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Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER

**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**

International Research and Innovation Programmes

Guidelines for applicants on the implementation of the order of priority

v2 June 2025 (update on ERC Advanced Grants 2024)



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1 Background information on the necessity of the order of priority

The Federal Council decided on transitional measures for the years 2021–2024 to mitigate the consequences of Switzerland's non-association to the Horizon package (2021–2027). Part of the transitional measures is the direct funding of accessible programme parts. In this framework SERI funds researchers and innovators in Switzerland whose participation in positively evaluated collaborative and some mono-beneficiary projects is not funded by the European Commission.

The volume of already submitted and still anticipated funding requests is very high and is expected to exceed the available funds for direct financing. For this reason, SERI applies measures based on an order of priority to all pending funding requests in relation to 2021–2024 calls for proposals, in accordance with the relevant ordinance (Ordinance on the measures for Switzerland's participation in EU programmes, FIPBV, SR 420.126).

2 Implementation of the order of priority

The order of priority was activated on 20 June 2025 and includes seven possible measures, five of which are currently active. It is available on the SERI website.

This guide provides an overview of the measures currently active as of 20 June 2025 and the funding requests that are affected.

If necessary, further measures can be activated in accordance with the order of priority. SERI is monitoring the implementation of the current measures and will take further action if required.

2.1 Funding requests affected by the order of priority

Affected requests:

The measures in place apply to all funding requests for the 2021–2024 calls for proposals that have not yet been approved by SERI. These include funding requests for participation in collaborative as well as mono-beneficiary projects.

Not affected requests:

- Project participations for which contracts have already been concluded are not affected.
- Project participations in 2025 calls for proposals are not affected as participants in Switzerland must prepare their project proposals as beneficiaries and thus apply for EU funding.
- Requests for the cost-neutral transfer of tasks from project partners within Switzerland and within existing commitments between SERI and the contribution recipient are excluded from the order of priority.

2.2 Measures that are applied to funding requests for collaborative projects

1) **Costs incurred from taking over tasks from project partners outside Switzerland are not eligible for direct funding (measure 1 of the order of priority).**

This means that:

- task transferred from a project partner outside of Switzerland to a Swiss partner will not be funded,
- researchers who transfer to a Swiss institution and continue the execution of the part of a collaborative project for which they are responsible, are not eligible for SERI funding, as this entails a transfer of tasks from abroad to Switzerland,
- a transfer of tasks between Swiss partners remains permissible, provided that it is cost-neutral within the existing commitments of SERI and the Swiss partners,



- the allocation of tasks as defined in the original proposal is binding. Transfers of tasks from foreign project partners during the Grant Agreement preparation phase is not possible.
- 2) **Consideration will not be given to requests for direct funding that relate to collaborative projects for which the grant agreement with the European Commission was signed earlier than six months prior to the date when the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) received the direct funding request. If the project coordinator and the European Commission signed the grant on different dates, the later date shall apply. This rule shall apply from 1 August 2025 (measure 2 of the order of priority).**

This means that:

- funding requests must be submitted to SERI within six months of signing the grant agreement. For example, if the grant agreement was signed on 1 May 2025, the funding request must be submitted to SERI by 31 October 2025 at the latest. Any submissions received after this date will not be eligible for funding and will be automatically rejected,
 - this rule applies to all funding requests submitted on or after 1 August 2025.
- 3) **The contribution to indirect costs (overhead) will be capped at 15% of eligible direct project costs (measure 4 of the order of priority).**

This means that:

- the overhead rate is reduced from 25% to 15% of the eligible direct project costs,
- any other applicable reductions, not related to the measures described here, will be applied prior to the calculation of overhead costs.

2.3 Measures that are applied to funding request for mono-beneficiary projects

- 1) **In the case of the 2024 call for ERC Advanced Grants, SERI will only accept direct funding requests that the EU has included in the “main list” in the first publication of the evaluation results on 17 June 2025 (measure 3 of the order of priority).**

This means that:

- ERC AdG 2024 projects that are promoted from the “reserve list” to the “main list” at a later stage are not eligible for SERI funding.
- this also includes potential transfers of ERC Advanced Grants 2024 from abroad to Switzerland: only ERC Advanced Grants 2024 that were included on the “main list” published on 17 June 2025 are eligible for an ERC Transfer Grant. Measure 5 of the order of priority still applies.

- 2) **The contribution to indirect costs (overhead) will be capped at 15% of eligible direct project costs (measure 4 of the order of priority).**

This means that:

- the overhead rate is reduced from 25% to 15% of the eligible direct project costs,
- any other applicable reductions, not related to the measures described here, will be applied prior to the calculation of overhead costs.

- 3) **For ERC Transfer Grants, only funds from ongoing decommitments will be available from 1 January 2026. Direct funding will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis to the extent of the available budget (measure 5 of the order of priority).**



2.4 FAQ

2.4.1 Do I need to do anything specific when submitting my funding request?

Please ensure that you only submit funding requests that are eligible. Other than this, submit your funding request as usual according to our guidelines for Swiss participation in collaborative or mono-beneficiary projects.

2.4.2 I have already submitted my funding request before 20 June 2025 but did not receive a contract. Is my request affected by the measures?

The measures in place apply to all funding requests for the 2021–2024 calls for proposals that have not yet been approved by SERI and therefore also apply to funding requests that have already been submitted to SERI but for which contracts have not yet been issued.

2.4.3 Why is an order of priority applied even though there is a financial guarantee?

Direct funding under Article 29 RIPA and RIPPO consists of subsidies to which there is no legal entitlement (Ermessenssubventionen). This is evident from the fact that Article 29 paragraph 1 FIFG contains a credit reservation (also known as a budget reservation) with the wording ‘The Federal Council may, within the limits of the approved credits, grant the following contributions and...’. The possibility of cuts as well as the implementation of an order of priority is explicitly foreseen by the relevant ordinance.

2.4.4 We are currently preparing a Horizon Europe project proposal to be submitted in a 2025 call for proposal. Does the order of priority also affect our project?

Projects of the 2025 calls for proposal are not affected by the order of priority. For all calls for proposals from the 2025 programme year onwards, participants in Switzerland must prepare their project proposals as beneficiaries and thus apply for EU funding. With the signing of the EU Programme Agreement (anticipated for November 2025), project participations by Swiss actors will be funded by the EU through Switzerland's mandatory contribution.

2.4.5 What happens to funding requests of projects with no overheads or with overheads below 15%?

Projects that operate with unit costs (for example Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions MSCA), are not subject to the overhead limitation as they do not have overheads allocated. The same applies to Digital Europe Programme (DEP) projects, where overheads are set at 7%.

2.4.6 Which projects would be affected if further measures were implemented in accordance with the priority order?

If further measures are implemented, they will apply to all funding applications for the 2021–2024 calls for proposals that have not yet been approved by SERI when the new measures come into force.

Participation in projects for which contracts have already been concluded, and participation in the 2025 calls for proposals, will not be affected.

2.4.7 Who should be contacted if further questions arise?

Please address all questions to europrogram@sbfi.admin.ch.