

To Switzerland-based researchers involved in international research networks

Berne, February 2018

Supporting research networks: call for pre-proposals

Since 1 January 2017, the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) has been supporting infrastructures for international scientific networking activities (hereinafter referred to as research networks). This funding is complementary to the SNSF's contributions to infrastructures directly supporting research. SCNAT's "Commission for Research Networks" assesses incoming project applications and thus ensures the high quality of the supported networks. The Commission consists of seven established researchers from a broad range of disciplines, working in Switzerland.

The Commission is planning to support one or two additional research networks with head offices located in Switzerland. It therefore opens a call for pre-proposals.

Scope of the call

The project should be related to FutureEarth themes (futureearth.org) and focus mainly on science. Integration into the structures of FutureEarth is, however, not a prerequisite.

The project duration is at least one and up to a maximum of four years. A follow-up proposal may be submitted at the end of the project. The number of follow-up funding requests is not limited.

SCNAT's support will be in the range of CHF 100'000.- to CHF 200'000.- per year. Substantial financial participation by partners located outside Switzerland increases the probability for a support by SCNAT.

Timeline of the call

Pre-proposals have to be submitted **before May 19, 2018**. Following an in-depth examination of the pre-proposals, the Commission will invite up to four project teams to submit a full proposal that will be subjected to a scientific evaluation, involving external referees, in addition to the Commission member's own expertise. The deadlines for processing the applications are:

18 May 2018	Submission deadline for pre-proposals.
Mid-June 2018	Communication of the result of the examination of the pre-proposals.
	Sending out the information concerning the full proposals.
10 August 2018	Deadline for submission of full proposals.
01 November 2018	Dispatch of funding decisions.

01 January 2019 Earliest start of funding.

Projects will only be supported when they meet the requirements listed below. Please note that for some of these points, the fulfillment will only have to be shown when submitting a full proposal.

A) Requirements for the research network infrastructure operators

Organizations or consortia submitting a funding request for the establishment and/or operation of a research network must meet *all* of the following requirements:

- The research network must be institutionally linked to one of the following types of institutions or units thereof (parent institution):
 - a. Cantonal Swiss Universities
 - b. Institutions of the ETH Domain
- The parent institution is willing to host the research network for the entire duration of the contract (responsible legal entity) and to contribute to it (e. g. infrastructure, staff, co-financing).
- A single point of contact for all administrative procedures will be designated with SCNAT. A single responsible scientific applicant is the contact person for all technical questions.
- Responsible or co-applicants can not apply for contributions to their own salary.
- The managing person(s) are qualified in the field of the proposal; there are substitute arrangements which ensure regular continued operation in the event of loss of key personnel.
- The project can demonstrate that the products of the research network (data, publications, etc.) are secured and made accessible to researchers in the long term, i. e. beyond the operation of the research network.

B) Requirements for the type of research network

Funding by SCNAT is excluded for (responsibility lies with the SNSF):

- Research-driven networks for direct research purposes.
- Participation in international research institutions and financing of cost-intensive large-scale facilities.

Funding from SCNAT is available for:

- Infrastructures for international scientific networking activities.

C) Requirements for the function in the scientific system:

The following prerequisites must be met cumulatively for processing the funding request:

- The research network is operationally and organisationally independent of both the SNSF and SCNAT.
- The research network is - if possible institutionally - embedded in an international context.
- Equal access for all qualified researchers to the services of the research network is guaranteed¹.

In addition, at least one of the following requirements must be met for proposals being processed by SCNAT:

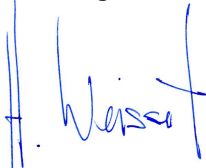
¹ Access is guaranteed on equal terms on the basis of transparent, objective and verifiable criteria. Competitive processes that meet these requirements are not excluded.

- The research network meets the needs of researchers at national level.
- The operation of the research network contributes to raising the profile of Switzerland as a research location.
- The operation of the research network strengthens one or more research areas.
- Switzerland has particular expertise in the field of the research network.
- The research network enables the development of special competencies in Switzerland in its field of expertise within four years.
- The research network is of particular importance for Switzerland as a research location.
- Switzerland's participation in the research network is essential.

To submit your pre-proposal, please use the enclosed form and observe the format specifications for the additional documents. Submission deadline of the pre-proposal is Friday 18 May 2018. We plan to send you the result of the evaluation of the pre-proposals by mid-June 2018. If you have any questions concerning the call, please use the following contacts:

E-mail: fnw@scnat.ch
Phone: 031 306 93 04.

Best regards



Prof. Dr. Helmut Weissert
President of the
Commission for Research Networks



Dr. Stefan Nussbaum
Secretary