



Preparing a Competitive SNSF Starting Grant Proposal at Unifr

Université de Fribourg / Universität Freiburg

Research Promotion Service

26.03.2026



Practical Information

- **Timeline**

- 30 minutes presentation
- 30 minutes Q&A

- **Content**

1. Overview of the evaluation procedure
2. Tips for your proposal, CV, and budget
3. Submitting a SNSF StG proposal at Unifr
4. Tour of the SNSF Portal

- **Slides**

- Slides are available on the SNSF StG 2026 page on the [unifr.ch](https://www.unifr.ch) > Research > Funding

- **Recording**

- The presentation, but not the Q&A, is recorded.

Two-phase evaluation procedure

Phase 1: Panel evaluation

Outcome: September 2026

- Each proposal is reviewed by **at least two panel members**
- Referees provide **independent written assessments**

Panel discussion focuses on:

- Strengths and weaknesses
- Evaluation criteria

→ Only strong proposals move to Phase 2

Phase 2: External review and interview

Outcome: December 2026

- Proposals undergo **external peer review**
- Applicants are invited to an **interview** to present their project and answer panel questions

Final evaluation is based on:

- Proposal
- Peer reviews
- Interview performance

📄 Composition of panels is normally published by the SNSF [here](#). Composition for the 2026 call are not yet known.

Ranking and funding decision

1

Individual ratings

Panel members provide **individual ratings** for each proposal.

2

Ranked list

Ratings are combined to generate a **ranked list** of proposals.

3

Funding allocation

Funding is allocated in order of ranking, within the available budget.

4

Lottery

If proposals are equally strong at the funding allocation threshold, **random selection (lottery)** is used.

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality of the project

Ground-breaking nature & impact

- Importance of the research question
- Ambition beyond the state of the art
- Novelty and interdisciplinarity

Scientific approach

- Feasibility of the project
- Sound methodology
- Appropriate resources and timeline

Qualification of the applicant

Intellectual capacity & creativity

- Ability to conduct ground-breaking research
- Evidence of original thinking
- Strong scientific track record

Capacity to deliver

- Expertise to execute the project successfully
- Independence
- Leadership potential

- ☐ The same criteria apply in both phases.
The exact evaluation form used is documented by the SNSF [here](#).

Key takeaways

- Excellence is required for **both project and CV**
- High-risk/high-gain projects are encouraged, but must remain credible
- Clear positioning beyond the state of the art is critical
- Coherence between **project, budget, and profile** matters
- Interview performance is **decisive in Phase 2**





3 stylistic devices for your proposal

Beautiful butterfly: start with an inspiring idea

Make your project engaging and intuitive, even if the topic is complex or dry.

Where: summary

Before–after: highlight your contribution

Clearly show what changes thanks to your project

Where: state of the art, impact

Smart repetition: reinforce your message

Tell the reader what you are **going to tell** them → **tell** them → tell them what you **just told them**

Where: whenever presenting a complex idea

Narrative CV: key points

- **Fixed structure**

3 achievements, 10 publications max.

- **Flexibility in narration**

By design, you have a lot of freedom in how you present your achievements.

- **Typical distribution**

2 scientific achievements + 1 broader academic achievement (e.g. teaching, supervision, outreach). But other distributions are fine.

- **ORCID**

Your ORCID profile is part of your CV. Make sure it is complete, up-to-date, and that the works you list there can be found.

Budget examples



Too general

5'000 CHF: Travel to attend various international conferences related to the project



Too specific

3'130 CHF: Travel for X to attend the 12th International Symposium on Y in City Z. The estimated costs are as follows:

- Flight (economy class, booked 9 months in advance): CHF 1,250
- Checked baggage fee: CHF 70
- Airport transfer (CHF 50 each way): CHF 100
- Hotel (CHF 180/night for 5 nights): CHF 900
- Meals (CHF 60/day for 6 days): CHF 360
- Conference registration fee: CHF 450



Good

3'200 CHF: Travel for X to attend the 12th International Symposium on Y (city TBD). The amount will cover flight tickets (return trips), accommodation at mid-range hotels, and registration fees. Costs are estimated based on experience with previous similar travel.

The documents [here](#) and [here](#) gives some guidance on the amounts expected by the SNSF. Note that the limits stated there do not apply to the SNSF StG scheme.

Unifr support letter: departmental approval

Unifr only provides the institutional letter to candidates who have secured support from their host department.

The head of the department must approve your application by confirming:

- Support for your application
- Availability of the necessary infrastructure
- Alignment of your proposal with the department's strategy

Make sure you reach out to your department before requesting your support letter

 The **Department of Psychology**, **Department of Biology**, and **Adolphe Merkle Institute (AMI)** have publicly available guidelines for SNSF Starting Grant candidates.

Unifr support letter: Grant Tool

You must request your support letter through the Grant Tool:

 my.unifr.ch

Grant Tool



Notes

- If you are not employed at Unifr, request access in advance.
- If your host department is part of the Medicine Section: select **7640 - Medicine Section** as host department in the Grant Tool form.
- Request your letter by **15 April 2026**. Later requests are possible, but we cannot **guarantee timely delivery**.

Budget structure

Two main components:

Project funds (max. CHF 1 million)

- Staff salaries
- Travel & conferences
- Equipment & infrastructure
- Data and research costs

Your salary

- Separate from project funds
- CHF 152,000/year (+ 19% social security)

Budget: staff costs

Amounts to enter in the SNSF Portal are published on the Unifr Research Website:

 www.unifr.ch



SNSF Starting Grant | Research Promotion Service | University of Fribourg

Thinking of applying for a SNSF Starting Grants with the University of Fribourg as your host institution?

+19% social security

Automatically added on top of all listed salaries.

Final salaries

Determined by HR based on CV.

Guided tour of the SNSF Portal

 portal.snf.ch

SNF Portal





How can we help?

Proposal review

Reviewing your proposal, giving advice to make it stronger

Administrative support

Budgeting, answering questions about edge cases, etc.

Sanity check

Confirming your proposal complies with the SNSF rules

...

The sooner you reach out to us, the better. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to support you in time if you reach out very close from the deadline.



Questions?

Danke!
Merci!
Thank you!

Dienststelle Forschungsförderung
Service Promotion Recherche
Research Promotion Service

research@unifr.ch

www.unifr.ch/research/



Nehmen Sie an unserer kurzen
Zufriedenheitsumfrage teil.

Participez à notre court sondage de
satisfaction.

Take our quick satisfaction survey.