

Funding LARge international REsearch projects (FLARE)

Call for proposals 2016

In order to optimise the use of international research infrastructures and organisations by Swiss researchers, the SERI has mandated the SNSF to allocate CHF 32 million¹ as an accompanying measure for the 2017-2020 funding period within the framework of the FLARE (Funding LARge international REsearch projects) programme, which complements the funding of scientific research projects. At least two calls are envisaged for the FLARE programme in the 2017-2020 period. The first one is being organised in 2016 and will lead to the award of grants for a duration of up to four years.

1. Purpose and scope

¹ The FLARE programme aims at facilitating the development, construction, maintenance and operation of instrumentation for major international experiments in particle physics, ground based astrophysics and astroparticle physics.

² FLARE grants are awarded to allow Swiss researchers to participate in these experiments. FLARE proposals must be scientifically directly related to (mirrored by) one or more SNSF grants funding the underlying scientific activities.

2. Application procedure

2.1 Eligibility criteria for applicants

¹ Natural persons are eligible to submit applications if they meet the general eligibility requirements for the submission of applications pursuant to Art. 10 of the Funding Regulations². The requirements set out in Art. 13 of the Funding Regulations with regard to the proposed project must also be met.

² Two or more applicants are eligible per application if needed to achieve the targets set for the proposed activities. In such a case, the requirements set out in Art. 12 of the Funding Regulations must be met.

³ Only one submission for each experiment will be accepted. If an application is submitted by two or more applicants, each of them represents one or more subparts of the experiment.

⁴ Each subpart must be mirrored by one or more SNSF grants funding the underlying scientific activities.

2.2 Eligible costs

¹ Researchers can submit FLARE proposals to request funding for the development, construction, maintenance and operation of internationally recognised experiments.

² Costs in the following categories are eligible:

- a) Hardware costs.

¹ Subject to approval by the Parliament.

² http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_reglement_16_e.pdf

- b) Salaries for technicians and/or engineers hired specifically for the project. The SNSF does not finance permanent positions. Technicians and/or engineers hired on a FLARE project are not allowed to perform academic research activities in the context of this project. Funding of scientific personnel (such as doctoral students and postdocs) is excluded. The requested salaries must comply with the salary ranges of the local institutions.
- c) Travel costs for the technicians and/or engineers hired on a FLARE grant if these travels are necessary for their activities; shipping and commissioning costs.
- d) Mandatory contribution to common funds. A justification has to be provided (Memorandum of Understanding or similar document). These costs must be of minor significance compared to the total requested budget.

³ The requested costs must be applied for and quantified in the proposal.

⁴ Other costs (such as local computing resources) can be requested if they are considered necessary for the planned activities. They should be justifiable and must comply with the SNSF Funding Regulations. The necessity of these costs is carefully evaluated and, as a general rule, will only be funded if the necessary funds are available.

2.3 Submission of applications

¹ The deadline for the submission of FLARE proposals is 15 November 2016.

² FLARE proposals must be submitted using the *mySNF* online proposal submission system.

³ FLARE grants can have a duration between one and four years.

⁴ The research plan is limited to a ten-page general description of the experiment, plus a maximum of five pages per individual subpart, each structured as follows:

- a) current status of the subpart of the experiment
- b) planned activities (including a detailed explanation of the requested costs)
- c) relevance and impact relative to the overall experiment
- d) schedule and milestones

⁵ The research plan is supplemented with a “business plan” consisting of a financial overview of the whole experiment and the planned deliverables and financial commitments of the Swiss participants over the duration of the experiment. If possible, the financial commitments of the Swiss participants have to be justified by copies of official documents attached to the business plan.

⁶ All other funds that are available for the experiment, or that were requested from other funding sources, must be declared in the proposal.

3. Evaluation process, assessment criteria and grants

3.1 Consideration of proposals

¹ Only proposals that meet the formal requirements are considered by the SNSF and evaluated by the FLARE evaluation panel.

² Proposals are not considered if their objectives manifestly do not match the purpose and scope of the FLARE programme as explained in Part 1 of this document, if the proposals manifestly do not fulfil one of the evaluation criteria listed in Part 3.2, or if they only request ineligible costs.

3.2 Evaluation

¹ The scientific evaluation of the experiments is based on the evaluation of the individual regular SNSF grants mirroring the FLARE proposal.

² The FLARE proposals are evaluated by a panel of experts (FLARE evaluation panel).

³ The FLARE proposals can be internationally peer-reviewed.

⁴ The evaluation of the proposals is based on the following evaluation criteria:

- a) the relative long term funding priority of the overall experiment as indicated by the representatives of the Swiss community to which the experiment belongs;
- b) the international visibility of the Swiss participation in the experiment;
- c) the quality of the research to be carried out, as evaluated in the mirroring SNSF grants, and its significance for Swiss science;
- d) the scientific track record of the applicants and their experience in the domain of the proposal.

3.3 Evaluation process

The evaluation is done during a meeting of the FLARE evaluation panel after the proposal submission, with each proposal being assigned to one or more referees.

3.4 Decisions

¹ Division II of the SNSF Research Council decides on the financing or rejection of the FLARE proposals. These decisions are based on the evaluation results of the FLARE evaluation panel meeting.

² The Presiding Board of the SNSF endorses the decisions of Division II of the SNSF Research Council.

³ The SNSF communicates the decision to the applicants in the form of an appealable ruling, which mentions, in particular, the amount of funds to be allocated to the project as well as any conditions or requirements. Such rulings may be appealed against before the Federal Administrative Court.

4. Conduct of the approved projects

¹ Successful FLARE grants can start at the earliest on 1 April 2017.

² For ongoing FLARE grants, annual financial reports have to be submitted to the SNSF, but no scientific reports are necessary.

5. Organisational provisions

5.1 FLARE evaluation panel

¹ The FLARE evaluation panel consists of members of Division II of the SNSF research Council, as well as additional national or international experts from the three different scientific communities concerned by the FLARE programme, namely: experimental particle physics, astrophysics and experimental astroparticle physics. The number of members of the FLARE evaluation panel is between 5 and 10.

² The additional experts are selected by Division II of the SNSF Research Council.

³ All panel members are elected for the duration of the ERI funding period 2017-2020.

⁴ The final panel composition is approved by Division II of the SNSF research Council. Applicants cannot be members of the FLARE evaluation panel.

⁵ The members of the FLARE evaluation panel are remunerated in accordance with the usual SNSF rates.

⁶ The panel is chaired by a member of the SNSF Research Council. A majority of the members of the panel constitutes a quorum.

⁷ Division II of the SNSF research Council can nominate ad-hoc replacements if panel members are unable to attend the evaluation meeting.

⁸ The FLARE panel takes its decisions in consensus.

⁹ If a consensus is not possible, a decision is taken by a majority vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the chair of the FLARE evaluation panel has a second vote.

¹⁰ The meeting of the FLARE evaluation panel is organised as follows:

a) The FLARE evaluation panel consults representatives of the three Swiss research communities involved (astrophysics, experimental particle physics and experimental astroparticle physics, cf. §5.2). These representatives communicate to the FLARE evaluation panel their long term funding priorities in terms of experiments.

b) The responsible applicants of each proposal present their proposal to the FLARE evaluation panel. After the presentation, the panel can ask questions or request clarifications. If the responsible applicants cannot attend the meeting, they may appoint a representative.

c) The FLARE evaluation panel then formulates funding recommendations.

5.2 Role of the representatives of the Swiss research communities

The representatives who communicate the long term funding priorities of the Swiss research communities during the meeting of the FLARE evaluation panel are mandated by these communities. They must convey the opinion of their community as a whole.

6 Specific funding arrangements for the LHC

¹ The yearly Swiss contribution to the LHC maintenance and operation (M&O) costs for the LHC experiments with Swiss participation (ATLAS, CMS, LHCb) is funded through the regular FLARE budget. Once the costs for 2017 are approved by the CERN Resources review board (RRB), the CHIPP chairman submits, for the same deadline of 15 November 2016, an application with a short research plan (maximum five pages) summarising the Swiss commitment. The Administrative Offices evaluate the application, if necessary in consultation with the FLARE evaluation panel, and make a funding proposal to the Presiding Board. The requested amounts must precisely reflect the costs approved by the CERN RRB.

² The yearly Swiss contribution to the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid (WLCG) for the physics exploitation of the LHC data is funded through the regular FLARE budget. Once the pledges for 2018 are known, the Swiss coordinator of the WLCG activities submits, for the same deadline of 15 November 2016, an application with a short research plan (maximum ten pages) summarising the Swiss commitment. The Administrative Offices evaluate the application, if necessary in consultation with the FLARE evaluation panel, and make a funding proposal to the Presiding Board. The requested amounts must reflect what is reasonably necessary to honour the Swiss pledges toward the WLCG. If costs going manifestly beyond the Swiss pledges are envisaged, then either a full FLARE proposal needs to be submitted, or these costs have to be requested in the FLARE proposals of the corresponding LHC experiments.

7. Final provisions

¹ In the absence of any relevant provisions in these Regulations, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and the directives on the use of grants apply.

² These Regulations are issued by the Presiding Board of the National Research Council on 14 June 2016 and enter into force on 1 July 2016.

³ They apply until the end of the ERI funding period 2017-2020 subject to any changes to federal requirements and provisions.