

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences require solid funding of their core mandate

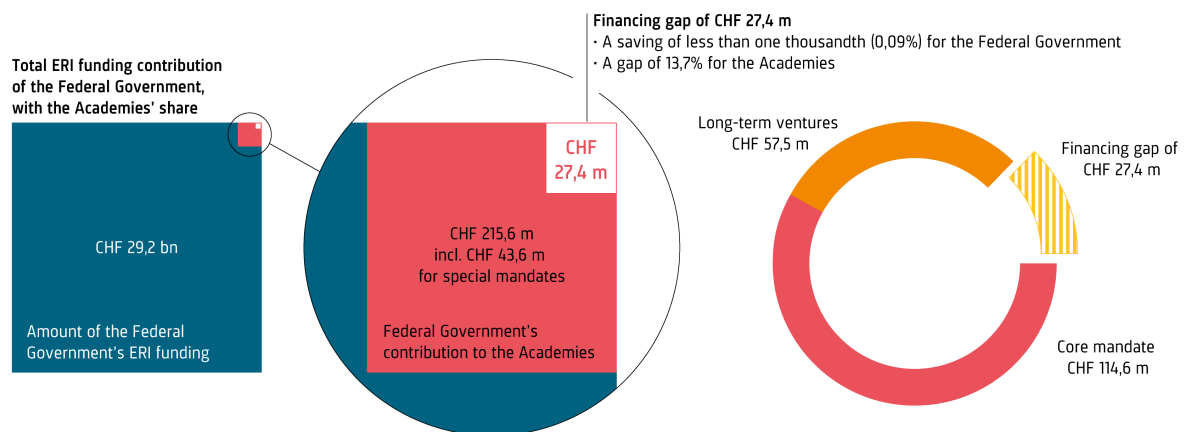
Funding decreases by 4% already in 2024

The Academies are already facing budget cuts of 2% in 2024. Taking inflation into account, funding will decrease by 4%. For several years now, the Academies had to cope with funding that is below the average in the ERI environment, thus making volunteer work in the field of science increasingly difficult.

Funding risks to further erode in the ERI period 2025-2028

As the largest scientific network in Switzerland, the Academies receive only 0,63% of federal funding for education, research and innovation, with a high leverage effect at a low cost. The Academies face an average annual funding gap of CHF 6,8 million, i.e. a total of CHF 27,4 million over four years. Starting with the next funding period, the Academies are expected to **fund additional projects through their core mandate** – although the budget was already cut for 2024. More tasks and projects, but less funding – that does not work. The core funding gap will lead to a noticeable and lasting impairment of the Academies' work and their network of more than 100,000 scientists who work on a voluntary basis. The reported budget increase of 5% concerns only special mandates (Swiss Quantum Initiative, Data Coordination Centre for Personalized Medicine) that are outside of the core tasks.

What is the benefit of the savings for the Federal Government?



The Academies are aware of the Federal Government's difficult financial situation. Yet, with the cuts, which for the Academies amount to almost one tenth of their core funding, the Federal Government is saving only about one thousandth of the ERI funding amount.

28 organisations and institutions within and outside of the science community support the call for a solid core funding of the Academies.



The Academies' **multiannual planning** sets out the priorities and funding requirements transparently.

What do the Academies achieve with their core tasks that are based on their legal mandate (Art. 11 of the Research and Innovation Promotion Act)?

On key topics such as the environment, digitalisation, health, nutrition, etc., they:

- provide a dialogue between science and society, thereby strengthening democracy;
- provide policy dialogue: scientifically based options for action as a basis for policymaking, even in times of crises;
- network on overarching topics such as climate, genetic engineering, biodiversity, ageing society, science communication to gain an overview;
- provide foresight and technology impact assessment, risk analysis, identification and promotion of future technologies (Swiss Quantum Initiative) to safeguard Switzerland as a business location;
- support international co-operation for a well-networked science location;
- promote innovative technologies to maintain competitiveness;
- address medical-ethical issues and draft guidelines in medicine and science (Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity);
- offer the platform for committees, projects and initiatives (Central Ethics Committee, SwissCollNet, Année Politique Suisse, etc.).

Examples

- Global warming illustrates the importance of **measurements, analyses** and **solutions** are, for example in the area of climate and energy: the Swiss Glacier Monitoring Network, the Biodiversity Forum and ProClim collate data and facts that contribute to the protection of our living and cultural environment.
 - Risk: less co-operation may lead to poorer results. Projects to promote sustainability (“Ateliers du futur”) are at risk.
- We provide **guidance** in the area of **digitalisation** and **technology**: in the case of foresight in areas such as cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, advanced manufacturing or blockchain, as well as in the provision of digital infrastructure for research and information (digitalisation of reference works, scientific collections, clinical data, etc.).
 - Risk: digitalization may falter and new technologies are applied in Switzerland with a delay.
- Broad-based, independent **syntheses, recommendations** and **medical-ethics guidelines** support sustainable development of the healthcare system, including with regard to an ageing society.
 - Risk: less options for action for medical staff (e.g. for end-of-life decisions), and coordination of clinical research becomes more difficult.
- Reduce the **shortage of specialists** in the STEM sectors by **lowering inhibition levels**.
 - Risk: it may be necessary to dispense with a scientific unit for improved coordination.
- **Bridge** between **science** and **society**: we encourage young talent, for example through 29 regional programmes that bring science to the doorstep (e.g. observatories, citizen science, science cafés), create networks such as “Ageing Society” or document and explain the dialectal and historical vocabularies of our national languages in four national dictionaries.
 - Risk: jeopardising funding programmes for young people, less networking in the area of ageing and health, culturally formative knowledge is not documented.
- We advocate for **open research data** and thus for a society-oriented scientific culture.
 - Risk: work in progress would have to be stopped, threatening Switzerland’s reputation in this area.