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**Programme Open Science II
Application Guidelines for the Call for Proposals for Open Access Long-Form Publications and Other Publication Formats**

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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 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 expanding OA initiatives in order to support Open Access also for long-form publications and other publication formats (monographs and edited volumes, practice publications, 'livres d'art', reference works, etc.) in order to guarantee bibliodiversity in compliance with the principles of open, transparent, and equal access to scholarly publications.

1.2 Long-Form Publications and Other Publication Formats

As stated in the revised National Open Access Strategy, not all areas of the Swiss Open Access landscape have progressed at the same speeds, and not all publication formats are published in Open Access with the same ease. Therefore, "existing OA initiatives must be expanded to include long-form publications and additional publication formats" in order to "ensure that the OA transformation remains aligned with current needs as well as future developments in the publishing practices of individual research communities and institutions."[1] Given the diverse nature and often national context of the publishing landscape for these publication formats, public-private partnerships with (domestic) service providers that serve the Swiss research communities are of particular interest.

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 OA Long-Form Publications and Other Publication Formats

In order to achieve the objectives of the revised National Open Access Strategy, particularly pathways B ("Negotiate with service providers for a sustainable transformation") and D ("Promote OA for long-form publications and additional publication formats"), 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.

In order further establish Open Access also for scholarly communication formats such as long-form publications, practice publications, reference works, and other non-article research publications including digital-born publication formats,[2] proposals are supposed to both identify systemic and cultural challenges for Open Access publishing related to these non-article publication formats in one of the following fields of research and sketch strategies and solutions to overcome these challenges:

- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Law
- Medicine, Health, and Life Sciences
- STEM
- Art and Aesthetics

These challenges and solutions are expected to be described in a report (max. 100 pages, including an executive summary) to be submitted to the Delegation Open Science within 12 months. These reports are supposed to serve as a basis for possible further activities, either mandated by the Delegation Open Science or independently pursued by the stakeholders in a given field of research.

A priori, only the best proposal – i.e. a single application for one field of research – will be funded; the subject-specific diversity between different types of higher education institutions will be taken into account. Proposals must indicate the field of research; no more than one field can be indicated.

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[1] National Open Access Strategy, p. 17.
[2] If article publications are the default mode of scholarly communication in a given field or research but major challenges in OA publishing remain, proposals may also include and / or focus on article publications.

2.1 Goals

The goal of this call is to enable eligible institutions to carry out conceptual work on how to establish Open Access in non-article scholarly communication formats by means of a report to be submitted to the Delegation Open Science. This report must include the following points includes in particular:

a) *Description of the challenges regarding long-form publications and / or other publication formats relating to Open Access in the chosen field of research*
Projects are expected to define the non-article publication formats (e.g. monographs, reference works, publications addressing practitioners) which are of particular relevance in the chosen field of research and for which conceptual and / or fundamental challenges relating to OA remain. Projects must also map the needs of the community regarding the chosen kinds of publications.[3] This may include:
- Analysis of the publishing practices of researchers affiliated with Swiss institutions within the chosen field or research.
- Definition and mapping of the practices, needs, and requirements of the research community regarding non-article publication formats.
- Description of current trends in publishing in their discipline (e.g. a shift from monographs to journal articles, consolidation among publishers, change in the number of researchers, etc.).

b) *Identification of key challenges preventing the widespread adoption of OA practices for non-article publications*
Projects are expected to identify key challenges preventing researchers in the chosen discipline from publishing in Open Access, particularly with regard to non-article publications.

c) *Description of the positions of major stakeholders in the chosen field of research*
Identify the major stakeholders with regard to non-article publishing and describe their position regarding OA publishing, the challenges they see, which solutions they would support, and whether they see any prerequisites to these solutions.

d) *Development of solutions to address and overcome the challenges*
Projects must sketch possible solutions in order to establish Open Access for the relevant non-article publication formats and describe how the research community will benefit from an implementation of such solutions. Solutions must be specific, relevant, actionable and within the capabilities of higher education institutions, researchers, and publishers to achieve. While overarching changes might be part of the proposed solutions, projects are expected to develop solutions that can be implemented by the major stakeholders and are open for further participants in the future. Projects are expected to include the findings of pertinent studies and initiatives (e.g. OAPEN, COPIM, Public Knowledge Project, Open Book Collective, DOAB, PRISM, Thoth, OPERAS).

It is strongly encouraged 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 which also include publishing houses and other stakeholders. Therefore, the extent to which a project proposal coordinates cooperation between all interested institutions as well as adequately addresses and incorporates the needs of the different stakeholders, their respective research community, and private partners is given particular weight in the evaluation.

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[3] A brief sketch of this definition and the needs of the community must be presented already in the project proposal.

2.2 Requirements

Submission	The following documents must be sent to open-science@swissuni-versities.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 cooperation 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 100'000 in federal funding available per project (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 (German | French).

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.