



M-ERA.NET Call 2026

M-ERA.NET has been operating since 2012 as a long-term European network supporting coordinated funding in materials research and innovation. Over the years, the network has launched numerous large transnational calls, enabling hundreds of collaborative R&D projects across Europe and associated countries. The initiative is currently in its fourth phase, M-ERA.NET 4, which continues to align national and regional funding programmes and strengthen the European Research Area in advanced materials. Switzerland has participated in several calls through different national funding bodies, including the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE).

General call conditions and call procedure:

The general conditions and procedural steps of the M-ERA.NET Call are defined and published on the official M-ERA.NET website (<https://www.m-era.net/>). They describe the overall call structure, the submission process, the evaluation criteria, and the transnational consortium requirements applicable to all participating countries. Applicants must follow these overarching rules when preparing and submitting their pre-proposals and full proposals via the M-ERA.NET submission platform.

Scope of this document for Swiss applicants:

This document specifies the fundable topics, national eligibility rules, and participation requirements from the Swiss perspective, as applicable to applicants seeking support from the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE). All Swiss applicants must comply both with the general M-ERA.NET call conditions and with the national regulations outlined in this document.

Swiss Funding Scope for Topic 1 and Topic 2:

Switzerland will only fund project proposals under Topic 1 ("Materials for energy storage and distribution systems") and Topic 2 ("Materials for energy conversion") if they strictly fall within the defined Swiss priority areas. This national restriction overrides the broader thematic scope described in the M-ERA.NET Call text.

Swiss Priority Areas (mandatory):

Projects must unambiguously address one of the following technological fields:

1. **Advanced battery technologies** (materials, components, electrolytes, interfaces, degradation mechanisms, manufacturing aspects)
2. **Photovoltaics** (active materials, interfaces, coatings, stability, degradation, manufacturing-relevant material innovations)
3. **Electrolysers** (materials for membranes, catalysts, electrodes, durability, efficiency, system-relevant material challenges)
4. **Power Electronics and Electrical Energy Systems** (materials for converters, inverters, power modules, electric drives, and grid-relevant components)

Projects outside these three areas are not eligible for Swiss funding, even if they fall within the broader M-ERA.NET Topic descriptions.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL) Requirements:

Swiss applicants must meet the following TRL criteria:

- Minimum TRL at project start: **TRL ≥ 3**
- Projects should demonstrate a credible pathway to higher TRLs, in line with the call requirement.

Industrial relevance and implementation potential:

While industrial participation is not strictly mandatory, all proposals submitted for Swiss funding must demonstrate clear implementation potential within Switzerland. Projects must either

- involve Swiss industrial partners, **or**
- address a technological field in which there is established or emerging industrial interest in Switzerland, ensuring relevance for future deployment or value creation.

Given that the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) supports application-oriented research, proposals must outline how the project results could be transferred into practice, contribute to industrial development, or support the Swiss energy system in the medium term.

Available Swiss Funding and Funding Rates:

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) will participate in the 2025 M-ERA.NET Call with a total **budget of EUR 2 million**. Swiss applicants may receive funding according to the following **national funding rates**:

- **Public research institutions:** up to 80% of eligible project costs
- **Industrial partners (companies):** up to 50% of eligible project costs

No overhead costs are funded. Only direct, project-related costs are eligible for reimbursement under SFOE rules. SFOE funding primarily covers **personnel costs**. **Infrastructure and equipment are not funded**, and **material costs are only eligible with clear justification** demonstrating their necessity for the project.

The call is expected to launch in **March 2026**. Successfully evaluated projects may be **contractually formalised at the beginning of 2027 and work (kick-off) can start immediately afterwards**; however, **no payments can be made in 2027**. Funding for Swiss partners will become available starting in 2028.

All projects receiving Swiss funding must be **completed by 31 December 2030**, as no payments can be made beyond this date. Project planning must therefore ensure that all activities, deliverables, and financial reporting are finalised before the end of 2030.

Funding is granted in accordance with Swiss national rules and subject to budget availability. The SFOE supports application-oriented research, and proposals must therefore demonstrate clear relevance for the Swiss energy system and credible potential for future implementation or industrial uptake.

National Submission Requirements (Switzerland)

Although the full proposal must be submitted by the consortium via the M-ERA.NET submission platform, Swiss applicants are required to contact the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) **prior to the submission of the transnational pre-proposal**.

Swiss partners must provide the SFOE with a **short project outline (one page)** no later than **two weeks before** the official pre-proposal deadline. This outline must clearly indicate which Swiss priority area the project falls under and should briefly describe:

- the planned project objectives and activities
- the role and contribution of the Swiss partner(s)
- the expected relevance for the Swiss energy system
- the anticipated TRL at project start and end
- the expected implementation potential in Switzerland
- the involvement or interest of industrial stakeholders, where applicable
- the planned consortium structure.

This early contact ensures that the proposed activities fall within the Swiss funding scope and comply with national eligibility rules.

Timeline from a Swiss perspective

See also details on M-ERA.NET Website:

Date	Action
2026-03-04	Launch of the M-ERA.NET Call 2026
2026-04-28	Deadline for contact with SFOE/ submission of short project outline (see above)
2026-05-12	Deadline for submission of pre-proposals
2026-06 to 2026-10	National eligibility check / Individual assessment by international evaluators / Coordination Meeting / Feedback
2026-11-18	Deadline for submission of full-proposals
	National eligibility check / Individual assessment by international evaluators / Selection Meeting
2027-02	Feedback to applicants early February
	Submission of national full proposal / National Evaluation / Contract negotiations
>2027-02	Project start
2028-01-01	First payments
2030-12-31	Latest possible project end date

Eligibility

Swiss participation is open to universities, universities of applied sciences, public research organisations (including the ETH Domain: ETH Zürich, EPFL, PSI, Empa, WSL, Eawag), and private-sector companies. M-ERA.NET applies two eligibility checks:

- **Institutional eligibility:** the participating Swiss organisation must be eligible for SFOE funding.
- **Topic eligibility:** the proposed project must fall within one of the Swiss priority areas defined for this call.

All Swiss applicants must comply with the national funding rules described in the section *Available Swiss Funding and Funding Rates*.

Application Procedure:

All proposals must be submitted via the **M-ERA.NET submission platform**. The platform provides full guidance on:

- consortium requirements (minimum number of partners and countries)
- submission steps for pre-proposals and full proposals
- evaluation criteria and assessment procedure
- communication flow (all official communication is directed to the project coordinator via the M-ERA.NET Office)

Swiss applicants must additionally follow the national submission requirements described in this document, including the mandatory early contact with SFOE and the submission of a short project outline.

National Contact:

For questions regarding M-ERA.NET in general, Swiss national rules, funding conditions or eligibility, please contact:

Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE)

Dr Stefan Oberholzer

stefan.oberholzer@bfe.admin.ch

Phone +41 58 465 89 20