

## Call for Two New Projects

# Using the Migration-Mobility Nexus to Make Sense of Contemporary Challenges

### Topics to be Addressed

While research has traditionally studied migration and mobility as separate subjects, the nccr – on the move postulates that we cannot fully understand one without considering the other. In the first two Phases I (2014-2018) and II (2018-2022), the researchers in the nccr – on the move have focused on empirically studying and finding a shared understanding of the so-called **Migration-Mobility Nexus**.

Recent developments surrounding the worldwide spread of COVID-19 have made the NCCR members aware that they need to broaden the research agenda to reflect more systematically on how to incorporate the temporal dimension, in particular, the occurrence of critical events and megatrends, into the conceptualization of the Migration-Mobility Nexus. Since the new projects will run for a limited duration of two years, the NCCR is seeking to recruit two new projects addressing either one of the following issues:

- The Impact of Pandemics on Migration and Mobility: Viral diseases travel with people, which is why governments' measures to contain the pandemic significantly restrict mobility within and across countries. The issuing of travel bans, curfews and other "curtailment" measures, which we are witnessing around the world in early 2020, has profound implications on how, when and where human beings move. In this context, Piccoli and Moret

(2020) have spoken of a "**Mobility Crisis**". The effects are, however, not limited to mobility. The COVID-19 crisis also has significant and potentially enduring consequences on citizenship, the opening/closure of borders, questions of belonging, and, more broadly, on human rights and transnational coordination.

- Digitization and the Migration-Mobility Nexus: When critical events unfold, ongoing megatrends, such as digitization, may experience a surge because they offer "solutions" to a world where the existing order is called into question. Digitization is purported as a solution to upholding and facilitating "mobility" and transnational contacts across "physically closed" borders. This enabling perspective on the influence of digitization on migration and mobility contrasts with the body of research, which finds that the introduction of new technologies, such as databases, biometrics and information exchange between state authorities, has facilitated migration control. Such infrastructure can be used to limit immigrant's access to state services and benefits but also to track people's movement in the context of a pandemic. The paradoxical impact of digitization on migration and mobility has so far not received sufficient attention on the nccr – on the move's research agenda, as most projects have associated migration and mobility with some form of physical movement from one place to another.

Project proposals addressing either of these challenges should adopt a comparative (in time or space) or transnational approach, or both. Depending on the quality of the submissions, the NCCR may decide to fund two proposals on the same topic, or one on each. The proposals must clearly demonstrate originality and value added to the research compared to the corpus of established literature. They should also explain in what ways the team has the necessary skills and experience to answer the research questions. They should also sketch how their research adds value to the conceptualization of the Migration-Mobility Nexus. In case the proposals are limited to investigating migration/mobility patterns and policies in Switzerland, they should include a reflection on how the particular setting and position of Switzerland inform international research.

You can find information on the NCCR, the Migration-Mobility Nexus, the focus of the research and the individual projects on our website [nccr-onthemove.ch](http://nccr-onthemove.ch).

The new research project(s) will be affiliated with one of the three thematic modules or the hub. The hub is made up of two research projects that provide a socio-historical and demographic perspective on migration and mobility (Hub). The other twelve projects are structured around three thematic research modules: (I) Migration and Social Inequalities, (II) Citizenship and Social Cohesion, and (III) Transnational Mobility and Complex Diversities.

## Project Funding Envelope

The nccr – on the move is the National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) for migration and mobility studies. It aims to enhance the understanding of contemporary phenomena related to migration and mobility in Switzerland and beyond. Connecting disciplines, the NCCR brings together research from the social sciences, economics and law. Managed from the University of Neuchâtel, the network comprises fourteen research projects at ten universities in Switzerland: The Universities of Basel, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Zurich, ETH Zurich, the Graduate Institute Geneva, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland, and the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Northwestern Switzerland.

The nccr – on the move is recruiting two new research projects for research teams based at Swiss Universities or Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences working on contemporary challenges to migration and mobility issues. The project grants run for **two years** and will cover a funding envelope by the NCCR amounting to **200'000 Swiss Francs** per project.

The project will run from 1 June 2020 to 31 May 2022 (end of Phase II of the nccr – on the move). The project funding can be used to cover the salaries of PostDocs, research associates, and research assistants, and to conduct empirical research in Switzerland and abroad (surveys or fieldwork). The funding cannot be used to pay doctoral students, as the duration of the funding is limited to two years, which is not sufficient for completing a doctorate.

## Conditions and Eligibility

### Applicants

The nccr – on the move accepts project proposals by Professors or experienced academics (for example Maître d'Enseignement et de Recherche) who have a **funded position** at their home university for the duration of the project, that is until 31 May 2022. Please note that the nccr – on the move cannot fund the salary of principal investigators (Project Leaders).

### Application Procedure

The applicants shall submit a four-page project description (approx. 2000 words), which includes information on the state of the project development (first achievements, next steps), the research question(s), the expected contributions to the academic literature and to the Migration-Mobility Nexus, hypotheses, data, methods, research tasks/milestones and expected contribution to the research conducted within the NCCR. Your proposal shall be written in English.

Furthermore, a budget shall be annexed showing how the 200'000 Swiss Francs will be used. Be aware of the following rules when it comes to budgeting NCCR funds: Salaries for academic personnel are funded by the nccr – on the move in accordance with the rules of the hosting institution of the project (PostDocs, Research Associates).

## Selection Procedure

### Decision-Making Body

The project proposal will be evaluated by members of the NCCR Scientific Committee in consultation with the International Advisory Board. The Management Board will take the decision on the admission of the new projects in May 2020. The projects will begin on 1 June 2020 (beginning of NCCR Year 7).

### Evaluation Criteria

- The originality of the research contribution in addressing a gap in the relevant literature
- The publication record of the principal investigator (Professor or senior academic)
- The potential added value to the work undertaken in the NCCR and to the work in one of the modules
- The motivation of the applicants to engage in interdisciplinary collaborations within the NCCR network

Please send your project proposal including the above-mentioned additional information to [nicole.wichmann@nccr-onthemove.ch](mailto:nicole.wichmann@nccr-onthemove.ch)

**Deadline for submission is 30 April 2020**