



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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*Sino-Swiss Science and Technology Cooperation 2013 – 2016 (SSSTC)*

## **Joint Research Projects: Call for Proposals 2014-2016**

Opening date: 06.01.2014

Closing date: 31.03.2014

## **1. Joint Research Projects**

Grants for Joint Research Projects (JRPs) are meant to promote collaborative projects with clearly defined goals involving at least one Swiss and one Chinese partner. Applications should describe ambitious research and propose innovative approaches. The research is to be carried out at the research facilities involved; reciprocal visits and short stays in Switzerland for researchers from China and vice versa are also possible within the scope of a JRP.

**Project duration:** the JRPs can last up to three years.

## **2. Research fields**

In order to make targeted use of the financial resources available, the following thematic area was chosen for this call:

- Translational biomedical research and medical technology

Proposals outside of the thematic area defined above will not be accepted.

## **3. Eligibility**

Each proposal for a JRP must have at least one main applicant based in Switzerland and one main applicant based in China; they are the lead scientists on the Swiss and Chinese side respectively. They bear the main responsibility for the project including its technical and administrative coordination as well as timely delivery of scientific and financial reports. Further applicants based in Switzerland and/or in China can also participate in the consortia.

### **Eligibility criteria in Switzerland**

The SNSF eligibility criteria apply to applicants requesting funding. Each applicant can only apply for one project. Furthermore, private sector partners are welcome to participate but will not be eligible for funding. Swiss main applicants who apply also to other SNSF funding schemes must inform the relevant contact person.

### **Eligibility criteria in China**

Chinese applicants submit an application in accordance with the relevant provisions of the International S&T Cooperation Programme of China (ISTCP), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST). Each applicant can only apply for one project.

## **4. Funding**

JRP proposals contain two separate budgets: one budget in RMB for the Chinese applicant(s) and one budget in CHF for the Swiss part (paid by the SNSF according to the SNSF's rules). In China, the cooperation will be funded by the ISTCP of the MoST. The available funds are sufficient for funding 10 to 15 projects.

### **Eligible costs in Switzerland**

The maximum permissible budget for a project is CHF 250,000.

The funding categories are:

- **Salaries:** the funding is sufficient to support the salary of a PhD student for three years or the salary of a postdoc for two years (salaries for main or co-applicants are not eligible).
- **Research funds:** funds needed to carry out the project, such as expendable items, field expenses, travel costs, room and board costs and unavoidable sundry expenses. The SNSF does not finance the acquisition or maintenance of expendable items that are part of the infrastructure of an institution (books, PCs, rental costs, etc.).
- **Equipment:** costs of material of enduring value (indicate manufacturer, type and distributor). Quotations – if possible, from different competitors – must be enclosed for items whose purchase price exceeds CHF 20,000.
- **Social security contributions**

The SNSF regulations apply to the Swiss budget. However, overhead costs are not admissible.

### **Eligible costs in China**

The maximum budget that can be applied for on the MoST side for an individual project (maximum of three years) will comprise up to RMB 1.5 million.

MoST principal investigator:

- Contribution to equipment and material costs
- Contribution to costs of tests and processing
- Travel expenses and accommodation costs
- Contribution to costs of project meetings and managements

### **Visiting costs between Switzerland and China**

When budgeting visits between the Swiss and Chinese partners, the travel expenses are to be charged to the budget of the visitor and the living expenses to the budget of the host. Health insurance should be arranged and paid by the visitor.

Research visits between Switzerland and China shall be balanced.

## **5. Submission**

Proposals are to be jointly prepared by the Swiss and Chinese applicants. However, they must be submitted separately to the SNSF and the MoST from early January to the end of March 2014. The research plan (see Annex 1 for indications regarding the requested structure) must be identical in both applications.

### **Submission in Switzerland**

The proposal must be submitted by the Swiss main applicant to the SNSF via its electronic submission system (*mySNF*, [www.mysnf.ch](http://www.mysnf.ch)). Chinese partners can have access to the electronic submission system through their Swiss partner.

After logging in, the correct funding scheme must be chosen (Programmes (national and international) > Bilateral Co-operation (Initiatives of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation) > Sino-Swiss Joint Research Programme).

The application consists of two parts:

- The administrative part, which must be completed online
  - Personal data of the Swiss main applicant
  - Personal data of the Chinese main applicant
  - Personal data of the co-applicant(s) from Switzerland and/or China
  - Personal data of the private partner(s)
  - Basic data of the project (e.g. title, field of research, starting date, duration, summary)
  - Declaration stating whether the application is use-inspired
  - Funding requested from the SNSF
  - Information on authorisations required in Switzerland
  - Other information (e.g. indication if the project is related to other SNSF projects, indication of the Swiss university/research institution at which the planned project will be implemented, indications concerning national and international collaborations, indications concerning already available funds or funds requested elsewhere)
- PDF documents that are to be uploaded to *mySNF*
  - The research plan (must have the structure indicated in Annex 1)
  - The CVs and publication lists of all applicants and other researchers involved
  - If applicable, equipment quotes
  - Other documents

For specific questions related to *mySNF*, please contact the support team by e-mail ([mynsf.support@snf.ch](mailto:mynsf.support@snf.ch)) or telephone (+41 31 308 22 00). Please note that you need a user account in order to submit proposals via *mySNF*. To open an account, please register with the SNSF as a user. Applicants with existing user accounts need not apply for new ones.

#### **Submission in China:**

Chinese applicants may download the relevant application forms from [www.istcp.org.cn](http://www.istcp.org.cn)

**Deadline for submission of applications:** 31.03.2014 (midnight CET). Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

#### **Language:**

All documents submitted to the SNSF must be in English.

All documents of Chinese applicants submitted to the MoST must be in Chinese and the Information Form in Chinese and English.

## **6. Evaluation**

The applications will be evaluated independently in Switzerland (by the SNSF according to its regulations) and in China (by the MoST according to its regulations).

Evaluation criteria (not listed in the order of priority):

- Scientific relevance and interest
- Application potential
- Originality of the aims and objectives
- Appropriateness of the methodology
- Experience and past performance of applicants
- Competence of research partners with respect to the project
- Complementary qualities of research partners
- Feasibility of the project

Based on both the Chinese and the Swiss evaluation results, the MoST and the SNSF will elaborate a final funding list and submit it to the Sino-Swiss Joint Committee for final approval. The evaluation results will be communicated to the Swiss and Chinese applicants in November 2014, by the SNSF and the MoST respectively.

#### **Swiss procedure**

The SNSF is responsible for evaluating the proposals. Proposals involving Swiss industrial partners will additionally be reviewed by experts proposed by the Swiss Innovation Promotion Agency: Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI).

#### **Chinese procedure**

The Chinese side will proceed to evaluate proposals submitted to the ISTCP of the MoST in 2014.

**Earliest possible starting date for the JRPs:** January 2015

## **7. Reporting**

Swiss and Chinese project partners will report separately to the SNSF and the MoST respectively. Scientific and financial reports are to be submitted yearly. The SNSF and the MoST will prepare a common template for the scientific report, so that the consortia will only need to prepare one report to be submitted to both organisations.

#### **In Switzerland**

The Swiss main applicant will be responsible for the reporting to the SNSF. Both for the financial and the scientific report, the standard SNSF regulations will apply. However, scientific reports are to be submitted yearly. They include a qualitative (template provided) and a quantitative part (output data).

#### **In China**

The Chinese main applicant will be responsible for the reporting to the MoST via financial and scientific reports according to the management procedure of the ISTCP.

## **8. Payments**

#### **In Switzerland (SNSF funding)**

The standard SNSF rules apply. In principle, the budgets for JRPs are transferred in annual instalments to the Swiss principal investigator (PI) at the beginning of a project year.

### **In China (MoST funding)**

The proposals approved based on the evaluation will be funded by the MoST according to the ISTCP.

## **9. VAT**

### **In Switzerland (SNSF funding)**

The JRP grants are not subject to VAT or other taxes and charges. However, research expenses are not excluded from VAT. Therefore, all costs budgeted in a JRP (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) can be charged to the programme, VAT included, unless the research institution (e.g. university, public research organisation, etc.) is able to recover the VAT.

## **10. Publications and intellectual property (IP)**

It is the duty of the project main applicants to inform their individual universities of the collaboration before the project start and consult them on any potential IP issues. If advised by their technology transfer offices, the main applicants should conclude an agreement with their Chinese partners concerning the IP rights before the project start.

The scientific and technological achievements resulting from the cooperative projects and the use of the intellectual property shall be agreed upon before the start of the project in a separate agreement by the cooperation parties.

## **11. Further information and contacts**

### **In Switzerland**

Swiss National Science Foundation

Mr Timothy Ryan

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CH-3001 Berne

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### **In China**

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## **Annex 1: Guidelines for writing the research plan (scientific part of the proposal)**

The research plan should be organised in 5 sections (2.1. – 2.5.), preceded by a summary (1.). We kindly ask you to use the section headings indicated below. The proposals will be sent out for external review. In order to ensure that the scientific content of your proposal can be adequately assessed, please provide a detailed research plan which sets out clearly the aims, objects and methods of the project you are planning.

### **1. Summary of the research plan (max. 8,000 characters)**

Should include the most important features of your research plan and place your project in a broader scientific context. For Swiss applicants: this summary should be an exact copy of the one you have written in the *mySNF* data container “Basic data II”.

### **2. Research plan**

The research plan must not exceed 20 pages and 80,000 characters including blank space, figures, tables, formulae and references. The font size should be 10 pt with a line spacing of 1.5. In general, appendices are to be avoided.

#### **2.1 Current state of research in the field**

By citing the most important publications in the relevant field, please set out the scientific background and basis of the project, explain the need to perform research on the topic you propose and briefly describe important research currently being conducted internationally.

#### **2.2 Current state of own research and partnership aspect**

- Please describe briefly the work done by the different applicants in the relevant research field or in related fields and indicate the relevant publications.
- Explain how the different applicants complement each other for the proposed research project.
- Describe past collaborations that involved the Swiss and Chinese partners (if applicable).

#### **2.3 Detailed research plan**

##### **Information on aims, rationale, methods and data**

Against the background described in sections 2.1. and 2.2., please state the aims that you plan to attain during the lifetime of the project. Please consider the following points:

- Which investigations and / or experiments do you plan to carry out / are necessary to attain the stated aims?
- What is the rationale for getting the project started and how will the work most likely develop later on?

Information concerning the methods necessary to attain the aims:

- Which are the methods available to you?
- To which other methods do you have access and how?
- Which methods need to be developed?

Data and data collection:

- Which data are available to you and from where?
- Which data need to be collected?

## **2.4 Work division, schedule and milestones**

- Please indicate how you plan to divide the work among the different partners.
- As far as possible, please give an approximate schedule for the work to be carried out within the project and indicate the most important milestones. In particular, please describe the major tasks of the staff to be employed within the project by the different partners.
- List the planned visits between the Swiss and Chinese research groups (visiting scientist, hosting scientist, purpose of visit, date and duration of visit).

## **2.5 Importance and impact**

### **Scientific importance and impact**

Please describe briefly the importance of your research for the scientific community and the impact you expect from the project on research and training/teaching in your field/discipline. Please indicate how you will publish/communicate your results.

### **Application potential and broader impact**

Please indicate to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be. The following points should be addressed:

- Need for research as perceived by practitioners/industry: are there any knowledge gaps? Are innovations and improvements expected?
- Transferability of results: to what degree can research results be put into practice?
- Other potential impacts: in which spheres outside science could the implementation of the research results entail changes and what is the nature of these changes?