



swissuniversities  
Effingerstrasse 15, Postfach  
3001 Bern  
www.swissuniversities.ch

## Programme Open Science II Application guidelines for the call for proposals for a National Diamond OA Consortium

### Contents

1. Context.....	1
1.1 Revised National Open Access Strategy and PgB Open Science II.....	1
1.2 Diamond Open Access.....	2
1.3 Federal Spending Cuts: Limitation to 2025.....	2
2. Call for proposals for a National Diamond OA Consortium.....	2
2.1 Goals.....	2
2.2 Requirements.....	3
2.3 Selection procedure.....	4
2.4 Timetable.....	4
3. Regulations for federal project contributions (PgB).....	4
3.1 Matching funds principle.....	4
3.2 Reporting.....	4
4. Further Information and Contact.....	5

### 1. Context

#### 1.1 Revised National Open Access Strategy and PgB Open Science II

The programme Open Science II is a national funding programme entrusted to swissuniversities, the Swiss Rectors' Conference, for implementation as part of the federal government's federal project contributions (PgB) in accordance with the [HEdA](#). The Delegation Open Science manages the programme Open Science II on behalf of the Board of swissuniversities.

In the context of the [PgB Open Science II](#) programme, the dimension on Open Access implements the goals and measures of the revised [National Open Access Strategy](#). Within the dimension on Open Access, the programme continues to work toward a sustainable implementation of Open Access in Switzerland, taking into account recent national and international developments relating to Open Access.

One measure of this dimension focuses on Diamond Open Access to guarantee financial sustainability, reducing systemic dependencies as well as to foster bibliodiversity in compliance with the principles of open, transparent, and equal access to scientific publications. By means of the PgB Open Science II, swissuniversities will fund the development of a Diamond OA Consortium in order to support Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets.

## 1.2 Diamond Open Access

The National Open Access Strategy defines as an objective the establishment of a financially viable Diamond OA publishing ecosystem as a robust publishing route for authors. Given the importance of infrastructures and services to enable OA, particularly with regard to Diamond OA, “current capacities must be scaled up in order to develop alternative solutions for reducing the dependency of scholarly publishing on oligopolistic markets.” Therefore, “a coordinated and interconnected ecosystem of [Diamond] OA infrastructures and services that is well known and established in scholarly publishing” with the purpose of “bringing about a scholar-led publishing system and a synergetic, cost-effective pooling of institutional capacities” is called for.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.3 Federal Spending Cuts: Limitation to 2025

On 20 September 2024, the Federal Council [announced](#) which cost-cutting measures suggested in the [report](#) of the ‘Spending and Subsidy Review’ expert group are to be pursued further. These measures include the discontinuation of project-related contributions. swissuniversities has been informed that for now, financial resources for the 2025-2028 programmes can only be committed for the year 2025. Projects may use funding received for 2025 until the end of July 2026.

## 2. **Call for proposals for a National Diamond OA Consortium**

In order to achieve the objectives of the revised National Open Access Strategy, particularly pathway A (“Develop, coordinate, and connect infrastructures and services”), swissuniversities’ PgB programme Open Science II welcomes proposals for funding from eligible higher education institutions ([German](#) | [French](#)) by Sunday, 02 March 2025, 23:59 CET.

The goal of this call is the creation of a Swiss Diamond OA Consortium to fund Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets (e.g. journals) in order to strengthen Diamond OA as a financially viable and academically robust publication option for researchers affiliated with Swiss higher education institutions in the medium term. Diamond OA as a publication option is expected to be supported both by resources within higher education institutions and the diverse national landscape of service providers within the evolving publication landscape. In addition to the development of long-term funding structures for Diamond OA, the consortium may also engage in capacity building and community engagement.

The Consortium must serve the entire Swiss higher education landscape and be compatible with the international Diamond OA landscape. It must be interinstitutional and adequately represent the multilingual situation in Switzerland. It is expected that the Consortium will cooperate closely with the SNSF, the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, and other relevant stakeholders such as Institutional Publishing Service Providers and private publishers in order to harness synergies.

Given the limited funding duration (see 1.3), proposals must demonstrate that federal funds will be used in a sustainable manner. Project proposals should therefore indicate the extent to which the proposed projects will have a lasting impact which goes beyond the reduced funding period. Refer to the [Implementation Plan](#) for more details on sustainability criteria.

### 2.1 Goals

Considering the preparatory work undertaken by previous and existing projects both in Switzerland and abroad, the funding received from swissuniversities should be used to:

a) *Legally establish a consortium to financially support Diamond OA*

By the end of the funding period, proposals are expected to have legally constituted the Swiss Diamond OA Consortium, including the establishment of bylaws and an adequate governance structure as well as the definition of membership criteria and members’ obligations.

---

<sup>1</sup> [National Open Access Strategy](#), p. 15.

- b) *Define clear criteria according to which Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets will be funded.*

On the basis of the many preliminary and neighbouring projects, the consortium must develop a clear set of criteria on which decisions to fund Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets will be based. Due to different disciplinary challenges and publication volumes, criteria may differ depending on academic fields. The consortium is expected to define which service providers and publication outlets within the evolving Diamond OA publication ecosystem may receive funding, develop a catalogue of eligible expenses, and the minimum and maximum amounts of financial support provided.

- c) *Develop and establish processes necessary to fund Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets*

The consortium must define specific criteria for assessing funding applications and establish a transparent and consistent decision-making process, e.g. by developing a scoring rubric or assessment framework. The consortium must also create clear forms and guidelines for submitting funding proposals, including eligibility criteria, required documentation, and submission deadlines, as well as establish mechanisms for monitoring and reporting.

- d) *Develop and establish long-term funding structures*

The consortium is expected to be operational by the beginning of the academic year 2026–2027 and able to fund Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets. For now, the funding provided for Diamond OA through this action line is limited to the end of 2025 at the latest (see above 1.3). While no long-term commitments are required at the proposal stage, proposals must outline which steps they already took, intend to take, which stakeholders they already approached, and which stakeholder they plan to approach in order to develop and establish long-term funding structures.

It is required that proposals promote or coordinate collaboration between higher education institutions, other ERI stakeholders (SNSF, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, ETH Domain, etc.), and private partners such as publishing houses. Only consortial proposals by multiple institutions will be considered, as only one project will be funded. For this reason, the extent to which the project proposal coordinates cooperation between all interested institutions as well as adequately addresses and incorporates the needs of the different institutions, types of higher education institutions, and research communities is given particular weight in the evaluation. Cooperation with other Swiss higher education institutions eligible for funding is therefore required. It is recommended that other ERI stakeholders as well as existing Diamond OA service providers and publication outlets be included in a suitable form (e.g. in the form of a sounding board).

In order to streamline the creation of a consortial proposal, a dedicated workshop will take place on 27. January 2025 at the SNSF to allow eligible higher education institutions to meet and prepare a possible collaboration. For more information and registration see here: <https://forms.office.com/e/0jaPcuCMWh>.

## 2.2 Requirements

### Submission

The following documents must be sent to [open-science@swissuniversities.ch](mailto:open-science@swissuniversities.ch) with the subject line "Diamond OA Consortium Funding: *Title of proposal*":

- 1) [Application form](#) (as PDF and Word)
- 2) [Budget form for cooperation projects](#) (as Excel)

**Submission deadline: Sunday, 02 March 2025, 23:59 CET.**

<b>Signature</b>	The application must be signed by the president or rector of all participating higher education institutions. The signature can be either digital with a Qualified Electronic Signature (QES), or a handwritten one. By signing an application, the institution commits to providing the necessary matching fundings if a proposal is accepted.
<b>Project duration</b>	The earliest project start is expected to be 1 July 2025, projects must be concluded by 31 July 2026 at the latest.
<b>Budget</b>	Up to CHF 250'000 in federal funding available for a single project (see also 3. Regulations for federal project contributions [PgB])
<b>General alignment</b>	Project proposals must be in line with the principles of the <a href="#">National ORD Strategy</a> and <a href="#">ORD Action Plan</a> , in particular the FAIR principles, the revised <a href="#">National OA Strategy</a> , and the swissuniversities Checklist Diversity Mainstreaming ( <a href="#">German</a>   <a href="#">French</a> ).

### 2.3 Selection procedure

Project proposals are assessed in a competitive evaluation process by external experts in swissuniversities' Open Science Reviewers' Pool (cf. [Implementation Plan](#)); the decision-making body is the Delegation Open Science. In case of a positive decision on the application, the swissuniversities Open Science programme will financially support the project through federal project contributions (PgB) from the federal government. Decisions on applications are expected to be communicated in June 2025.

### 2.4 Timetable

18 December 2024	The call for proposal opens
2 March 2025	Submission deadline
March – May 2024	Evaluation of applications by the Open Science Reviewers' Pool
23 June 2025	Decision by the Delegation Open Science with subsequent announcement
1 July 2025	Earliest possible project start

## 3. Regulations for federal project contributions (PgB)

### 3.1 Matching funds principle

Subject to the budgetary decision of the Federal Assembly, federal funds are allocated by the Swiss Conference of Higher Education Institutions (SHK) and awarded to the higher education institutions via swissuniversities; the regulations for federal project contributions (PgB) therefore apply. In particular, this includes the matching funds principle: the higher education institutions are required to cover at least 50 percent of the total project costs from their own resources. More information is available in the Guidelines for the PgB-funded programmes managed by swissuniversities ([German](#) | [French](#) | [English](#)).

### 3.2 Reporting

The project leaders must submit to swissuniversities an annual as well as a final content and financial report. Detailed information on reporting can be found in the Guidelines for the PgB-funded programmes managed by swissuniversities ([German](#) | [French](#) | [English](#)).

#### **4. Further Information and Contact**

For further information please see the [website of the PgB Open Science II](#) or send an email to: [open-science@swissuniversities.ch](mailto:open-science@swissuniversities.ch).

**swissuniversities**