

# **Regulations on Research Grants for Longitudinal Studies**

## **(Longitudinal Study Regulations)**

**of 23 January 2013**

The National Research Council

based on Article 46 of the Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on Research Grants of 14 December 2007 (hereinafter “Funding Regulations”<sup>1</sup>)

hereby issues the following Regulations:

### **Chapter 1 General Provisions**

#### **Article 1 Basic principles**

<sup>1</sup>The Swiss National Science Foundation (hereinafter “the SNSF”) provides grants for longitudinal studies in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.

<sup>2</sup>Grants for population or indication-specific studies with a longitudinal design are made for the following purposes:

- a. to fund research infrastructure which facilitates the collection and analysis of population and illness-related data over protracted periods; and
- b. to support projects which are highly relevant to healthcare in Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup>Such grants are generally awarded to multicentric projects that receive funding from several research institutions (the “Funding Institutions”).

#### **Article 2 Specific features of the scheme**

<sup>1</sup>Grants may be awarded to longitudinal studies under the following conditions, all of which must be fulfilled. The project must:

- a. engage with an issue that can only be answered via a longitudinal approach;
- b. require a time frame that exceeds the duration of project funding pursuant to Article 3 of the Funding Regulations;
- c. bring together a research group comprising researchers from at least three different institutions; and
- d. lay the foundations of further, innovative research projects.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg\\_reglement\\_e.pdf](http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_reglement_e.pdf)

### **Article 3 Duration of project**

<sup>1</sup> Grants to longitudinal studies are initially awarded for two years. A two-year extension may be possible, depending on the results of an interim evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> Requests for extensions are governed by Article 3 paragraph 5 of the Funding Regulations.

### **Article 4 Amounts of grants**

The grant awarded by the SNSF supplements the grants from the Funding Institutions. While the SNSF grant will be commensurate with the scale of the study, it cannot as a rule exceed CHF 2 million per year. The application must be accompanied by a detailed budget based on the project stages and milestones defined in the study plan and showing the grants from the Funding Institutions.

### **Article 5 Funding Partners**

<sup>1</sup> The longitudinal studies must receive financial support from the Funding Institutions and, as the case may be, from third parties (hereinafter “Funding Partners”). Evidence of the origin, nature and extent of such support must be provided.

<sup>2</sup> The eligibility of Funding Partners is governed by SNSF requirements. Funding Partners are not eligible if they are incompatible with the interests and objectives of the funding scheme or of the SNSF in general. The SNSF decides on eligibility in the context of its review of the formal requirements.

## **Chapter 2 Formal requirements for an application**

### **Article 6 Personal requirements**

<sup>1</sup> Eligibility to apply is governed by Article 8 of the Funding Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants must be natural persons who form a research group pursuant to Article 14 of the Funding Regulations and designate one responsible applicant in relations with the SNSF.

<sup>3</sup> All applicants must show that they have successfully carried out research work for several years and must be capable of running a multicentric project drawing on various specialist disciplines.

### **Article 7 Further formal requirements**

<sup>1</sup> Other formal requirements applicable to the application include especially those of Article 9 of the Funding Regulations, Article 2 of the present Regulations and the instructions in the call for proposals.

<sup>2</sup> Applications must be written in English, as must all supporting documentation.

## **Chapter 3 Application procedure**

### **Article 8 Call for proposals and deadlines**

<sup>1</sup> The SNSF will issue one public call for proposals for longitudinal studies on the SNSF website.

<sup>2</sup> Project outlines and applications must be submitted to the SNSF by the submission deadlines prescribed in the call for proposals in electronic form via the “mySNF” portal.

### **Article 9 Evaluation procedure**

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation takes place in two stages<sup>1</sup> and involves international experts. Based on the project outlines, a panel of experts shortlists the research groups which are to be invited to submit full applications.

<sup>2</sup> Project outlines that clearly do not meet one or more of the evaluation criteria will be rejected.

<sup>3</sup> The scientific quality of the applications is evaluated and rated according to the evaluation criteria listed in Article 10, based on the written applications and an interview with the applicants. Applications whose rating does not qualify them for a grant within the budget available for this call for proposals will be rejected.

#### **Article 10 Evaluation criteria**

The evaluation is based on the main criteria of project funding pursuant to Article 17 of the Funding Regulations as well as on the following, additional criteria:

- a. the project team's expertise, especially the applicants' experience of designing and conducting longitudinal studies and of managing and internationally networking multicentric projects;
- b. the scientific potential of the study; its value and function as a research platform in the context of national and international cooperation;
- c. interdisciplinary cooperation between the participating researchers; potential for national and international networking with other (longitudinal) studies; suitability of the longitudinal study as a platform for national and international research projects; plan to ensure that data is accessible for third-party research projects;
- d. importance of the scientific question dealt with by the study to healthcare in Switzerland; collection of representative data with national coverage;
- e. appropriateness and feasibility of longitudinal study design; medium and long-term planning of studies and funding with clearly defined stages and milestones, including the results expected in each case and their potential significance; quality of data gathering, analysis and protection of data according to international standards; and
- f. joint execution and funding plan by all Funding Partners; especially the strategic and financial acceptances of the Funding Institutions and the available human and material resources; plan for use of existing research infrastructure, e.g. clinical trial units.

#### **Article 11 Eligible costs**

<sup>1</sup>In principle, the same conditions apply to longitudinal studies as to funded projects. Eligible costs of longitudinal studies include the following in particular:

- a. salaries of personnel employed for the project according to the SNSF-approved rates for project staff;
- b. material costs that are directly related to the project's execution; especially set-up costs, the costs of recruiting and following up study participants, the costs of data gathering and analysis, and the costs of operating and maintaining the database;
- c. travel expenses; costs of coordinating the multicentric study.

<sup>2</sup>The following are ineligible:

- d. research project costs: these must be applied for separately in the context of project funding, with the exception of grants of a maximum of CHF 50,000 over a maximum period of 6 months to projects which are conducted within the research group and serve primarily to optimise data gathering and the generation of hypotheses (pilot studies) – hereinafter called “small nested projects”. A plan for the thematic orientation and selection of such small nested projects must be submitted with the application; a maximum of CHF 200,000 of the grant may be used annually for such small nested projects;
- e. procurement and operation of large equipment.

## **Chapter 4 Final provisions**

### **Article 12 Supplementary provisions of the SNSF**

<sup>1</sup> Unless the present Regulations provide to the contrary, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and of the General Implementation Regulations of the Funding Regulations apply.

<sup>2</sup> In particular, Chapters 4 and 5 of the Funding Regulations govern without restriction the legal relations formed in the context of the present Regulations between the SNSF and the applicants. The same applies to the provisions of the Regulations on Information, Valorisation and Rights to Research Results.

<sup>3</sup> The research groups are obliged to participate actively in the SNSF's information and exchange activities in connection with longitudinal studies and to cooperate actively with the future SNSF biobank coordination platform.

### **Article 13 Entry into force**

**These Regulations shall enter into force on 23 January 2013.**