Ambizione

Guidelines for submitting a proposal via mySNF

Table of contents

1. Submission of proposal .......................... 2
   1.1 Regulations and relevant documents ...... 2
   1.2 Personal requirements and extension of the eligibility window 2
   1.3 Next deadlines ............................... 2
   1.4 Parallel submissions ......................... 2
   1.5 Create a new application on mySNF ..... 2
   1.6 Duration of the grant ....................... 3
   1.7 Eligible research institutions ............. 3
   1.8 Earliest and latest possible starting date for the grant 3
   1.9 Revised application/Resubmission ........ 3
   1.10 Gross salary of the applicant ............. 3
   1.11 Budget limit for project funds and what may be requested 4
   1.12 Data Management Plan ..................... 4
   1.13 External peer-reviewing ................... 5
   1.14 Career plan ................................ 5
   1.15 Choice of research institution .......... 5
   1.16 Written confirmation of the research institution 5
   1.17 Support letters ............................ 5
   1.18 Evaluation procedure ....................... 6

2. Follow-up proposal ............................ 6
   2.1 Transitional provisions and submission 6

3. Instructions for CV, major scientific achievements and research output list 6
   3.1 General remarks ............................. 6
   3.2 Instructions for the CV and major scientific achievements 7
   3.3 Instructions for the research output list 7

4. Instructions for the research plan .......... 8
   4.1 General remarks ............................. 8
   4.2 Structure of the research plan .......... 9
1. Submission of proposal

1.1 Regulations and relevant documents

The Ambizione Regulations and relevant documents are available on our website in [German](#), [French](#) and [English](#) (see section “Documents”). Alternatively, the documents are also accessible in your Ambizione application on mySNF under "Information/Documents". For any questions contact: ambizione@snf.ch

1.2 Personal requirements and extension of the eligibility window

The personal requirements for applicants, including [eligibility windows and proof of mobility](#), are governed by article 5 of the Ambizione Regulations. For applicants with PhD, the date of the examination or viva voce/defence of the thesis is the decisive date. For applicants who have completed their medical studies, the date of the medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) is relevant. An extension of the eligibility windows is governed by the [General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations](#) (see Clause 1.11).

For the proof of mobility (12 months of research activities after the PhD/the medical license undertaken at an institution different from the one/s of the PhD/the medical license) no exceptions are possible. This condition must be met at the time of the submission deadline.

1.3 Next deadlines

There is only one call per year. Proposals have to be submitted electronically via the web platform mySNF ([www.mysnf.ch](#)). The application must be submitted no later than 17:00:00 Swiss local time (i.e. UTC + 1) on the day of the submission deadline:

Submission deadline in 2019: 1 November 2019

**Do not wait until the very last moment to submit your application. The deadline is non-negotiable.**

1.4 Parallel submissions

Note that an Ambizione application may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no other project grants (as applicant or co-applicant), Sinergia grants or programmes of the SNSF have been requested, approved or are ongoing. For career funding schemes, parallel applications may only be submitted for [Postdoc.Mobility return grant](#) (see article 13 of the Ambizione Regulations). Before preparing an application consult the relevant articles on parallel submissions in the regulations for each funding instruments concerned.

1.5 Create a new application on mySNF

All new users have to register first on mySNF ([www.mysnf.ch](#)). In the corresponding step during the registration, make sure to select the correct division and funding instrument ([Careers/Ambizione](#)). Note that it may take several days to process your request for a mySNF account. If you already have a mySNF account, check that the role "grant applicant" is present.

Before making any entries or uploading files, make sure to read all information in this document as well as in the header of every container carefully.
1.6 **Duration of the grant**

Ambizione grants are awarded for a maximum of four years. The minimum duration of funding is two years. If the maximum duration of the grant is not requested, the applicant must give an explanation for the shorter duration in the cover letter. Note that projects with a shorter duration than the maximum possible duration of four years do not have a higher chance of being granted.

1.7 **Eligible research institutions**

All publicly funded research institutions in Switzerland are eligible, i.e. universities, university hospitals, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education, research centres (e.g. PSI, EMPA, EAWAG) or institutes of postgraduate education (e.g. IDIAP, IHEID).

1.8 **Earliest and latest possible starting date for the grant**

For a submission on 1 November 2019, the earliest and latest possible starting dates are 1 September 2020 and 1 September 2021, respectively. Note that the starting date can still be changed after an Ambizione grant has been awarded.

1.9 **Revised application/Resubmission**

Pursuant to article 14 of the Ambizione Regulations, applicants whose application was rejected may apply at the most a second time for an Ambizione grant regardless of the subject matter of the project, as long as the applicant still fulfils all personal requirements. In case of a resubmission, upload in the container “Research plan” a separate document providing a point-for-point response to the critique raised in the rejection letter and a comment on significant changes or additions in the research plan, if applicable. This statement must not be longer than 2 pages (point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing).

1.10 **Gross salary of the applicant**

The SNSF awards Ambizione grants and Ambizione project grants. Pursuant to article 1 paragraph 4 of the Ambizione Regulations, grantees must devote their entire work time (100%) to the planned research. A lower work time percentage of at least 80% is permissible (see article 6 paragraph 2 of the Ambizione Regulations) and should be explained in the cover letter.

**Ambizione grant:** The grant covers project funds and the full salary of the grantee. An Ambizione grant is not intended to cover just a share of the salary of the applicant. The salary of the applicant will be determined by the SNSF in agreement with the research institution. The average gross salary will be around CHF 105’000 per annum for a work time percentage of 100% (e.g. research associate level, junior group leader, scientific collaborator, etc.). The social security contributions of the employer will be covered as well. If the applicant would like to insert more accurate figures for the salary, contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution.

The fields labelled “Social security contributions (%)” are automatically calculated according to the selected research institution in the container “University or research institution”.

Regarding family/child allowance (“Further social security contributions”), they differ in every canton. Therefore, contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution.

For researchers doing clinical work (Ambizione-PROSPER/SCORE): The salary share dedicated to research (at least 80%) is covered by the Ambizione grant. The salary share for the work-time percentage dedicated to clinical work (up to 20%) must be covered by the research institution.
**Ambizione project grant:** The grant comprises project funds only. The salary of the grantee is fully covered by the research institution and may be stated in the field “Salary covered by other funds”.

### 1.11 Budget limit for project funds and what may be requested

The budget limit for project funds is **CHF 400'000 for 4 years**, i.e. an average of CHF 100'000 per annum (see article 10 and 11 in the Ambizione Regulations). For an Ambizione grant, the salary of the applicant is not included in this maximum amount. The budget should be as detailed as possible (e.g. separate entries are required for equipment, access costs to infrastructure, consumables, travel, personnel, etc.). Costs for **open access publications** are not eligible costs under Ambizione grants and must be applied for separately via mysnf (www.snf.ch/oap). Changes in the budget after the submission of the application are not possible. For more details see articles 9, 10 and 11 in the Ambizione Regulations.

Pursuant to article 9 of the Ambizione Regulations, a **research stay of no more than 12 months** at a Swiss or foreign academic host institution or at an institution of the practical realm (industry, administration, etc.; intersectoral mobility) can be envisaged as part of the Ambizione grant. The mandatory documents for such a stay include a letter of invitation and a detailed budget of the costs.

Research funds may be used to employ personnel (e.g. technician, laboratory assistant, supporting assistant, etc.). There is no restriction on the work-time percentage of personnel as long as the employment is justified in the application.

Candidates may apply to appoint one **PhD student**. The salary scales for doctoral candidates are fixed by the SNSF. In such cases, the research institution must confirm the supervisor of the doctoral thesis in writing. Furthermore, the supervisor of the doctoral thesis and the research institution must guarantee the due completion of the doctoral thesis on expiry of the grant or in the event of the project being abandoned prematurely (see paragraph 1.16 below and article 12 of the Ambizione Regulations).

If engagement of a **postdoctoral researcher** is envisaged for the project, the confirmation of the research institution must include a commitment to contribute to at least half of the said researcher’s salary (see paragraph 1.16 below and article 12 of the Ambizione Regulations).

Personnel salaries may be different for every institution. The applicant should therefore contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution for the corresponding salary standards. For more details on salary scales for doctoral candidates and salary ranges in general see:

**Annex 12 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations**

### 1.12 Data Management Plan

The proposal must include a **Data Management Plan** (DMP) set up according to the requirements issued by the SNSF. The aim of a DMP is to plan the lifecycle of data. It offers a long-term perspective by outlining how data will be generated, collected, documented, shared and preserved. The DMP is an integral part of the grant proposal. **The proposal can only be submitted once the DMP has been completed.** The **content of the DMP** is directly entered in the mySNF submission form. It is not possible to upload a DMP as a separate PDF file. Applicants must enter a DMP that is understandable, suits their project and meets the standards set by their research community.

**At this stage, the DMP is considered a draft and is excluded from the evaluation process.** However, the definitive DMP must be provided by the end of the project at the latest.
1.13 **External peer-reviewing**

A list of potential external reviewers is not required. The applicant is entitled to submit together with the funding proposal a list with the names and addresses of **persons who are not to be asked** for an external review (exclusion list). The SNSF may abide by this list if the applicant provides a valid reason for the requested exclusion and if a sufficient number of other experts are available.

1.14 **Career plan**

No form or template is provided by the SNSF. The career plan must **not exceed one page (a minimum of point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing)**. The past career achievements should be described briefly, while more emphasis should be put on the medium and long-term career goals.

1.15 **Choice of research institution**

Mobility is an important evaluation criterion (see article 15 of the Ambizione Regulations). Justify the choice of the research institution. In particular for the following cases, the choice must be carefully motivated in the cover letter and will be assessed based on the rationale:

- At the time of the submission deadline the applicant has already spent more than one year at his/her present Swiss research institution.
- The applicant has already spent more than one year as postdoctoral researcher in the past at the selected research institution.
- The applicant would like to return to the research institution where he/she received his/her PhD or completed his/her medical exam.
- The applicant would like to join the research institution of his/her PhD advisor.

1.16 **Written confirmation of the research institution**

Applicants must contact as soon as possible the research institution to ask for the written confirmation of the research institution. The written confirmation of the research institution consists of two separate letters:

1. Detailed confirmation of the research institution signed by the contact person (leader of the research group) mentioned in the application and the head of the institute/department. This letter refers to the obligations which are stated in the Ambizione Regulations, in particular article 8 and article 12.

2. General confirmation of the vice rectorate for research (or equivalent).

The directorate of the institute/department must forward the detailed confirmation of the research institution (point 1) to the vice-rectorate for research in order to receive the general confirmation (point 2). Then, the contact person at the research institution must send both confirmations to the applicant for a timely submission of the application.

Both confirmations must follow the text template provided by the SNSF and be written on paper using the official letterhead of the research institution. They must be added to the application and will only be regarded as complete if all the points relevant to the application are addressed. The text template is available in [German](#), [French](#) and [English](#).

1.17 **Support letters**

The submission of support letters is not required. However, applicants are free to include support letters to their application. The documents should be uploaded in the container “Other annexes”. **Support letters forwarded to the SNSF by mail or by e-mail will not be considered.**
1.18 Evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases. In phase 1, the National Research Council of the SNSF makes an initial selection based on the documents submitted. Only applications selected for phase 2 are peer-reviewed. All candidates selected for phase 2 are invited to an interview to present their research project and career plan.

Applicants not considered for phase 2 will receive the decision around mid-May. Candidates invited to phase 2 will be informed about the outcome in the beginning of May. The interviews are held in June. These candidates will be informed about the final decision around the end of August.

2. Follow-up proposal

2.1 Transitional provisions and submission

Ambizione grants that have been approved or are ongoing on the entry into force of the Ambizione Regulations of 14 June 2016 may be extended by the SNSF, generally by a maximum of 12 months. A follow-up proposal is only considered in the following exceptional cases (see article 22 of the Ambizione Regulations):

- In the event of clinical activities (Ambizione-PROSPER/SCORE)
- In the case of an interruption or reduction of the employment level due to maternity or family care duties during the grant period;

Prior to the submission of a follow-up proposal, the grantee should contact the Administrative Offices of the SNSF. Follow-up proposals have to be submitted electronically via the web platform mySNF (www.mysnf.ch) by simply creating a new application. In the container "Follow-up proposal of" just add an entry and select from the drop-down list the number of your running grant. Follow-up proposals must be submitted at least six months prior to expiry of the running grant.

3. Instructions for CV, major scientific achievements and research output list

3.1 General remarks

The SNSF has signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which recommends funders to be explicit about the criteria used in evaluating the scientific productivity of applicants. The scientific quality, value and impact of the entire research output is taken into consideration (including datasets, software, and prototypes) in addition to research publications. In this context, the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the name of the journal in which it was published. Furthermore, during its evaluation procedure, the SNSF takes into account the scientific discipline, academic age and personal situation (e.g. career breaks, child care duties).

In order to comply with the DORA, the SNSF requests a standardised set of information from all applicants, i.e. the "CV and major scientific achievements" and the "Research output list". These two documents must be written in the same language as the research plan, and must be structured as specified below. Proposals that lack the relevant information will not be considered for evaluation.
3.2 Instructions for the CV and major scientific achievements

The CV and a short statement of major scientific achievements must be assembled in one document and be written in the same language as the research plan. The CV must not exceed 3 pages (minimum font size 10 points) and must be structured as follows. It is important that all dates at least include month and year. Additional points can be added, if relevant:

1. Personal information, including the researcher ID (e.g. OrcID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID).
2. Education: Mention the day of your PhD viva voce/defence and the name of the PhD advisor/s. For applicants who have completed their medical studies, the date of the medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) and the date of the MD thesis must be mentioned. If applicable, add separate sections on clinical education and scientific education and quantify the corresponding periods in months and years. Continuing education in connection with the applicant’s research activities should also be listed (e.g. internships, postgraduate studies, clinical work, residency/board certificate for physicians, training in clinical psychotherapy, etc.)
3. Employment history including current position/s with the name/s of the advisor/s
4. Institutional responsibilities
5. Approved research projects
6. Supervision of junior researchers at graduate and postgraduate level (summary information, the names of the junior researchers should be indicated)
7. Teaching activities (summary information)
8. Memberships in panels, boards, etc., and individual scientific reviewing activities
9. Active memberships in scientific societies, fellowships in renowned academies
10. Organisation of conferences
11. Prizes, awards, fellowships
12. Career breaks (provide justification)

In the section "Major scientific achievements" (maximum 1 page to be attached to the CV) the applicant describes his/her most important scientific achievements. Describe for each achievement the applicant’s specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

3.3 Instructions for the research output list

The research output list is used in the evaluation process to assess the scientific productivity, the scientific quality, the scientific independence and qualification of an applicant with regard to the proposed project and his/her ability to successfully conduct and document a research project. Both aspects are also taken into account in the evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed research project.

Depending on the research field, the applicant’s position in the list of authors may give an indication on his/her contribution to the scientific work (see also: Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: Integrity in scientific research, Principles and procedures).

Separate your publications resulting from your PhD/medical exam (or prior) and from your postdoctoral time and highlight the 5 most important. For all publications listed from your postdoctoral time, give a very short comment on your contribution; in particular for publications with several authors, where the applicant is not first or last author, or for disciplines where the authors are in alphabetical order.

The applicant’s name in the list of authors and the publication year must be clearly visible (e.g. boldfaced or underlined). Give the full reference and do not use “et al.” to shorten the list.
of authors, unless the research project was conducted by a large international collaboration with more than 50 authors and a direct link to the full publication is given. In order to support the principle of open electronic access to scientific knowledge nationally and internationally, provide a direct internet link for each publication, if applicable.

Candidates in Humanities and Social Sciences must expose the status of their PhD thesis publication. They have to state whether their PhD thesis monograph is published or submitted. Otherwise, specify when the publication is expected and upload a corresponding contract/agreement with the publisher in the container "Other annexes".

Under points 1-4 only "published", "in press" or "accepted" publications can be listed ("submitted" or "forthcoming" publications cannot be included). All entries in every section should be numbered.

Important: Do not change the order of authors, in particular for publications with shared first authorship. Ensure that all required categories below are listed and indicate "none" in case of absence of items in a given category. The research output list should be structured as follows (if applicable):

1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals
2. Peer-reviewed books/monographs
3. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings
4. Contributions to books
5. Patents and licenses
6. Oral contributions to conferences (talk or poster)
7. Outreach activities (e.g. public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, scientific art performances, etc.)
8. General contributions to science (e.g. spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes, etc.)
9. Other artefacts with documented use (e.g. maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)
10. Preprints (e.g. arXiv, bioRxiv, EarthArXiv, etc.).
11. If a manuscript/monography is not accessible via a repository for preprints, specify the journal/publisher where it has been submitted and upload the proof of submission, as well as the file in the container "Other annexes".

4. Instructions for the research plan

4.1 General remarks

The research plan provides the basis for scientific evaluation, particularly of the quality of the proposed research project, i.e. its scientific relevance, topicality, originality, feasibility and the suitability of its methods. Together with the CV and the applicant’s research output, the research plan also serves as a basis for assessing the researcher’s scientific qualifications, particularly his/her expertise with regard to the project. The SNSF’s requirements with regard to the form and content of the research plan help to ensure the comparability of applications. This is an important prerequisite for a comparative evaluation based on the principle of competition and for the equal treatment of all applicants.

The research plan must consist of original text that has been written by the applicant himself/herself. A limited amount of text (or other material, graphs, etc.) by third parties or text published by the applicant himself/herself is permissible in the sections concerning the state of research (2.1) and the state of his/her personal research (2.2) as well as when describing standard
methods. The quoted texts must be clearly designated as such (quotation marks or appropriate wording) and a verifiable source must be mentioned nearby and in the bibliography. The SNSF uses a special software to compare texts and analyse suspected cases of plagiarism. A number of universities have made such programs available to their students and employees. We recommend that you contact your institution for further information. For more details see the SNSF dossier on scientific integrity:

www.snsf.ch > The SNSF > Research policies > Scientific integrity

In **mathematics, natural and engineering sciences, biology, medicine, psychology, economics and political sciences**, applications have to be submitted in **English**. In all other research areas, applications can be submitted in one of the official Swiss languages (preferably in German or French; for Italian please contact the administrative office of SNSF first). An English translation must be enclosed if requested by the SNSF.

**Special rules apply for political sciences.** Researchers will still be able to submit proposals in an official Swiss language should this be justified for scientific reasons, particularly if working in a specific language is appropriate to the nature of the research topic.

The SNSF does not consider applications that **do not meet the requirements for the research plan**, the **formal requirements for applications** (article 14 of the [Funding Regulations](#)) and the requirements for research integrity and good scientific practice (article 15 of the [Funding Regulations](#)).

### 4.2 Structure of the research plan

The research plan must **not exceed 15 pages** (including cover/title page and if applicable a **table of contents**, **A4 paper size**) and **60’000 characters (with spaces)**. This includes the title or title page, possible table of contents, **summary, footnotes** (explanatory notes or comments at the bottom of a page), **illustrations, formulae, tables**, but not the bibliography (list of sources/references at the end of the document). A minimum of **point 10 font size** (e.g. Times New Roman; condensed fonts not allowed) and **1.5 line spacing** must be used. The research plan should not contain any annexed documents and must be uploaded as a single file. **The research plan needs to be structured as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Summary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the summary (maximum 1 page), present the <strong>background and rationale</strong> of the project, list its <strong>overall objectives</strong> and <strong>specific aims</strong>, mention the <strong>methods to be used</strong>, and briefly discuss the <strong>expected results</strong> and their <strong>impact</strong> for the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Proposed Research</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Current state of research in the field</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your project in the context of the current state of knowledge in your field. Make reference to the most important publications, particularly by other authors. Describe:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in which areas research is needed, and why;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- which important, relevant research projects are currently underway in Switzerland and abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2 Current state of personal research</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **2.3 Detailed research plan** | Based on the information provided under 2.1 and 2.2, specify the approach you are taking and the concrete objectives that you aim to achieve in the period of funding. The following points should be addressed:  
- describe the studies or experiments needed and/or envisaged to reach the set goals. Assess the risks involved and propose alternatives if necessary;  
- characterise existing sources and datasets and describe the data collection strategy and possible alternative strategies;  
- methods by which the research goals are to be reached (applicant and collaborations) and methods that first have to be developed;  
- explain the role and the planned work of each member of the research team (incl. applicant, personnel and collaborations).  
Your description should be as detailed as necessary to enable an expert to assess whether your methodology is appropriate and your project feasible. Refer to the work described here in the budget you submit via mySNF. |
| **2.4 Schedule and milestones** | Compile a schedule that includes the most important milestones (e.g. table, Gantt chart, etc.). This plan should also indicate the main tasks with which the persons funded by the SNSF/involved in the project are to be entrusted. |
| **2.5 Relevance and impact** | Describe the **scientific relevance and expected impacts** of your project for the discipline and for science as a whole (research and education/teaching). Mention the form in which you wish to publish your research results (articles in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceedings, etc.) Indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be. |
| **3. Bibliography** | List the sources of all concluded and/or ongoing work referred to in the research plan. Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. **Do not use “et al.” to shorten the author list.** (Exception: the author list can be shortened if a publication involves large international consortia with over 50 authors. In this case, a link to the complete reference has to be included). The bibliography is not included in the maximum number of pages (15) and characters (60'000) count. |

17.07.2019