

Open Call

## **nexBio Amazônia**

### **Swiss-Brazilian Sustainable Innovation Program for the Bioeconomy**

Swissnex in Brazil, together with the Leading House for the Latin American Region at the Institute of Management in Latin America (University of St.Gallen), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), and the Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies (Confap) is pleased to announce the second edition of the Swiss-Brazilian Sustainable Innovation Program for the Bioeconomy, nexBio Amazônia.

### **Purpose of the Call**

The nexBio Amazônia bilateral program aims to initiate sustainable innovation projects in the Amazon region. It shall act as a platform and catalyst for new international partnerships between Switzerland and Brazil to develop and implement projects and solutions contributing to a sustainable, inclusive, and efficient bioeconomy. In response to the immediate threats of climate change and the loss of biodiversity, the main goal of this call is to jointly develop and implement innovative solutions with a positive impact on the socio-bioeconomy in the Amazon region.

The focus of the nexBio Amazônia program is to solve specific problems endemic to the region which were carefully defined through the consultation of local stakeholders and existing research. The program aims to provide the participants with connections, knowledge, and the required skills to navigate the ecosystem of the Amazon region.

The nexBio Amazônia program is a crucial first step to kickstart inclusive, lasting, and sustainable pilot projects with a real on-the-ground impact and thereby prepares participants to initiate local partnerships and/or research collaboration.

The program is open to the participation of researchers and startups from Switzerland and Brazil, inviting them to contribute with their expertise to developing impactful solutions in the region.

## Services & Support

The nexBio Amazônia program is designed to substantially accelerate the implementation process of sustainable technologies and organizational/social processes, while also driving socio-bioeconomy research in the region.

To achieve this, the program offers:

- Introduction to the Amazon Region's Innovation, Academia, and Research Environment: A tailored program designed to connect participants with the innovation and research communities in the Amazon region, providing valuable insights into local challenges, opportunities, and ongoing research efforts. This initiative fosters collaborations with local players from innovation and research, enabling participants to align their innovation and research topic with region-specific needs.
- Immersion in the local innovation and research ecosystem and culture through workshops, mentoring, networking events, and field trips to local production sites in the Amazon rainforest.
- Encounters with potential partners and local stakeholders from industry, academia, government, and civil society.
- Connection with complementing local and international startup programs, accelerators, and funding mechanisms to guarantee the continuation of the project implementation.
- Training and support for the development and testing of a region-specific, sustainable business model.
- Support for the preparation of a thorough market validation in the Amazon region
- Valuable exchanges with international peers within the nexBio cohort
- Logistic and administrative support for the travel arrangements.

**The costs for travel and accommodation, as well as for on-site trips, transportation, events, and meals will be fully covered by the program funding agencies. The nexBio Amazônia program will take place in the Brazilian states of Pará and Amazonas during a period of two weeks in July/August 2025.**

## Focus Areas : startups

The startups must contribute to the development of ready to market solutions for products, technology based services, or methods, which have a significant market potential to bring sustainable change to existing production chains in the Amazon, especially in these areas:

- Supply Chain Optimization & Automation
- Quality Assurance Technologies & Traceability
- Information and Communication Technologies & Management
- Community Empowerment & Social Innovation

Positive impact in these areas is the main criteria and the type of technology is only secondary. Technologies can be based on (non-excluding): Automation, AI, Blockchain, Big Data, Food Technologies, Biotechnologies, Sensors & Hardware, IoT, Software (SaaS), Energy Solutions, New Materials, etc.

The nexBio Amazônia program remains open for various types of applications and places importance on the transferability of technologies across production chains. However, after careful consultation with local experts, bioeconomy specialists and local communities, the program will initially prioritize and direct innovative technologies towards industries that have a particularly high potential and urgent need for innovative solutions.

## Focus Areas : research

The nexBio Amazônia program invites researchers from Brazilian and Swiss institutions to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to address the key challenges faced by the Amazon region. The program encourages research into technologies, methods, or products that can bring about meaningful and lasting change for local industries and ecosystems, while recognizing traditional knowledge and local production systems.

The researcher must be aligned with the areas of sociobioeconomics and contribute to the sustainable development of the local ecosystem. Potential areas are:

- Biodiversity
- Food Systems
- Climate Change
- Social Sciences and Economy

The nexBio Amazônia program supports scientific research across a variety of key areas, with a focus on developing sustainable solutions for the Amazon region. These research areas are designed to foster interdisciplinary approaches that combine scientific innovation with local knowledge, addressing complex challenges faced by the Amazon region, while promoting sustainable development and environmental preservation. The specific research areas will be identified after careful consultation with the local academic environment and its priorities.

## Startup eligibility

All applications must meet the following eligibility criteria to be qualified for evaluation:

- The startup must demonstrate a strong case on how their solution will contribute to the sustainable development of the local socio-bioeconomy
- The project must be aligned with and strive for the SDGs
- The company must be registered in Switzerland or Brazil
- The startup has a ready-to-market solution that, with the right partners, can be implemented in the short-term (minimum TRL 5, Ideal TRL 7 or higher)
- The solution should be a science-based innovation and add value to the bilateral cooperation in both countries

Only fully-filled proposals meeting all eligibility criteria will be considered for further evaluation.

Brazilian startups:

Please note that only researchers from states where the State Funding Agency – FAP - is a participant in the agreement to fund this program will be accepted. These are:

- State Funding Agency of Paraná – Fundação Araucária;
- State Funding Agency of Alagoas – FAPEAL;
- State Funding Agency of Amazonas – FAPEAM;
- State Funding Agency of Amapá - FAPEAP;
- State Funding Agency of São Paulo – FAPESP;
- State Funding Agency of Pará – FAPESPA; and,
- State Funding Agency of Paraíba – FAPESQ.

Each FAP has its own guidelines associated with this call. Interested parties are advised to consult their supporting FAP before preparing a proposal.

The FAPs are welcome to participate of this call for proposal until January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Researcher eligibility

All applications must meet the following eligibility criteria to be qualified for evaluation:

- Researchers entitled to apply must be affiliated with a Brazilian or a Swiss research institution in any scientific discipline or field of study.
- The researcher must demonstrate a clear and strong research interest that contributes to the sustainable development of the local economy and ecosystem
- The research axes must be aligned with and strive for the SDGs
- The research topic should be science-driven and offer innovative contributions that add value to the bilateral cooperation in both countries

Only fully-filled proposals meeting all eligibility criteria will be considered for evaluation.

### Brazilian Researchers

Please note that only researchers from states where the State Funding Agency – FAP - is a participant in the agreement to fund this program will be accepted. These are:

- State Funding Agency of Paraná – Fundação Araucária;
- State Funding Agency of Alagoas – FAPEAL;
- State Funding Agency of Amazonas – FAPEAM;
- State Funding Agency of Amapá – FAPEAP;
- State Funding Agency of São Paulo – FAPESP;
- State Funding Agency of Pará – FAPESPA; and,
- State Funding Agency of Paraíba – FAPESQ.

Each FAP has its own guidelines associated with this call. Interested parties are advised to consult their supporting FAP before preparing a proposal.

The FAPs are welcome to participate of this call for proposal until January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Application

Applications shall be submitted in electronic format only through the online application form by midnight on **Friday, February 14, 2025**. Please submit the complete application on the Swissnex website according to the instructions. [Here you can find the link](#). The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the formal requirements are fulfilled, and that the content is accurate and complete. Otherwise, the application cannot be considered. All information provided in the administrative part and all uploaded documents must be written in English.

For Swiss participants: the responsibility for securing the necessary visa to enter Brazil rests solely with the applicant. It is the applicant's duty to ensure they meet all the requirements and complete the application process in accordance with Brazilian immigration regulations.

## Evaluation and Selection

The eligible applications will be evaluated by Swissnex in Brazil and the nexBio Amazônia program partners: the Leading House for the Latin American Region at the Institute of Management in Latin America (University of St.Gallen), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), and the Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies (Confap) who will select together up to 10 startups from Switzerland and up to 10 startups from Brazil, as well as up to 10 researchers. The principal guiding criteria is the alignment of the application with the purpose of the call. To ensure the match of the technological solutions with the local challenges and context of the Amazon region, the evaluation process will be conducted with the consultation of local experts from academia, industry, government, and civil society. Pre-selected applicants will be invited for an online interview where they will pitch their startup (3 minutes) or research interests (3 minutes), followed by a Q&A (3 minutes). If accepted, the participants will be asked to sign a commitment form and will be required to write a 5-page final report after the program is finished.

For the all Brazilians candidates, either startups and researchers, the participating FAPs are responsible to carry on a eligibility check before the online interview, Therefore, the candidates considered eligible by the FAPs are invited to the online interview.

## Timeline

Tue, Jan 14, 2025	<b>Launch of Joint Call for Brazilian (Startups) and Swiss applications (Researchers + Startups)</b>
Tue, January 28, 2025	Info Webinar Brazil
Wed, January 29, 2025	Info Event Zurich
Fri, Feb 14, 2025	<b>Application Deadline</b>
Thu, March 14, 2025	Announcement of pre-selection & invitation for interviews
Tue, March 24, 2025 - Thu, March 26, 2025	<b>Interviews with pre-selected candidates: Startup Pitch (3min) + Q&amp;A (3min)</b>
Mo, March 31, 2025	Announcement of selected candidates
TBD	Online Kick-Off Meeting
June - July 2025	Online Preparation Phase
Mo, Jul, 21- Fri, Aug 01, 2025	<b>nexBio Amazônia program in the Amazon rainforest</b>
TBD	Follow-up meeting and deadline for the 5-page final report

## Contact Information

For researchers, please send an email with copy to:

Pedro Capra

Program Manager | Academic Relations

[pedro.capra@swissnex.org](mailto:pedro.capra@swissnex.org)

Leticia Vargas Bento

Head of Research and Academic Partnerships

[leticia.vargasbento@unisg.ch](mailto:leticia.vargasbento@unisg.ch)

Flávia Cerqueira

Advisor for International Cooperation of CONFAP

[nexbioconfap@gmail.com](mailto:nexbioconfap@gmail.com)

For Start-Ups, please send an email with copy to:

Vincent Neumann

Program Manager | Innovation & Startups

[vincent.neumann@swissnex.org](mailto:vincent.neumann@swissnex.org)

Rocío Robinson-Wiedemann

Head of Innovation & AIT Startups

[rocio.robinson@unisg.ch](mailto:rocio.robinson@unisg.ch)

Flávia Cerqueira

Advisor for International Cooperation of CONFAP

[nexbioconfap@gmail.com](mailto:nexbioconfap@gmail.com)