



National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR): Fact Sheet internal selection process UZH

1 Introduction

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) has announced the call for a sixth series of National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR). The call is expected to open in the second half of November 2023, with a potential start of the funded NCCR during the course of 2026.

The SNSF expects the home institutions to make a strategic pre-selection of projects. To guide the pre-selection and to best coordinate NCCR proposals with the strategic planning of UZH and the involved faculties, the Executive Board of the University has decided to conduct an internal selection process involving the faculty leaderships and a panel of selected internal experts. This document describes the internal selection process and submission details. An optional information event will be organized in September 2023 (item 7).

1.1 Eligibility requirements for NCCR applicants

The present call will be **thematically open** and thus invites all disciplines to submit a proposal.

Each NCCR is led by a single director or by a **director and a co-director**. Each home institution (leading house) of the NCCR must be represented in the team of directors. Directors are internationally renowned researchers with proven experience in managing large and ambitious research networks. An NCCR directorship is a long-term role, and designated directors must commit themselves to this responsibility.

An NCCR proposal is submitted by the designated director, the co-director, and a team of project leaders that build the consortium.

2 Internal Selection Process

All professors of UZH are invited to submit project sketches. The internal selection process consists of two stages:

Rating by Leading House Faculty(ies):

The applicants must submit a **project sketch by 1 November 2023** (see items 3 and 4). The Division Research Development will conduct a formal review of the project sketches and send them to the respective leading house faculty(ies) (up to two per proposal). **Leading house faculty(ies)** serve as the locus of structural change and accommodate the project management personnel (ensuring the corresponding relief for the NCCR management). The board(s) of the leading house faculty(ies) will rate and rank the project sketches based on specific criteria (item 5).

Rating by Expert Panel and Short Presentations:

In addition, an internal panel of experts chaired by the Vice President Research (item 6) will rate and rank the project sketches. The expert panel will select 15-20 projects based on both ratings (faculties and panel) and invite the main applicants to present their proposals to the panel. These **short presentations take place on 21 December 2023**. Based on the project sketches, ratings, and presentations, the expert panel will provide recommendations to the Executive Board of the University. In January 2024, the Executive Board of the University will make the final decision on which projects will be supported to submit outline proposals to the SNSF.

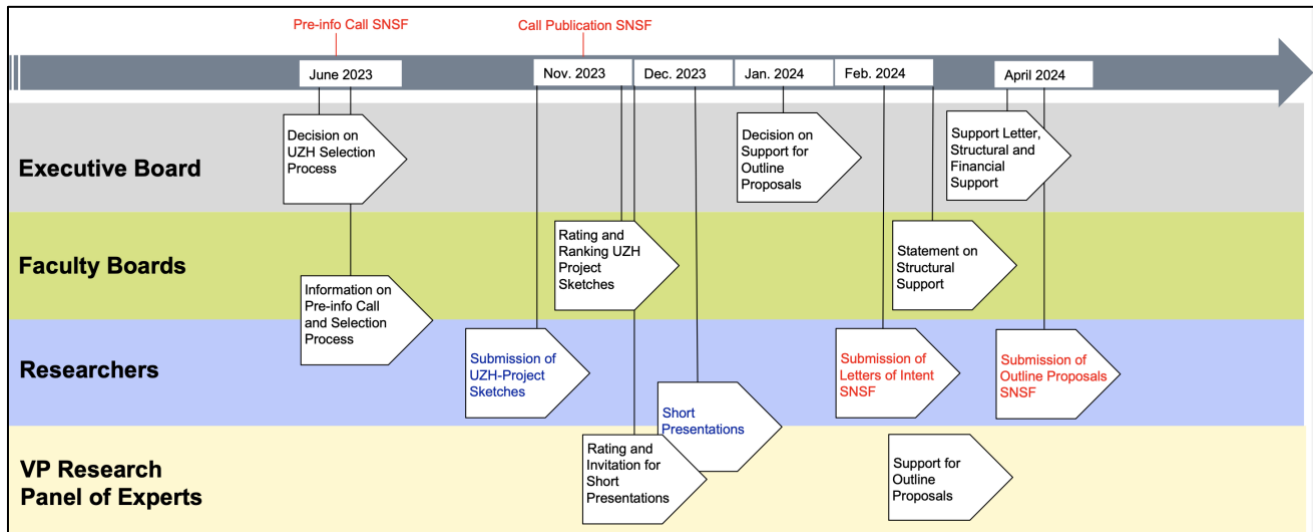


Figure 1: Timeline internal process

3 Structure of project sketch

The project sketch is written in English and has a maximum length of 5 pages (Arial, typesize 10, linespacing 1.15). The structure of the project sketch must follow the [template](#) provided and cover the following aspects:

- members of the consortium
- scientific content and aim
- relevance of the research topic for UZH and nationwide
- added value of an interdisciplinary approach
- possibilities for knowledge and technology transfer
- support of Co-Leading Houses (if any)
- unique selling point
- existing and planned new structures or initiatives in the research area (on institutional and national level)

4 Submission of project sketch

The project sketch has to be submitted **by 1 November, 2023, 12:00 hrs MESZ/CEST** as one single pdf document to the division Research Development (maurus.bolfing@uzh.ch). Name the file as follows: NCCR_ProjectSketch_NameFirstname.pdf). Project sketches that are incomplete, exceeding page limits, or not submitted on time will not be considered.

5 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria for the project sketch are based on the selection criteria of the SNSF according to the ordinance of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) regarding the promotion of research and innovation ([Art.8](#)). The criteria are as follows:

- quality of consortium
- relevance of research topic
- unique selling point and benchmarking with other initiatives
- added value of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation potential
- necessity of restructuring the chosen research field



- potential in the field of knowledge and technology transfer
- suitability of UZH as home institution
- consistency with the strategic planning of the leading house faculty(ies) and the UZH
- support of Co-Leading Houses (if any) and partner institutions

6 Internal Panel of Experts

The internal expert panel is chaired by the Vice President Research. The panel is interdisciplinary and includes representatives from all seven faculties. The experts are distinguished by their proximity to the SNSF and their experience in the submission, management or evaluation of NCCR (or comparable collaborative projects). The Vice President Research decides on the composition of the panel.

7 Information event (optional)

An optional information event will be organized in September 2023. Further information and the exact date and place will be communicated in due time to all faculties.

8 Important deadlines for researchers

- **November 1, 2023:** Submission of project sketch to Division Research Development (maurus.bolfing@uzh.ch)
- **December 21, 2023:** Short presentations of selected projects to internal expert panel
- **February 2024:** Submission of Letters of Intent to SNSF
- **April 2024:** Submission of Outline Proposals to SNSF
- **First Quarter 2025:** Submission of Full Proposals to SNSF

9 Contact

The Division Research Development is available for questions and support (Maurus Bolfing, 44812, maurus.bolfing@uzh.ch; Sandra Volken, 44878, sandra.volken@uzh.ch). All information and Templates can be found under: <https://www.research.uzh.ch/en/funding/researchers/NCCR.html>.