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# Guidelines for the Scientific Exchanges grants

## Scientific Events and Research Visits

August 2020

*Based on the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges;  
Grants for scientific exchanges*

*of 14 February 2017 (updated version of 5 July 2019)*

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# 1. Definitions

## 1.1 Scientific events

*(Art.4 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Scientific events:

- are (co-)organized by the applicant;
- include scientific conferences, workshops, or similar events;
- may last from 1 to 5 days;
- typically take place in Switzerland, but **may in exceptional cases be held abroad. Please contact the SNSF before submitting a proposal if you wish to apply for such an exception.** If an exception is granted, it is possible to request funds for Swiss researchers taking part in an event abroad. It is also possible to apply for funds for the Swiss applicant, provided that priority is given to the support of other participants and the usual limits are adhered to correctly. Otherwise, the same eligible costs apply as with events in Switzerland (see 4.2).

## 1.2 Research visits

*(Art.5 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Research visits:

- are visits by the applicant to a host at an institution abroad, or visits by a guest from abroad to the applicant's institution;
- involve joint scientific/research activities or projects;
- may last from 1 to 6 months.

# 2. Requirements for applicants and funded participants

## 2.1 Personal eligibility

*(Articles 6 and 9 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

### 2.1.1 For the applicant for a scientific event

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Eligibility criteria listed in the Funding Regulations of the SNSF, unless specified otherwise;
- Minimum employment of 20% at an eligible institution in Switzerland;
- Active in a research domain related to the topic of the event;
- PhD students are eligible;
- Researchers employed on an SNSF-funded project are eligible, though the event in question must not be directly linked to that project.

### 2.1.2 For the invited participants to be funded

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Invitees must be from abroad and either affiliated with an academic institution or practitioners in a relevant field;
- The invitees must be specified; if there are any changes after the proposal has been submitted, the SNSF must be informed prior to the event;
- Invitees must contribute to the scientific content of the event;
- PhD students can be funded participants.

### 2.1.3 For the guest and host of the research visit (including Swiss applicant)

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Eligibility criteria listed in the Funding Regulations of the SNSF, unless specified otherwise;
- Minimum employment of 20% at an eligible institution (for the applicant this must be in Switzerland);
- Position guaranteed for at least 6 months after the end of the research visit;
- PhD or comparable (PhD students are not eligible, neither as guest nor as host);
- Researchers employed on an SNSF-funded project are not eligible.

## 3. Duration of the exchange

### 3.1 Scientific event

*(Art.5 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

The possible duration of a scientific event is between 1 and 5 days.

Please note that for administrative reasons, the requested starting date (to be entered on *mySNF* under “Basic data I”) must be given as **the first day of the month preceding the month of the event**, and **the overall duration (also under “Basic data I”) must cover a period extending to the month after the event**. I.e. if a scientific event is proposed for 15-17 June, the requested starting date must be given as 1 May and the duration must be given as three months. Please note that while you must submit your proposal at least four months before the event in question (see 6.1), it is the actual first day of the event, as entered under “Timeframe of the scientific exchange”, that is the relevant date in this respect and not the requested starting date given under “Basic data I”.

### 3.2 Research visit

*(Art.5 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

The possible duration of a research visit is between one month and six months. The exact duration must be entered in *mySNF* in the container “Timeframe of the scientific exchange”. However, for administrative reasons, the requested starting date (to be entered on *mySNF* under “Basic data I”) must be given as the first day of a month, and the duration (also under “Basic data I”) must cover all months affected, i.e. if a visit is requested from 15 May to 15 June, the duration must be given as two months (May and June). While this may result in the overall duration under “Basic data I” exceeding six months, this is not an issue, as the maximum duration applies to the actual dates of the visit.

## 4. Eligible costs

An overview for budget calculation is available [here](#).

### 4.1 Total grant

*(Art.3 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

The requested grant can be between CHF 2'500 and CHF 25'000. It contributes towards travel expenses as well as room and board costs incurred by either the invited participants from abroad (scientific event), or by the visiting guest (research visit).

Please note that once a grant is given, the granted amount cannot be increased even if there are changes to the Scientific Exchange. However, applicants may be required to reimburse the SNSF in certain circumstances.

### 4.2 Travel expenses, room and board costs for scientific events

*(Art.9 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Eligible costs for scientific events include:

- A maximum of two participants per half-day of the event can be supported, i.e. an event of two days (that is, four half-days) allows for the support of up to eight participants. Applications that do not adhere to this rule will not be considered. (Please note that events that start and/or end at noon must be counted accordingly, i.e. as half-days.)
- Travel costs for a return trip to Switzerland for each of the invited participants are supported by the grant. This includes train travel or flights in Economy class, transfers to and from the airports or train stations, transportation in Switzerland, and visa costs, up to the maximum travel costs covered by the SNSF as defined by region (see the [travel costs list](#)). Unless there are valid reasons to do otherwise, travel within Europe should be conducted by train. **Please do not list separate amounts for flights or train travel and local public transport in your proposal.**
- Living expenses (accommodation and subsistence costs) for the invited participants based on a flat rate of up to CHF 200 per overnight stay. The number of overnight stays requested may exceed the number of days the event is scheduled for by up to two; e.g. for an event of three days, up to five overnight stays can be requested. **Please do not list accommodation and subsistence separately; in your proposal, for each invitee provide the number of overnight stays and the flat rate used, e.g. 4 x CHF 200 = CHF 800.**
- Please note that **in general, proposals must list and name all invited participants** whose travel costs and living expenses are to be supported by the SNSF. However, **it is possible to request funding for non-named participants in accordance with the following requirements:** 1) no more than half of the supported participants can be non-named, i.e. at least half of the supported participants must be named in the application; 2) the application documents must describe the selection process and criteria (which must ensure that the selected participants fulfil the regular eligibility criteria) and include the CVs of the individuals responsible for the selection; and 3) the requested travel funds for each individual non-named participant must not exceed CHF1000. If a proposal is approved, the CVs of non-named participants must be submitted to the SNSF as soon as these participants have been

identified. Also, please note that while travel funds of up to CHF1000 can be requested for a non-named participant, the maximum travel costs defined by region nonetheless apply for regions where the maximum is set below that sum, e.g. Europe and the Middle East.

- Please note that **speaker fees, conference fees and other costs related to the organisation of the conference** (e.g. rental of venues, conference materials, deficit guarantee) **are not eligible**. Applications requesting funding for such costs will not be considered.
- Additionally, applicants with childcare duties may request travel costs for each accompanying child according to the travel costs list above, as well as a childcare allowance of CHF200 per overnight stay.

### 4.3 Travel expenses for research visit

*(Art.10 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Eligible costs for scientific events include:

- Travel costs for a round trip for the guest, including train travel or flights in Economy class, transportation from and to the airport, and visa costs. Unless there are valid reasons to do otherwise, travel within Europe should be conducted by train. The maximum travel costs covered by the SNSF are defined by region and can be found in the [travel costs list](#). **Please do not list separate amounts for flights and local public transport in your proposal.**
- Only one return trip will be supported by the grant.
- A monthly flat rate for living expenses (including accommodation and subsistence costs as well as local transportation) is eligible for the guest, with a maximum of CHF 3'000 (per month of the visit). For guests coming from Least Developed Countries, Other Low Income Countries and Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories (as defined by the [OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients](#)), this maximum can be increased to CHF 3'500 per month. In your proposal, provide the number of months and the flat rate used, e.g. 5 x CHF 3'000 = CHF 15'000. (For partial months, applicants should calculate a rate of CHF100 per day, though the minimum length for a research visit is one month.)
- Additionally, applicants with childcare duties may request travel costs for each accompanying child according to the travel costs list above, as well as a childcare allowance of maximum CHF1000 per month, independent of the number of accompanying children.

## 5. Requested documents

### 5.1 All Scientific Exchanges

The applicant must submit a [self-declaration](#) certifying that the Scientific Exchange submitted is not directly connected to any other activity financed within another SNSF funding instrument in the same timeframe. A template for this is provided [on the SNSF website](#).

## 5.2 Scientific event

### 5.2.1 CV of applicant and all funded participants

The applicant must submit a CV (max. 2 pages) including a list of relevant recent publications (last five years; the publications are not counted towards the two pages). (Please note that if any of the participants are not specified at the time of submission (as outlined in section 4.2), CVs have to be submitted as soon as these participants have been identified.)

A CV (of any format, though no longer than 5 pages) is also required for each invited participant whose expenses are supported by the grant. Short CVs for all invited participants can be combined in a single PDF document. CVs for participants who are not to be supported by the grant should not be submitted; other CVs considered relevant by the applicant, e.g. of co-organisers, can be uploaded under “Other annexes”, though they are not a requirement. (Please note that if, as outlined in section 4.2, any of the participants are not specified at the time of submission, CVs have to be submitted as soon as these participants have been identified. However, in such cases, the original application must include the CVs of the individuals involved in the selection process.)

Please note that while there is no defined minimal length for invitee CVs, the SNSF needs to be able to assess their qualifications and suitability from the submitted materials. A proposal may be rejected if the CVs are too insubstantial to allow for a valid evaluation.

In order to replace participants who cannot attend an event, applicants are required to submit the CVs of the replacement participants as well as a brief description of their roles in the event. This can be done directly via *mySNF* at the same time as requesting the release of funds (see 8.1), or after the release of funds (see 8.1) under “Messages/Requests” on *mySNF*. In any case, **the SNSF must be informed of participant changes before the beginning of the event**. Any participants who are only communicated to the SNSF after the event may not be entitled to financial support from the grant and the respective sums may have to be reimbursed. Also, any costs incurred by replacing participants that exceed the sum originally granted will not be covered by the SNSF.

### 5.2.2 Event programme

A draft of the event programme indicating the roles of the participants to be supported by the grant must be uploaded as part of the proposal.

## 5.3 Research visit

### 5.3.1 CV of host and guest

A CV (max. 2 pages) including a list of recent publications (last five years; the publications are not counted towards the two pages) is required for both the host and the guest.

### 5.3.2 Research plan

A short research plan including the rationale for the visit must be uploaded as part of the application. The research plan must be written according to the [template](#) provided on the Scientific Exchanges webpage, and must not exceed five pages. The required sections are: 1) Aims and relevance; 2) Methods; 3) Schedule; 4) Expected outcomes; and 5) Partnership: added value.

### 5.3.3 Letter of confirmation

For visits where the Swiss applicant travels abroad, **an invitation letter from the partner or host institution is required.**

## 5.4 Submitted application documents

Please note that the SNSF reserves the right to delete documents uploaded to *mySNF* that are not immediately relevant to the evaluation (e.g. book manuscripts, journal articles).

## 6. Submission of application

### 6.1 Deadlines

*(Art.7 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Applications must be submitted at least 4 months, but no more than 18 months, before the first day of the Scientific Exchange (in the case of an event, this is the actual first day and not the requested starting date (see 3.1)), and will not be considered outside of this timeframe. In general, no more than one application of the same type (i.e. event or visit) can be funded per individual per year, i.e. there must be at least 12 months between the end of one exchange and the start of a new one of the same type. In specific cases, parallel applications can be submitted (see 6.2).

### 6.2 Parallel submission of applications

*(Art.11 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Two exchanges can be submitted in parallel, provided that one is a visit and the other is an event. Please note that in such cases, two individual applications must be submitted, one for the visit and another for the event.

## 7. Evaluation

### 7.1 Evaluation procedure

*(Art.13 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

The evaluation procedure includes:

- The formal eligibility check by the Administrative Offices, including personal and formal requirements (e.g. budget);



- The scientific assessment of the application by experts from the SNSF, according to the assessment criteria listed in Article 12 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges (see 7.2);
- The communication of the decision to the applicant in a decision letter. This does not include an evaluation report; only the reasons for rejection, if applicable, will be communicated to the applicant.

The entire evaluation procedure described above may take up to three months.

## 7.2 Evaluation criteria

*(Art.12 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

The assessment criteria listed in Article 12 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges are as follows. All criteria are weighted equally.

- Expertise and scientific qualifications
- Relevance and originality
- Mutual scientific benefit
- Feasibility of the exchange

# 8. Grant administration and monitoring (approved grants)

## 8.1 Release of funds

*(Art.14 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

Once the proposal is granted, the applicant can submit the request for the release of funds via *mySNF* up to one year after the date stated in our decision letter.

Please note the following:

- Grants cannot be administered by applicants. **If no official financial administration is listed on *mySNF* (under “Basic data II”), the option that must be chosen is “Another office (not recognised by the SNSF)”.**
- If the grant is administered by an official grant administration office, the applicant must indicate the internal account number, which they receive from the corresponding office.
- The applicant receives the entire approved grant amount and must reimburse whatever amount has not been used at the end of the grant (after submission of the financial report; see 8.2).
- Should there be any change in the dates initially indicated in the application, the applicant should make a note of this, as well as of the new start and end dates, on *mySNF* under *Release of funds* → *Administrative data* → *Comments*.

## 8.2 Financial report

*(Art.15 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

A financial report must be submitted no later than six weeks after the end of the grant, and must include:

***For a scientific event:***

- Receipts for plane/train tickets, with mention of the price, travel dates and name of the person traveling for each SNSF funded participants;
- Receipts for accommodation costs of the SNSF funded participants with mention of the price, dates and the name of the persons for whom the room was booked;
- Receipts for meals for SNSF-funded participants.
- If accommodation and living costs are organised and paid directly by the participant, applicants may provide the SNSF with the confirmation of receipt form for the lump sum, duly filled out and signed ([Link to form \(event\)](#)).

If the actual travel costs are lower than the allocated funds, the SNSF has the right to request a partial reimbursement. Also, please note that if any of the speakers are replaced and the permitted travel costs for the replacements are lower, this may add to the sum that needs to be reimbursed.

If any funded participants were unable to participate and were not replaced, the total amount allotted for them has to be reimbursed to the SNSF.

Only costs for announced participants can be covered. Costs for non-announced persons will not be considered and have to be covered by other financial resources.

If any funds remain at the end of the event, they may in some cases be used to cover other event costs. Please use this [Excel document](#) to request such a use of remaining funds.

***For a research visit:***

- Receipt(s) for plane/train tickets, with mention of the price, travel dates and name of the person traveling;
- Confirmation of receipt form for the lump sum received, duly filled out and signed ([Link to form \(visit\)](#)). **Applicants do not have to provide the SNSF with detailed receipts for accommodation and living costs.**

If the visit is shorter than originally planned, the SNSF has the right to request a partial reimbursement of the budgeted lump sum. A partial reimbursement may also be requested if the actual travel costs are lower than the allocated funds.

***For both events and visits:***

The template for the financial report is available under the following link: [Template financial report](#)

Please note that any positive balance above CHF 50.00 must be reimbursed to the SNSF (account details below).

Please note that the reimbursement should not be done before the applicant and grant office have received a confirmation by e-mail that the submitted financial report is accepted.

- **Account owner:** Schweiz. Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung, 3001 Bern
- **Account number:** 30-3767-5
- **IBAN number:** CH14 0900 0000 3000 3767 5

- **SWIFT:** POFICHBEXXX
- **Remark:** “IZSEZO\_XXXXXX”

### 8.3 Scientific report

*(Art.15 of the Regulations on Scientific Exchanges)*

A short scientific report (max. 5 pages) must be submitted no later than six weeks after the exchange: the template can be downloaded [here](#). This report must include:

- The timeframe of the exchange;
- The names of the funded researchers;
- A brief summary of the event or research activity that was conducted during the visit, including specific outcome (e.g. joint publications);
- Partnership aspects, including added value of the collaboration and further planned collaborations.

Please note that the output data, which need to be entered on *mySNF*, are also considered part of the scientific report. It is essential that the relevant collaborators outside Switzerland are listed in the output data. For visits, this refers either to the host abroad or the guest visiting from abroad; for events, this entails all invitees supported by the SNSF grant.

Other relevant output data, such as resulting publications, should also be entered on *mySNF*. Please note that SNSF grantees are in principle required to publish the results of their research in Open Access publications (according to art. 47 of the [Funding Regulations](#)).