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Division Higher Education Policy

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Programme Open Science II
Application guidelines for the call for proposals for Supporting Green Open Access

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1. Context

1.1 Revised National Open Access Strategy and PgB Open Science II

The Open Science II programme is a national funding programme entrusted to swissuniversities, the Swiss Rectors' Conference, for implementation as part of the federal government's project-related contributions 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 Green Open Access. By means of the PgB Open Science II, swissuniversities will fund measures which ensure continuous coordination on the national level, increase researchers' awareness and knowledge of their copyright and usage rights in general and the Rights Retention Strategy in particular, and provide (institutional) solutions supporting researchers in retaining their rights.

1.2 Green Open Access

The National Open Access Strategy defines as objectives that the "frameworks for scholarly publishing set by institutions and service providers advance the paradigm shift towards Open Access" and that "authors affiliated with a Swiss institution have open access publishing options at reasonable conditions that align with the global context". It states that the "infrastructure and services such as repositories that are necessary for Green OA are well established at the institutional level. However, continued coordination at the national level is needed to further strengthen this OA model and ensure interoperability."[1] Additionally, the National Open Access Strategy recognises the essential importance of the retention of copyrights and usage rights by researchers and "aims to introduce legal framework conditions that promote open access to all scholarly publications" which include both the continued support of institutional measures as well as the "introduction of a secondary publication right under Swiss law for publicly funded scholarly publications".[2]

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 Supporting Green Open Access

In order to achieve the objectives of the revised National Open Access Strategy, particularly pathways A ("Develop, coordinate, and connect infrastructures and services") and C ("Establish a supportive legal framework"), 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.

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

The goal of this call is twofold and therefore, different kinds of proposals are called for which focus on one or more of the following goals:

a) *Ensure continuous coordination at national level to further strengthen the Green OA model and ensure interoperability.*
While the infrastructures and services required for Green OA are well established at the Swiss Higher Education Institutions, this decentralised implementation has led to challenges regarding the findability of published research and the interoperability of the different repositories. swissuniversities therefore invites proposals which focus on establishing common standards and practices as well as federating existing solutions to improve findability, visibility, and interoperability.

b) *Increase researchers' awareness and knowledge of Rights Retention Strategy and provide (institutional) solutions supporting rights retention*
While the retention of copyrights and usage rights by researchers as envisaged by the Rights Retention Strategy by cOAlition S is of essential importance for advancing Green OA, and the Swiss Code of Obligations already contains a nonmandatory

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[1] National Open Access Strategy, p. 15.
[2] National Open Access Strategy, p. 16.

provision guaranteeing a limited secondary publication right, researchers are too often left with the task of navigating individual publishing contracts and the various policies of service providers and negotiating usage rights, if they know about their rights at all. swissuniversities therefore invites proposals which will increase awareness and knowledge of the Rights Retention Strategy in particular and researchers' retention rights in general, facilitate researchers' implementation of this policy, or support institutional measures to promote rights retention, e.g. by providing legal guidance, developing institutional policies, fostering collaboration with publishers, etc.

It is strongly recommended 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. While proposals by individual institutions will be considered, preference will be given to consortial proposals by multiple institutions. 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.

2.2   Requirements

Submission	The following documents must be sent to open-science@swissuniversities.ch with the subject line "OA Project Funding: Title of proposal": 1) Application form (as PDF and Word) 2) Budget form for individual projects *or* budget form for co-operation projects (as Excel) Proposals may be submitted by one applicant (individual projects) or by a consortium of applicants (cooperation projects). **Submission deadline: Sunday, 02 March 2025, 23:59 CET**
Signature	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.
Project duration	The earliest project start is expected to be 1 July 2025, projects must be concluded by 31 July 2026 at the latest.
Budget	Up to CHF 350'000 in federal funding available in total (see also 3. Regulations for federal project contributions [PgB]).
General alignment	Project proposals must be in line with the principles of the National ORD Strategy and ORD Action Plan, in particular the FAIR principles, the revised National OA Strategy, and the swissuniversities Checklist Diversity Mainstreaming.

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.