

# FAQ

Q: I am starting an SNSF Starting Grant at UNIL in November. My salary will also be paid through the SNSF Starting Grant (100%). I'm trying to identify funding sources that would allow me to hire a postdoc to work on a side project to which I will not be able to dedicate time once I start my group. I am wondering if I am eligible for the SNSF Project Funding scheme (Oct. 1. 2026 deadline). I would be asking for salary for a postdoc for 3 years, funding for consumables, and travel costs. I'd appreciate some guidance on whether this would be feasible and also whether you can recommend any other sources of funding for this purpose.

R: "Even though you are holding a starting grant, you are allowed to submit in project funding if the project thematically differs from your starting grant. Please note that applicants must be employed at least 50% at an eligible research institution in Switzerland. Further, applicants must be in a position to be fully responsible for carrying out a research project and managing the staff involved in it - which should be fine in your case." SNSF July 2025.

Q : I'm writing to ask your advice, as I have recently been awarded the ERC Starting Grant. The two proposals share some similarities, but I believe that they would usefully complement each other rather than fully overlap. Ideally, I would like to continue in the application process for the SNF Starting Grant. If it is possible to bring both to UNIL, I would be very interested in pursuing that path.

I would therefore like to ask your advice when it comes to the rules and praxis of SNSF when it comes to receiving both an ERC and an SNSF grant. Would you be able to advise on that?

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This is my main concern. **Although there is no complete overlap, as the SNSF project represents a further evolution of the ERC project, some objectives do indeed converge.** My intention, of course, is to ensure that the two projects are complementary, with no overlap. Based on my previous experience **with SNSF fundings, they tend to be flexible and allow for adjustments to objectives and deliverables**, provided there is a relevant justification. **I would therefore need to revise the submitted proposal accordingly. However, it seems that such adjustments are not permitted within the framework of the Starting Grant.**

I'm also concerned that I will only be able to contact the SNSF very close to the interview, as there is an embargo on officially disclosing this information until September 3rd. I would therefore greatly appreciate your advice on this matter, especially because I do not want to take up faculty time for the mock interview, or that of the SNSF committee for the interview, if it is certain that I will have to decline the grant in the end.

R : Congratulations on your ERC Starting Grant award!

I would recommend informing the SNSF office as soon as the award is official, ideally before your SNSF interview. Feel free to copy me in if you like. The SNSF evaluation will normally proceed based on your submitted proposal, without considering the ERC grant, positively or negatively. So, you likely don't need to adjust your interview presentation, but you can reflect this new development with the SNSF when informing the office.

You might have already informed the SNSF about an ERC submission when submitting your application via MySNF, in line with what is stated in the call document : *"Please note: Any funds received or requested from the SNSF, or other funding institutions must be declared (refer to the mySNF section "Available or requested funds)".*P8/14.

Now, letting them know now about the update is recommended as the SNSF Starting Grants guidelines clearly states that : *"Applicants must provide information on available and requested funding for their research projects"* (cf. section 3.1), and *"SNSF Starting applicants and grantees must inform the SNSF about the acquisition of third-party funding"* (p. 5/14).

This is also in line with Article 23 of the SNSF Funding Regulations, which states that applicants must promptly report any new or significant facts relevant to the decision-making process, even if these arose after the submission of the application. [Règlement des subsides \(PDF\)](#) p. 9/17.

When it comes to receiving both an ERC and an SNSF grant, the SNSF 2025 call document states : *"Applicants for an SNSF Starting Grant may apply for the call identifier ERC-2025-StG (p.4/14)... If an applicant secures significant third-party funding, such as an ERC grant, they may request a reduction of their time commitment to the project but respecting that the time spent on the SNSF grant is at least 0.5 FTE . (p.6/14)"*

I know, you already mentioned that there won't be full overlap, but we would like to add complementary information from the SNSF Office : in the case of double funding, the SNSF would first need to compare the two funded projects to ensure there is "no" overlap. This means double funding is not possible if both projects (ERC and SNSF) address the same research questions or cover the same topic.

*"If both the ERC and the SNSF StG are awarded, we need to compare the research plans submitted to both funding schemes. If there is some overlap, it is most likely not possible to follow-up on both grants. We do not double fund research projects, and almost always the overlaps are quite high in such cases. Both grants will only be funded if the projects are distinctively different, e.g. completely different topics, research questions, methods, etc."*

The research plan **cannot be adapted** or changed after the submission deadline. The project can also **not be changed** after it has been approved by the evaluation panel / research council. If **a similar project** is already funded by another funding instrument or research funding agency, **we do not fund it again**:

Art. 1.3 in the call document: *"Support for research projects already funded by the SNSF or third parties is excluded",* and also *"SNSF Starting applicants and grantees must inform the SNSF about the acquisition of third-party funding"*

Thus, the candidate must inform us about the approval of the project by the ERC.

Q : I am starting an SNSF Starting Grant at the Department of Ecology and Evolution in November. My salary will also be paid through the SNSF Starting Grant (100%). I'm trying to identify funding sources that would allow me to hire a postdoc to work on a side project to which I will not be able to dedicate time once I start my group. I am wondering if I am eligible for the SNSF Project Funding scheme (Oct. 1. 2026 deadline). I would be asking for salary for a postdoc for 3 years, funding for consumables, and travel costs. I'd appreciate some guidance on whether this would be feasible and

also whether you can recommend any other sources of funding for this purpose.

R :

Holding an SNSF Starting Grant in parallel with another SNSF funding instrument with overlapping funding periods is not permitted. "*Exceptions are to one-off calls such as National Research Programmes (NRPs) and National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs)*" SNSF StG grants Call Document, page 1

For other SNSF Grants, "overlapping is only approved if:

- a. the research projects clearly **address separate topics or pursue different project goals** in the context of programmes; and
- b. the applicants are **in a position to make substantial contributions to each of the research projects**. The Research Council may exclude or restrict the awarding of grants with overlapping funding periods in the Implementation Regulations". **Funding Regulations SNSF / 8, Article 7.**

If the postdoc was not initially planned to join your Starting Grant team, he or she may need to apply for relevant [SNSF funding scheme](#) as an applicant, i.e principal investigator. 18.07.2025.

**Q:** I am a postdoc 3 years past my PhD defense in November 2025, and would like to apply for SNF funding in the upcoming academic year, considering Ambizione and SNF Starting Grant. Is it possible to apply to both Ambizione and SNF Starting Grant in parallel? Asking because Ambizione is due in November and Starting Grant only later in 2026. But in the unlikely event that I get an Ambizione, I would no longer be eligible for a Starting Grant when it ends.

**R:** Parallel submissions of both types of career grant with overlapping SNSF funding periods are not permitted. You will need to choose the funding instrument that best suits your career stage and short-term goals. I would advise you to start with Ambizione to strengthen your scientific independence.

In fact, SNSF stated the following :

*"Ambizione grantees may apply for an SNSF Starting Grant 12 months after starting their Ambizione grant at the earliest"*. **Page 5, Call\_Document\_SNSF\_StG\_2025.**

#### "2.4 Parallel submissions

*Note that an Ambizione application may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no other project grants (as applicant or co-applicant), Sinergia grants, SPIRIT grants or programmes of the SNSF have been requested, approved or are ongoing. For career funding schemes, parallel applications may only be submitted for Postdoc.Mobility return grant (see article 13 of the Ambizione Regulations)".* **Page 3, Ambizione\_guidelines.**

**Q:** As I have been appointed as Professor, do you recommend that I inform the FNS in advance, or that I inform them at the moment of the interview when I present the distribution of work.

**R:** You might have already informed the SNSF when submitting your application via MySNF, in line with what is stated in the call document : "*Please note: Any funds received or requested from the SNSF, or other funding institutions must be declared (refer to the mySNF section "Available or requested funds")*".P8/14. [of the call document \(PDF\)](#) .

If not yet, then letting them know now about the updated is recommended as the SNSF Starting Grants guidelines clearly states here : "*Applicants must provide information on available and requested funding for their research projects*" (cf. section 3.1), and "*SNSF Starting applicants and grantees must inform the SNSF about the acquisition of third-party funding*" (p. 5/14).

This is also in line with Article 23 of the SNSF Funding Regulations, which states that applicants must promptly report any new or significant facts relevant to the decision-making process, even if these arose after the submission of the application. [Règlement des subsides \(PDF\)](#) p. 9/17.

Therefore, it would be best to inform them as soon as your appointment is official and confirmed, before the interview, rather than waiting to mention it during the presentation. Transparency at this stage is always appreciated and expected. I believe it will also help you feel more confident going into the interview. You could still use the interview as an opportunity to discuss the implications of this change in more detail, if needed.

Q: [Quelle est la durée d'utilisation de crédits de démarrage SNSF Starting Grants octroyés jusqu'ici, en particulier le crédit 2024 ?](#)

R: Tous les crédits de démarrages financés par la Direction peuvent être utilisés seulement pendant 2 ans. (SF, 30 juin 2025)

Q: [Would it be possible for the SNSF Call to hire persons via the African partner universities?](#)

R: Oui, deux options sont possibles pour recruter des membres de l'étranger dans votre projet StG FNS. (1) le contrat peut se faire sur place à l'UNIL si la personne est domiciliée et possède un permis de travail en CH. Dans ce cas, il faut suivre les normes RH en cas de financement. (2) Financer le partenaire ou le thésard localement à l'étranger avec un contrat de travail. (Réponse téléphonique du FNS datant du 20 décembre 2024).

Q : [Pour remplir le Template de la lettre de soutien du FNS, quelle case faut-il cocher YES ou NO concernant le droit de diriger une thèse de Doctorat.](#)

R: YES. car l'UNIL délivre des diplômes de doctorat. Pas besoin de mentionner le nom du prof. co-directeur de thèse.

"If NO, this is not the objective of this career funding scheme; neither was it for the former schemes at the highest level of career funding (Eccellenza or SNSF Professorships). Indeed, Universities and ETHs are expected to offer at least a position and title of assistant professor and title for the duration of the grant. This includes the right to supervise PhD candidates that are employed under their grant." FNS, 24.01.2025.

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