



3RCC Funding Regulations – 3Rs Project Grants

Approved by the Strategic Board 05.12.2024

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1 Overview

1.1 Introduction

- a. 3Rs Project Grants are ambitious and innovative 3Rs research projects based of high scientific quality and 3Rs impact. Projects are multi year and are selected through the process of a call for proposals under specific remits.

1.2 Definitions

Funding Call	An official announcement to submit proposals for financial support. Calls will be of a specific nature depending on the strategic aim of the funding provided.
Grant Review Panel	A panel comprised of internationally recognized 3R experts who advise the 3RCC on research funding. They have an advisory function and no voting rights. The GRP is composed members of the 3RCC Scientific Advisory Board but may also include additional panel members selected for each specific round.
Node Coordinator	Members of the 3RCC Executive Board who are animal welfare officers and/or 3Rs experts at member universities (Nodes) and member organisations. They are in direct contact with students and researchers at the universities and are responsible for implementing the Centre's strategy at the node level.
Host Institution	A recognised nonprofit research institution based in Switzerland. Recognized research institutions are the public Swiss universities, Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, Swiss universities of applied sciences and university (associated) hospitals and non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector.

1.3 Aim

- a. The 3RCC funds Research Grants for innovative 3Rs research projects of high scientific quality and 3Rs impact in Switzerland. Projects should:
 - i. Address existing gaps in 3Rs knowledge or methodology
 - ii. Promote the development, optimisation and/or implementation of methods for the purpose of advancing the 3Rs and
 - iii. Aim to have a significant impact on the development of 3Rs research

1.4 Duration

- a. The maximum duration of funding is 48 months.

1.5 Maximum funding

- a. The maximum funding for a Research Grant is prescribed in the specific funding round.

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1.6 Research proposals involving animals

- a. For research proposals that cannot achieve their research aims without the use of experimental animals, the applicant should:
 - i. Follow the Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Experiments on Animals from the SAS (Swiss Academy of Sciences) and the SAMS (Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences).
 - ii. Use best practice guidelines, such as pre-registration, [PREPARE](#), or Animal Research: Reporting of *In Vivo* Experiments (ARRIVE).
- b. The formal ethical approval of animal experimentation licenses does not lie with the 3RCC's Grant Review Panel, but with the competent bodies of authority (e.g. the cantonal veterinary office).

1.7 Frequency

- a. Call frequency is determined within the four-year strategic plan and can be adjusted depending on funds available.

1.8 Project results

- a. The rights to research results gained during research work funded by the 3RCC are owned by the grantee and/or the Host Institution in accordance with the policy of the Host Institute.
- b. The project results must not create any direct financial benefits during the project for any involved parties.

2 Eligibility

2.1 Requirements for the research proposal

- a. Requirements for grant applications are defined in the remits of the individual Funding Calls.

2.2 Lead Applicant – 3Rs Project Grants

- a. Applicants must be natural persons eligible to autonomously conduct a scientific research activity at a Host Institution.

2.3 Eligible Costs – 3Rs Project Grants

- a. The following costs are considered eligible:
 - i. Salaries of employees engaged for the project within the scope of the salary ranges of the Host Institution.
 - ii. Costs of project-related services by third parties in the domain of research.
 - iii. Costs of the use of project-related equipment.
 - iv. Asset/equipment purchases under CHF 20'000.- per item, unless specifically given exemption with extraordinary justification during the application process.
 - v. Consumables directly used in the scope of the project.
 - vi. Animal costs.
 - vii. Expenses related to travel, meetings and communication of the results.

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- viii. Publications in compliance with an open-access policy.
- b. Goods or services should be obtained from Swiss-providers whenever possible

2.4 Ineligible costs – 3Rs Project Grants

- a. The following costs are ineligible and expected to be contributed by the Host Institute:
 - i. Infrastructure.
 - ii. Overhead costs related to the project.
 - iii. Administration of Funds.

2.5 Joint Applicants – 3Rs Project Grants

- a. Only one Lead Applicant is permitted.
- b. If funded, the resulting project may have co-Principal Investigators.
- c. Co- applicants are encouraged and must be listed.

2.6 Collaboration with commercial research organisations

- a. Research conducted for directly commercial purposes will not be funded.
- b. For-profit/private/industrial partners are allowed as collaborators on the Project along with an eligible applicant and Host Institution as described in these Regulations.
- c. Applicants who wish to conduct the planned research in collaboration with a commercially oriented institution must be able to prove to the 3RCC that the principles of research freedom, research independence and freedom to publish will be upheld.
- d. Sponsors and owners of commercial research organisations outside the higher education sector may not derive any direct financial benefit from their involvement in the funded research work.
- e. The collaborations with commercially oriented institutions must be at the same level as, or higher than, research conducted in facilities at the Host Institution.

2.7 Overlapping Grant funding periods

- a. If the lead applicant is a Principal Investigator on a Project or Doctorate Grant from the 3RCC, the application will only be considered if there is no overlapping funding period between the funded grant and proposed project.

3 Application

3.1 Language

- a. The language for all correspondence with the 3RCC is English.

3.2 Process – 3Rs Project Grants

- a. A grant application to the 3RCC is a two-step process:

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- i. Applicants will initially complete an outline application providing an overview of the research proposal
 - ii. If successful, applicants will be invited to submit a full application
- b. The 3Rs Node Coordinator – 3RCC’s representative at the Higher Education Institution – can support applicants in this process.

3.3 Document submission

- a. All application documents are submitted via the 3RCC funding portal.

3.4 Conflict of Interest

- a. 3RCC expects all applicants to comply with good practice aimed at preventing conflicts of interests in scientific research, for example where the people involved (researchers, collaborators, or stakeholders) have relationships or interests that could affect the integrity of the research or could stand to financially profit from the research.

3.5 Contributions by the Host Institute

- a. A “Letter of Support” from the Host Institution is required when submitting the Full Application to ensure that the project would have institutional support and be provided for in accordance with clause 2.4 of these regulations.

3.6 Resubmission

- a. Resubmissions of applications are permitted provided that significant modifications have been made compared to the previous application which reflect the changing external conditions and/or improvements to the application in line with provided feedback from the original reviews. The applicant must acknowledge that the application is a resubmission and describe the changes made from the previous submission in an attached cover letter at the Outline Application stage.

4 Assessment

4.1 Criteria for award and evaluation

- a. The quality of the grant application is evaluated according to the following criteria
 - i. **Scientific Quality**
 - Innovation and new perspectives for the 3Rs in the proposed approach.
 - Whether it adds significant value to current scientific understanding.
 - Interdisciplinary Relevance, applicability and value.
 - ii. **Impact on the 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine)**
 - Clear integration of, and motivation to further the 3Rs Principle.

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- Demonstration of measurable replacement or reduction of animal use, and/or animal welfare improvements.
- Potential for adoption and broader application by other labs or research groups.

iii. Feasibility

- Flexibility and risk management of the project to ensure a successful completion of key milestones.
- Collaborations and partnerships necessary to project success.

iv. Other criteria

- Clear plan for communicating the research outcomes to non-specialist audiences and stakeholders.
- Commitment to sharing data and results transparently with Open Access

b. Additional criteria may apply as specified in Funding Calls .

4.2 Review process – outline applications

- a. Outline applications are assessed for validity by the 3RCC.
- b. The application is assessed by at least two members of the Grant Review Panel based on the specific remits of the Funding Call.
- c. The entire Grant Review Panel convenes and rank all outline applications based on the criteria.
- d. Selected applicants are invited to complete a full application. The number of outline applications that are invited to the next stage is dependent on the quality of the applications, as well as the probability of success.

4.3 Review process – full funding applications

- a. Full funding applications are checked for validity and completeness by the 3RCC.
- b. The proposal is independently reviewed by at least two external, international experts.
- c. The research proposal is individually assessed by three members of the Grant Review Panel, taking into consideration the external reviews.
- d. The individual assessment of the Grant Review Panel forms the preliminary ranking of the proposals.
- e. The final ranking of all research proposals is set in the Grant Review Panel meeting. The highest-ranking research proposals that can be accommodated within the budget for

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the Funding Call are recommended for funding to the Strategic Board of the 3RCC. Any special conditions of funding are described in the recommendations.

- f. The 3RCC's Strategic Board approves which proposals will be funded.

4.4 Availability of reviews

For both the Outline and Full Application processes, all applicants are provided with the written reviews from both external experts and members of the Grant Panel. The Review Summary document is complete except for the name of the reviewer; the overall score from 1-5; and confidential information.

4.5 Right of appeal

- a. Applicants have no right to any formal appeal process regarding the decision of the Strategic Board. Feedback received will be taken into consideration for further calls.

5 Process for funding

5.1 Start of the project, extensions, forfeiture

- a. Funds will only be released once:
 - i. The Funding Agreement is fully signed.
 - ii. The Data management plan has been submitted.
 - iii. Any other conditions for release of funds are met.
- b. Grantees are required to provide an invoice for the first tranche of funding and start their project within one year of receiving email notification of a successful grant application. If this condition is not fulfilled, the grant expires and the grantee is notified by email.
- c. Upon request, the 3RCC may approve a postponement of an additional year if a substantial justification is provided.

5.2 Revocation of funding

- a. The requirements for the grant will be checked immediately prior to commencement of the project. If, at this time, the requirements for the grant are no longer met, or the circumstances upon which the approval was based have changed significantly, the 3RCC may amend or revoke the approved grant including demanding partial or full repayment of any funds already paid.