

Multi-Year Program Aims For More Support For Young Scientists

In its new multi-year program, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) aims to make scientific careers in Switzerland more attractive to young scientists. It also wishes to strengthen the competitiveness of Swiss researchers and secure Switzerland's opportunities for formative action in cross-border research activities.

In its multi-year program for 2012 – 2016, the SNSF presents its aims and proposals for the next messages of the Federal Council on the promotion of education, research and innovation. The SNSF recognizes an urgent need to optimize the framework conditions for researchers in Switzerland and enhance their international competitiveness.

Commitment to young scientists and women The SNSF is convinced that Switzerland must improve the attractiveness of scientific careers in order to stay in the running for the best minds. Its multi-year program therefore envisages measures to improve the working conditions for researchers. In its support of young scientists, it intends to achieve a better balance between researchers' careers and their family lives in order to increase the number of women researchers, which continues to be too low.

From basic research to practical application Publicly funded basic research promoted by the SNSF is a fertile environment for applied research and, in turn, for innovation and economic might. The SNSF will continue to focus on basic research and not fund research for direct commercial purposes. From 2012 onwards, it also intends to increase funding of use-inspired basic research and intensify co-operation with the Innovation Promotion Agency (CTI). **Project funding focus** The current high dynamics displayed by the Swiss research community are encouraging and reflected in an ever-growing demand for SNSF funding. As these funds do not increase by the same measure, success rates decrease as a result. Application submissions for March 2010 are again approaching a record high. The SNSF therefore intends to focus on project funding in the future as well.

The SNSF will also be putting greater emphasis on the area of bio-medical research. At the international level, it would, for instance, like to establish cross-border projects and participate to a greater extent in international initiatives.

A political priority Implementation of the multi-year program depends on the government's approval of an annual budget increase for the SNSF from 2012-2016 on the same level as that of 2008-2011 (seven percent). What is important is that financial development at SNSF must be in the proper relation to that of the ETH sector and basic contributions to the universities. The SNSF hopes that the federal authorities will remain true to their chosen course and allow Swiss research to

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