

OPEN CALL 2025 FAQs

Do I need a finished project/fixed project outcome to apply?

No, project or research proposals are eligible. Our only stipulation is that the jury should be able to clearly understand the questions, lines of inquiry, and/or topics you wish to work with within your proposal, the methods you wish to adopt to support this, and why this proposal fits with the framework of the SoC program and learning environment. You will not be assessed on the project outcomes.

Can I apply with a pre-existing project?

Yes, but you must specify what of the existing project, or larger body of work, you will focus on specifically within SoC and how this part of the project directly connects to the SoC learning environment.

Can I submit multiple applications?

Due to the high volume of applications we typically receive, applicants may submit one application only.

Do I need to collaborate with others on a project?

No, you can also work on an individual project, but you should be interested in peer learning processes, which means to actively share your working methods with others and to be engaged in learning from your peers in exchange.

Can I apply as a collective?

We strongly encourage collectives to apply, we do however ask that you state in your application how your collective will be present in the programme to be sure the representation of your collective remains consistent. For example, will all collective members attend meetings or only a select few? Will all collective members oversee all responsibilities or only a select few? This gives us a better idea of how to accommodate the collective in the programme, and to manage participant expectations. Regular representation also allowed for better community cohesion and trust-building to form.

What is the breakdown of the number of selected projects?

In total, we will be selecting 16 projects for School of Commons 2025. This will be broken down into 8 projects from enrolled or employed ZHdK students and staff and 8 from applications who are not enrolled in ZHdK, otherwise known as independent projects, this category also includes ZHdK alumni. Applicants who are independent can apply from anywhere in the world, and do not need to be enrolled in an education institute or have any specific level of education. Each project will receive a 1,500 CHF budget.

What are the limitations of the budget?

How the budget (1,500 CHF) is allocated is at the discretion of each applicant. The only stipulation we ask for is that the applicant/collective reserve part of the budget for 1 x return trip to Zürich for the School of Commons Gathering in June (accommodation will be provided).

Can I reapply if I have previously participated?

Previous participants can only apply with an entirely new project with new collaborators. Participants may only complete SoC a maximum of two times.

Can I be currently enrolled in a school/university?

Current students may apply. Please be aware of the key dates we expect you to be present for during the programme, including Tuesday evenings from 18.00-20.00 CET/CEST, to ensure you have the capacity to participate in full.

Do I need to move to Zürich?

No, since most of the project takes place online.

Do I need specific knowledge to participate?

No, the program is open to all levels and disciplines.

What are the criteria for selection?

Selection is based on the completeness of submitted materials, the feasibility of the project, and how well the project connects to the aims and values of the SoC learning environment. There are two main categories for which applications are assessed. Under each category are sub-categories which must also be taken into consideration:

CONTENT of the proposal.

Content looks at the clarity of the proposals' key questions, lines of inquiry, and suggested ways of working, as well as the relevance of the project in relation to major societal issues, tensions and questions, the current discourse on the topic, and the use of innovative and/or experimental approaches.

MOTIVATION to be part of the School of Commons learning environment.

Motivation looks at the proposals' ambitions towards contributing to alternative forms of knowledge production and circulation, peer learning, commoning practices, and the overall ethos and spirit of the SoC learning environment. It also looks for a demonstrated commitment to actively exchanging, sharing, and collaborating with fellow participants, with clear examples of how this will be tangibly overseen, incorporating approaches based upon sharing, reproducing, and collaborating as part of the SoC learning environment to support this.

When do I find out if my project has been accepted?

The deadline for applications is December 1, 2025. You will hear back with a response by February 07, 2025.

Please note that if you include key identifiable information about yourself such as your name, place of work, or level of education, or exceed the stated word count in the application form, your application will not be considered for review.

Updated FAQ following Open Call Zoom Session 16.10.2024

Question Topic: Open Call

How many individual and collective projects will SoC be accepting for the 2025 cohort?

We will be accepting a total of 10 collective projects and 6 individual projects. This is broken down into: from ZHdK (Zurich University of the Arts) Student and Staff Member applications we will accept 5 collective projects and 3 individual projects, from outside of ZHdK applications we will be accepting a further 5 collective projects and 3 individual projects.

Do you accept collectives who are newly formed, or formed specifically for the purpose of SoC?

Yes

Could you clarify what you expect in terms of participation from collectives?

If applying as a collective it is important for us to know how your collective will be present, visible and participate in the SoC programme. For example, you may want to nominate 2-3 members of the collective who will be present for all meetings during SoC, and another person who is responsible for the ISSUES Publication Contribution. You may want to nominate a lead person for all communications regarding the collective. SoC are very open to how your collective will be present and communicable throughout the process. However, we emphasize that certain members of the collective are regularly present to ensure group cohesion and trust building.

Can I apply with a new project, or a project specifically created for SoC?

Yes

Can I apply with a project that is a small component of a larger scale project?

Yes

Are there collective pots of money available to support participants beyond the 1,500 CHF fee?

Yes, we have organized collective pots to support participants for the following:

- Long-distance travel to and from Zürich for the SoC Gathering
- Accommodation to cover each participant's stay in Zürich
- 'Ways and Workings' Workshops and Guest Speakers
- School of Commons Gathering and Assembly Programme
- Self-Organized Programme
- Participation in 'Accessibility and Inclusion in Hybrid Working Spaces' research (optional)

Will SoC support Visa Applications?

Yes, we are happy to write letters of support from both SoC and ZHdK. We are also happy to call embassies and representatives to ensure a smooth visa application process. We have a demonstrated commitment to supporting participants with Visa Applications (Turkey, South Africa, Costa Rica, Colombia, to name a few) and, to date, have been granted all Visa Applications successfully

Question Topic: Accessibility

Does SoC support Translation?

To date, for each cohort SoC has welcomed participants who require support with translation. For this we have used different tools and techniques. We have offered financial support to translators the participants know and trust to support them during meetings and gatherings. We have organized translations for select events. We also always offer a transcription for events which can be translated. In previous years and cohorts, we have also experimented with alternative forms of translation and transcription which include communication and documentation beyond written or verbal language.

Does SoC support Transcription?

All SoC meetings have live transcription and we often experiment with different forms of transcription including recording sessions and publishing the transcripts live on [etherports](#) to create print-at-home zines and booklets for participants to explore. In previous years and cohorts, we have also experimented with alternative forms of translation and transcription which include communication and documentation beyond written or verbal language.

Does SoC record events?

Before recording an event, we must always ask the consent of everyone present in space. If this consent is secured, then we are happy to record all events and meetings upon request.

Question Topic: Finances

If the project budget is less this year than the previous year, are we expected to conduct smaller-scale projects?

We encourage participants to apply with projects and proposals that fit the scope and the scale of the structure and budget offered by SoC. If this means applying with a scaled down version of your project that has the potential to grow and expand depending on whether extra resources can be secured (i.e. through external funding) then this is totally acceptable.

Will SoC support me in looking for extra project funding to allow me to increase the scale and scope of my project?

Yes. We are in the process of compiling a list of funds and grants in collaboration with the SoC Alumn* network that we can share. We will always offer a letter of support or recommendation for funding applications.

Question Topic: Content

What do 'Successful' forms of participation and collaboration/collectivity in SoC look like?

At SoC we are very much looking for projects and proposals which actively give time and space to collective ways of working and potential collaborations as part of their processes. This could take the form of a workshop, a publication, an open session, an exchange, or something entirely different that fits your project and practice. We are less interested in proposals which are mainly focused on looking for feedback or advice from participants as a main form of engagement as we are very mindful of extractivist practices.