

Regulations on Scientific Exchanges; Grants for scientific exchanges

of 14 February 2017

The National Research Council,
based on Articles 9 and 48 of the Funding Regulations of 27 February 2015¹,
issues the following Regulations:

1. General

Article 1 Objectives and principles

¹ The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) awards grants for international scientific exchanges (SE grants) to researchers in Switzerland.

² SE grants enable researchers in Switzerland to set up and strengthen international networks. They help to increase the competitiveness of Swiss research and its problem-solving capacities and enable researchers from all disciplines to add to their knowledge and contacts; this is beneficial to young researchers, in particular.

³ The SE grants offered by the SNSF support scientific exchanges within the scope of events such as meetings/conferences/workshops (hereinafter: scientific events) or research stays of a maximum of six months in Switzerland or abroad.

⁴ SE grants cover the travel expenses and room and board costs of participants and guests.

⁵ Insofar as the activities comprising the scientific exchanges are related to a research project financed under another SNSF funding scheme, no SE grants may be applied for. This is subject to cases where the SNSF does not, or did not at the time of submission, offer a support option for scientific exchange measures.

¹ http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_reglement_16_d.pdf

Article 2 Applicable law

Subject to any specific provisions in these Regulations, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations apply².

Article 3 Types of grant and amount

¹ SE grants can be requested for scientific events and/or research visits in all disciplines in accordance with the following provisions.

² Both types of grant may be applied for simultaneously, provided the scientific event and the research visit are related and there is good reason to believe that carrying out both SE measures will add scientific value. Both grants must be requested in a single application. In such cases, the maximum amount pursuant to paragraph 4 is increased to CHF 50,000.

³ Only travel expenses and room and board costs incurred by the applicants and the participants or guests are covered by the grant.

³ The minimum amount that may be requested in an application is CHF 2,500, the maximum CHF 25,000. The SNSF does not consider applications for amounts outside this range.

Article 4 Scientific events

¹ Meetings, conferences, workshops or similar events organised by the applicant are regarded as scientific events if they meet the following requirements:

² The scientific event

- a. takes place in Switzerland, subject to paragraph 5, in a scientific context;
- b. facilitates direct exchanges between qualified scientists from different countries and institutions;
- c. addresses clearly defined scientific questions and goals; and
- d. enhances the integration of researchers from Switzerland into networks.

³ The topic of the event must be related to the research questions the applicant is working on.

⁴ SE grants may not be used to finance working sessions or events taking place in the context of already established collaborative projects.

⁵ Where there is good cause, the event may exceptionally be held abroad, particularly if it is not possible to stage it in Switzerland.

Article 5 Research visits

¹ Research visits are visits by the applicant at an institution abroad or visits by a guest from abroad at the applicant's institution.

² The research visits

- a. must be devoted to scientific cooperation and exchanges in the subject area of the research questions addressed by the applicant and must be deemed likely to add value to their research;
- b. must include a concrete plan for joint scientific/research activities of the applicant and the guest or a responsible person at the host institution;

² http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/snf-ausfuhrungsreglement_beitragsreglement_d.pdf

- c. must last between one month and six months;
- d. may take place anywhere in the world.

³ The guest or the responsible partner-person at the host institution must be scientifically qualified to carry out the planned joint activities. At the host institution or the applicant's institution, access to the infrastructure must be guaranteed and other requirements for a promising collaboration must be met.

⁴ SE grants for research visits may not be used to finance participation in conferences or similar events, sabbaticals or academic holidays, or visits for the purpose of attending continuing education courses.

2. Personal and formal requirements

Article 6 Personal requirements

¹ Researchers from all academic disciplines who meet the general requirements for applicants pursuant to the Funding Regulations and the Implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations are eligible to submit applications for SE grants.

² In particular, the applicants must be employed in Switzerland according to the provisions issued by the SNSF. Their work-time percentage may lie under 50%, but not below 20%, and the position must last for at least six months after the end of the SE research visit.

³ Applicants must hold a doctorate (PhD) or have completed their studies in human, dental, veterinary, social or preventive medicine with a doctorate (MD). Applicants without a doctorate must generally have completed three years of research work as their main source of income since obtaining their higher education degree. Applications for scientific events may also be submitted by doctoral students.

⁴ Guests who are invited by the applicant to conduct a research visit or the responsible partner-person at the host institution must also meet *mutatis mutandis* the requirements set out under paragraph 3.

Article 7 Formal requirements

¹ Applications for SE grants must be submitted to the SNSF electronically.

² There are no set submission deadlines and, subject to the application restrictions stipulated in Article 11, applications may be submitted at any time, but no earlier than 18 months before the start of the event or the research visit.

³ Applications must be submitted to the SNSF no later than four months before the scientific event or before the research visit is expected to take place. If both types of grant are applied for, the deadline will be calculated on the basis of the activity that starts first.

⁴ All formal requirements for the submission of applications also apply, in particular the Funding Regulations of the SNSF and its Implementation Regulations.

3. Applications and eligible costs

Article 8 Applications

Applications for SE grants must be submitted in accordance with the requirements issued by the SNSF and must contain all the necessary information and documents. They are to be submitted by natural persons; it is not permissible to have more than one applicant per application.

Article 9 Eligible costs: scientific events

¹ Travel expenses and room and board costs incurred by participants from abroad are covered by the grant, provided they make a contribution (talk, poster, moderation, supervision of workshop, etc.) that adds scientific value to the event.

² The applicant may enter in the application the SNSF flat rates, which are graduated by country or travel distance, and flat rates for the stay in Switzerland, with the travel costs being based on the actual costs. In the case of children with care needs who accompany their parents, the flat rates defined for care costs may be entered in the application.

³ The number of supported persons is limited. Per half day of the event, no more than 1-2 persons from abroad with roles pursuant to paragraph 1 are eligible for support.

⁴ Total costs must not exceed the maximum grant pursuant to Article 3.

Article 10 Eligible costs: Research visits

The eligible costs are:

- a. travel expenses and room and board costs of the applicant if they have applied for a research visit abroad; or
- b. travel expenses and room and board costs of the guest invited by the applicant.

² The SNSF has defined graduated flat rates by country or travel distance for travel expenses and room and board costs.

³ The total costs must not exceed the maximum grant pursuant to Article 3.

4. Parallel applications and grants

Article 11 Number of applications and grants: limitation

¹ No more than two parallel applications and/or SE grants may be submitted or ongoing per calendar year. Parallel applications and/or grants must concern different activities.

² SE grants are intended to support initial or one-off activities. It is not possible to acquire funding for the same activity, or repeated activity, particularly for follow-up or annual meetings.

³ If an application that is subject to these limitations is submitted, it will not be considered by the SNSF.

5. Assessment criteria and procedure

Article 12 Assessment criteria

¹ Applications that meet the personal and formal requirements are examined and evaluated.

²The following assessment criteria are applied:

- a. expertise and scientific qualifications of the participants for whom grants are being requested and the qualifications of the applicant with regard to organising and staging the event;
- b. relevance and originality of the scientific goals set for the exchange, particularly the scientific quality of the event or the research visit;
- c. mutual scientific benefits for those involved; and
- d. feasibility of the project.

Article 13 Evaluation and decisions

¹ The SNSF evaluates and either approves or rejects SE applications during six evaluation meetings per year.

² At these meetings, the evaluators discuss applications that were received up to two months prior to the date of the meeting.

³ The decisions are communicated to the applicants within a month of the evaluation meeting in the form of a ruling.

⁴ The Research Council has delegated the evaluation and decision-making with regard to SE grants to an evaluation body at the Administrative Offices of the SNSF.

6. Grants and grant administration

Article 14 Grants

¹ SE grants are generally transferred to the grantee via the grant administration office and must be used according to the conditions set out in the ruling.

² Any intended changes to the described scientific activities and requirements for staging the event, particularly with regard to the research institution, must be reported to the SNSF in advance. The SNSF may approve changes to a grant if significant reasons are cited in the change request.

Article 15 Reporting, receipts and reimbursements

¹ Grantees must send the SNSF a short scientific report no later than one month after the event or after the end of the research visit (expiry of grant).

² The duty to provide output data will remain in place after submission of the final report and will end three years after the expiry of the grant.

³ The financial report must be submitted within the period specified in paragraph 1. The corresponding receipts as well as a statement listing the actual costs must be submitted to the SNSF. Any surplus funds must generally be reimbursed to the SNSF.

7. Entry into force and repeal of existing regulations

Article 16 Entry into force

These Regulations enter into force on 1 April 2017.

Article 17 Repeal of existing regulations

The following SNSF provisions are repealed as of 1 April 2017:

- a. the Regulations on International Short Visits of 16 June 2009;
- b. the Regulations on International Exploratory Workshops of 1 September 2009;
- c. Clause 2.17 paragraph 2 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations of 9 December 2015; and
- d. Annex 3 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations of 9 December 2015