



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

Programme Open Science II

Application guidelines for the ORD Action Line B5.2: Action plans for the (further) development of ORD specialists / data stewardship

Contents

1. Context	1
1.1 Open Research Data Strategy and Action Plan	1
1.2 Action Line B5.2 ORD Specialists / Data Stewardship	2
1.3 Federal Spending Cuts: Limitation to 2025	2
2. Call for proposals	2
2.1 Content of new action plans	3
2.2 Further development of existing action plans	3
2.3 Submission and general requirements	4
2.4 Selection procedure	5
2.5 Timetable	5
3. Financing modalities	5
3.1 Regulations for federal project contributions (PgB) and matching funds principle	5
3.2 Reporting	5
4. Contact	5
5. Appendix: Glossary/Overview of ORD specialists / data stewardship tasks and their associated roles for the programme Open Science II	6

1. Context

1.1 Open Research Data Strategy and Action Plan

In January 2020, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) commissioned swissuniversities to develop a [Swiss National Strategy for Open Research Data](#) and an associated action plan. The [Action Plan for Open Research Data \(ORD\)](#) published in January 2022 concretises the measures of the ORD strategy published in 2021 and was developed jointly by swissuniversities, the ETH Domain, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences.

The Delegation Open Science led and leads the implementation of the programmes Open Science I Phase B – ORD (2022–2024) and Open Science II (from 2025) on behalf of the

Board of swissuniversities. The programmes implement those action lines of the ORD Action Plan that are under the responsibility of swissuniversities and finance them through federal project contributions.

1.2 Action Line B5.2 ORD Specialists / Data Stewardship

Action Line B5.2 of the ORD Action Plan aims to promote ORD specialists and data stewardship at all higher education and research institutions. In a first implementation step until 2024, the focus was on data stewards. As part of the implementation of Action Line B5.2 in the programme Open Science I, all higher education institutions were invited to describe their ideas and intentions for establishing data stewardship at their institution in the form of a (short) action plan. Data stewardship encompasses the management and monitoring of an organisation's data resources with the aim of facilitating access to research data. As such, it is the link between researchers and support units in the form of IT, libraries and infrastructure providers. Data stewards take on an active advisory role for researchers and serve as the first point of contact for all questions related to (open) research data, e.g. data backup, long-term storage or data management. [25 projects from 31 higher education institutions](#) were co-financed by swissuniversities from 2022–2024.

Action Line B5.2 will now be continued in 2025 and will take into account, in this second implementation step, not only data stewards, but **also other experts and roles in the area of ORD / data stewardship (see appendix of this document for an overview)**.

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

As part of the continuation of Action Line B5.2 in the programme Open Science II, all [eligible Swiss higher education institutions](#) are invited to describe their ideas and intentions for the (further) development of ORD specialists / data stewardship at their institution and to submit a corresponding project proposal:

- Higher education institutions that have not yet implemented a B5.2 project can submit an action plan for the development of ORD specialists / data stewardship for the year 2025, see section 2.1.
- Higher education institutions that submitted an action plan in 2022 and implemented it in 2023–2024 can develop, supplement and expand their existing plan according to the current implementation status, see section 2.2.

If the application is successful, the programme Open Science II of swissuniversities will support the projects financially through federal project contributions (PgB) from the Confederation (see section "Funding modalities"). It is important that the planned measures can be financially sustained by the higher education institutions after the initial funding from the programme Open Science. Cooperations with other [Swiss higher education institutions eligible for funding](#) are not mandatory, but welcome.

2.1 Content of new action plans

The action plans are based on the explanations for Action Line B5.2 of the [Swiss National ORD Action Plan](#) (p. 24) and describe the steps and measures planned by the institutions to develop ORD specialists and data stewardship (in the broad sense, see appendix). The plans are based on sound planning, set realistic goals and are supported by the higher education institution management. The [published action plans for the period 2022–2024](#) can be viewed for inspiration.

Specifically, an action plan must include the following:

- (1) A description of the current and target situations, with a corresponding gap analysis.
- (2) A description of the higher education institution's medium and long-term goals in the area of ORD / data stewardship (in the broad sense, see appendix) based on the actual/target analysis.
- (3) A description of the measures to achieve the goals set.
- (4) A list of the processes with which the action plans will be integrated into the higher education institution's planning.
- (5) A description of the synergies and complementarities with existing internal and external higher education institution structures in the area of data stewardship.
- (6) A realistic plan to put the objectives of the project's action plan into practice.
- (7) A detailed financial plan.
- (8) A specification of the strategic and financial sustainability of the data stewardship action plan and its further implementation after 2026 in accordance with the objectives described.
- (9) Important: The planned measures are not research projects.

2.2 Further development of existing action plans

The projects and action plans that were implemented from 2023–2024 are based on the narrow definition of data stewardship and therefore focused on the employment of data stewards. **From 2025, the call will be extended to include ORD specialists and other people who take on data stewardship tasks at the higher education institutions (see appendix for an overview).** Based on their 2022 action plans, [eligible higher education institutions](#) can submit a project application for a corresponding broadening of their activities and measures.

The project application must include the following points:

- (1) A summary of the action plan and a description of the current status of implementation.
- (2) A description of the newly set goals, taking into account the broadening of the activities in the field of data stewardship (see appendix).
- (3) A list of the new measures planned for 2025 to achieve the objectives set out in (2).
- (4) A detailed financial plan.
- (5) A description of the strategic and financial sustainability of the measures and their further implementation after 2025 in accordance with the objectives described.
- (6) Important: The planned measures are not research projects.

2.3 Submission and general requirements

Content	<p>When submitting a new action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application Form New Action Plan - Budget form for individual projects or Budget form for co-operation projects - Action plan of max. 4'000 word as a PDF (please note that there is no template) <p>When extending an existing action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application Form Extension of Action Plan - Budget form for individual projects or Budget form for co-operation projects
Deadlines	<p>1) Deadline for the expression of interest (<u>mandatory</u>): Friday, 24 January 2025, 23:59 CET</p> <p>Eligible higher education institutions wishing to submit a project for this call must submit an expression of interest by filling in this form. The distribution key (see 'Budget' below) indicates the minimum amount of federal funding available per institution. By 30 January 2025, all institutions that have submitted their expression of interest will be informed of the new amount of federal funding available for their institution.</p> <p>2) Deadline for the project application: Monday, 17 February 2025, 23:59 CET</p> <p>Project applications are submitted at the following address: open-science@swissuniversities.ch. The subject line of the e-mail must contain the following: "Action line B5.2" and the title of the project. Applications will only be considered if an expression of interest was submitted by 24 January 2025.</p>
Signature	<p>The application must be signed by the presidents or rectors of the participating higher education institutions. The signature can be either digital with a Qualified Electronic Signature (QES), or handwritten. By signing an application, the institution commits to providing the necessary matching fundings if a proposal is accepted.</p>
Project duration	<p>The earliest project start is expected to be 1 April 2025, projects must be concluded by 31 July 2026 at the latest.</p>
Budget	<p>See distribution key.</p> <p>Important: The distribution key specifies the minimum amount of federal funding available per institution. By 30 January 2025, all institutions that have submitted their expression of interest (see 'Deadlines' above) will be informed of the new maximum amount of federal funding available for their institution.</p>
General alignment	<p>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.</p>

2.4 Selection procedure

The suitability and feasibility evaluation of the action plans is carried out by the General Secretariat of swissuniversities; the decision-making body is the Delegation Open Science (cf. [Implementation Plan](#)). Applicants will be informed of the decision on their dossier following the meeting of the Delegation Open Science at the end of March 2025.

2.5 Timetable

18 December 2024	The call for proposal opens
22 January 2025	Open Science event for networking and planning cooperative projects
24 January 2025	Deadline for the expression of interest
17 February 2025	Application submission deadline
February 2025	Formal evaluation and assessment by the General Secretariat of swissuniversities
March 2025	Decision by the Delegation Open Science with subsequent announcement
01 April 2025	Earliest possible project start

3. Financing modalities

3.1 Regulations for federal project contributions (PgB) and matching funds principle

Subject to the budget decision of the Federal Assembly, the federal funds are allocated by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and awarded to the higher education institutions via the General Secretariat of swissuniversities. The regulations for federal project contributions (PgB) are therefore applicable. Please take note of the Guidelines for the PgB programmes managed by swissuniversities ([German](#) | [French](#) | [English](#)). In particular, this includes the matching funds principle: the higher education institutions must provide at least 50% of their own funds for the entire duration of the programme.

3.2 Reporting

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

4. Contact

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

5. Appendix: Glossary/Overview of ORD specialists / data stewardship tasks and their associated roles for the programme Open Science II

The following list is not exhaustive and serves as guidance for the further development of ORD specialists / data stewardship under Action Line B5.2 of the ORD Action Plan. It reflects the diversity of the higher education institutions and the different roles and tasks in the area of data stewardship. The names of the roles may change overtime or differ from one institution to another, but the tasks listed hereafter are those supported under the programme.

Task Categories	Examples of Tasks	Related Roles (in alphabetical order)
General advise on ORD, OA and OS questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advise researchers and answer questions related to data, RDM¹, OA publishing, etc. contribute expertise and practical experience to OS topics responsible for all OS-related questions and topics at the institution 	Data / ORD expert Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator OS expert / specialist
Promote ORD, OA and OS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raise community awareness on OS topics endorse the FAIR principles act as spokesperson in the faculty participate in possible publications on RDM 	Data champion / ambassador Data librarian Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator OS expert / specialist
Guide researchers to specific support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinate inquiries to involve the appropriate experts serve as a link between central services (IT, DPOs, ethics, grants office) and researchers 	Data champion / ambassador Data / ORD expert Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator
Provide resources and training (general and / or discipline-specific)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare, organize and / or lead workshops, trainings or awareness campaigns on RDM, OA publishing, OS technical tools, etc. develop communication and training materials provide resources (e.g. DMP² templates) 	Data champion / ambassador Data librarian Data manager Data / ORD expert Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator OS expert / specialist Research software engineer
Support on DMP implementation and RDM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer general and / or subject-specific support for RDM; assist researchers with RDM (throughout data life cycle) 	Data archivist Data champion / ambassador

¹ Research data management

² Data management plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote RDM tools ▪ assist in drafting or adapting DMPs ▪ support researchers in preparing data for archiving; assist in enriching metadata 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data curator Data librarian Data manager Data / ORD expert Data steward
Advise on data reuse and preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ advise on data handling, data reuse and preservation ▪ assist in preparing data for archiving ▪ inform about infrastructures and tools for managing and sharing data ▪ assist in finding and reusing data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data archivist Data champion / ambassador Data curator Data librarian Data / ORD expert Data steward
Develop software / IT solutions and support ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ produce and maintain research software tools for ORD ▪ FAIR-ify and package research scripts and datasets ▪ use programming to work reproducibly with data ▪ help manage institutional data repository 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data librarian Data manager Data steward Research software engineer
Establish and improve workflows and best practices (researcher-oriented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish and / or improve data workflows and strategies ▪ establish best practices for managing and opening up research data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data manager Data / ORD expert Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator
Develop strategies and policies (leadership-oriented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop institutional ORD strategies and policies ▪ implement guidelines and standards from institutional policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator OS expert / specialist
Project management and funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ responsible for research management at the institution ▪ support grant writing; manage third-party funding ▪ oversee project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data librarian Data manager Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator
Ensure knowledge transfer within the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ act as multiplier and ambassador for RDM at the institution ▪ coordinate internal committees that bring together specialists within an institution ▪ ensure that subject-specific needs are considered to develop transferable solutions ▪ inform organizational units about developments, services and requirements in RDM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data steward Data steward(ship) coordinator OS expert / specialist

³ Please note that the development of IT infrastructures or solutions will not be financially supported within this call.

Coordinate organiza- tional units involved in ORD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coordinate and manage data stewards and / or research data experts in individual de- partments and facilitate collaboration and exchange between them ▪ coordinate services involved in supporting RDM 	Data steward
		Data steward(ship) coordinator
		OS expert / specialist
Guarantee institutional alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ monitor ORD output ▪ represent the institution (inter)nationally with regard to OS 	Data librarian
		Data / ORD expert
		Data steward(ship) coordinator
		OS expert / specialist

swissuniversities