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Regulations on SystemsX.ch applications

The National Research Council, based on Article 48¹ of the Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on Research Grants (hereinafter: Funding Regulations), issues the following Regulations:

Chapter 1

Article 1 Purpose and scope

¹ These Regulations regulate the organisation, evaluation and assessment of applications submitted within the framework of SystemsX.ch (national initiative for research co-operation in systems biology) and the assessment at the Swiss National Science Foundation (hereinafter SNSF) of progress made in the SystemsX.ch project as a whole.

² With regard to the SystemsX.ch programme, the SNSF is responsible, in particular, for the scientific evaluation of applications, the approval of sub-projects and overall quality assurance.

³ In addition to these Regulations, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and its Implementation Regulations apply, in particular with regard to the procedure and to legal protection.

⁴ These Regulations apply only to project categories of SystemsX.ch in which the SNSF is responsible for the evaluation of applications.

Chapter 2 Application procedure

Article 2 Call for applications

¹ The procedure for submitting project applications concerning SystemsX.ch is announced via a public call for applications.

² The periodicity, the terms of the call, the form and the deadlines are based on the principles relevant to the implementation of SystemsX.ch.

³ The terms of the call may provide for different categories of submissions, in particular categories for projects in research, technology and development ("RTD Projects"), transfer projects, interdisciplinary projects with doctoral students ("Interdisciplinary PhD Projects") and transition postdoc fellowships.

¹ Amendment; funding regulations of 27.2.2015, in force since 1 January 2016.

Article 3 Eligibility criteria

¹ Applications may be submitted by researchers who

- a) conduct the proposed project for an institution that is eligible to participate in SystemsX.ch and who
- b) can show that their project is partially financed by themselves and by third parties.

² Fulfilment of the eligibility criteria is governed by the terms set out in the documents of the call.

Article 4 Evaluation of applications

¹ The Systems Biology Panel (Article 10) or its Committee is responsible for the scientific assessment of the eligible applications. In addition, it may solicit reviews from external experts.

² SystemsX.ch issues a recommendation specifying how the individual applications contribute to the SystemsX.ch project as a whole and forwards it to the Systems Biology Panel.

³ Applications that do not meet the formal requirements are rejected by the SNSF, unless the fault in question is easily rectified.

⁴ The SNSF may immediately reject manifestly inadequate applications without conducting an in-depth scientific evaluation.

Article 5 Scientific evaluation criteria

¹ The Systems Biology Panel evaluates the applications eligible for scientific evaluation with regard to:

- a) their contribution to the advancement of systems biology and the planned integration within the SystemsX.ch project as a whole. In so doing, it takes account of the recommendation issued by SystemsX.ch;
- b) the scientific quality of the applications, incl. the scientific added value of the application when compared with the sum of the individual research groups;
- c) the contribution towards public-private partnership;
- d) the financial planning and security of financing (total costs, own funds and third-party funds, requested federal contribution).

² In addition to the criteria set out in paragraph 1, the usual scientific criteria apply pursuant to the Funding Regulations of the SNSF:

- a) Scientific relevance and topicality of the application
- b) Originality of the research questions
- c) Suitability of the methods chosen
- d) Scientific track record of the applicants
- e) Applicants' expertise in relation to the application
- f) Feasibility of the proposed project

Article 6 Decisions

¹ The Systems Biology Panel or its Committee decides whether an application is accepted or rejected. This decision is subject to endorsement by the Presiding Board of the National Research Council. If the application is approved, the Systems Biology Panel or its Committee defines the amount of federal funds to be allocated.

²If there are any differences of opinion between the Systems Biology Panel and SystemsX.ch, such differences shall be resolved as far as possible before a decision is made. The decision is the responsibility of the Systems Biology Panel.

³The Presiding Board of the National Research Council endorses the decisions made by the Systems Biology Panel or its Committee.

⁴The SNSF communicates the decision to the applicants in the form of an appealable ruling, which mentions, in particular, the amount of federal funds to be allocated to the project as well as any conditions or requirements.

Article 7 Right of appeal

Rulings pursuant to Article 6 paragraph 4 may be appealed against before the Federal Administrative Court.

Article 8 Conduct of the approved projects

The SNSF transfers the approved project grants to SystemsX.ch, which is responsible for the financial handling of the projects.

Article 9 Monitoring, progress assessment

¹ The grantees shall send SystemsX.ch interim and final scientific reports compiled in accordance with the requirements issued by the SNSF.

²The SNSF is responsible for assessing the progress made in the SystemsX.ch project as a whole. This assessment is based, inter alia, on the annual reporting carried out by SystemsX.ch.

Chapter 3 Organisational provisions

Article 10 Composition of the panel

¹The Systems Biology Panel consists of

- a) eight to twelve recognised experts in systems biology who are as a rule - but not exclusively - based abroad.
- b) two representatives each from divisions II, III and IV of the National Research Council.

²The six members of the National Research Council form the Systems Biology Panel.

³The Panel is chaired by a member of division IV of the National Research Council.

⁴The Panel may consult further experts if necessary.

Article 11 Election of the Panel

The President and the members of the Systems Biology Panel are elected by the Presiding Board of the National Research Council.

Article 12 Constitution and self-organisation of the Panel

The Systems Biology Panel constitutes itself under the present Regulations. In particular, it appoints a Vice President, who deputises for the President when the latter is absent, and determines the number of Panel meetings and when they are to be held. It sets down its decisions in writing.

Article 13 Term of office of the Panel

¹ For the meantime, the term of office of the Systems Biology Panel is limited to the period of the two BFI Dispatches 2011-2012 and 2013-2016.

² Elections and by-elections shall be conducted for the remaining term of office.

Article 14 Remuneration of the Panel

The members of the Systems Biology Panel are remunerated in accordance with the usual SNSF rates.

Article 15 Tasks and competencies of the Panel

¹ The Systems Biology Panel is responsible for the scientific evaluation of applications for "RTD projects" that are eligible under SystemsX.ch.

² The Committee of the Systems Biology Panel is responsible for the scientific evaluation of applications for "Interdisciplinary PhD projects" and transition postdoc fellowships that are eligible under SystemsX.ch. It defines the evaluation procedures. The Committee may delegate the evaluation to the FAID or to a group of experts selected by the Committee.

³ Each year, the Panel receives a progress report from SystemsX.ch, on the basis of which it assesses the progress made in the project as a whole and sub-projects approved by the SNSF. It forwards its assessment to the Presiding Board of the National Research Council.

⁴ The Panel evaluates the project as a whole and forwards its recommendations to the Presiding Board of the National Research Council. The latter files an application with the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) concerning the continuation of SystemsX.ch.

Article 16 Tasks and competencies of the Presiding Board of the National Research Council

¹ The Presiding Board of the National Research Council elects the members of the Systems Biology Panel and endorses its decisions regarding the acceptance or rejection of the submitted applications.

² It receives an annual progress report from SystemsX.ch and makes decisions regarding the release of funds for the following year.

Article 17 Tasks and competencies of the Administrative Offices

¹ The Administrative Offices of the SNSF are responsible for providing administrative and organisational support with regard to the procedure for SystemsX.ch applications pursuant to these Regulations.

² The NCCR Secretariat of the Targeted Research division is responsible, in particular, for ensuring the flow of information within the SNSF.

³ It carries out the formal examination of the submitted applications and rejects applications that do not meet the formal requirements (Article 4 paragraph 3).

⁴ The Administrative Offices issue the guidelines for the annual scientific progress reports of SystemsX.ch pursuant to Article 9 paragraph 2.

Chapter 4 Final provision

Article 18 Entry into force and period of validity

The Regulations of 3 July 2007 were amended on 20 March 2012 (approval by the National Research Council). They apply until the end of the BFI funding period 2013-2016 subject to any changes to federal requirements and provisions.