

SCOPES 2009-2012

Scientific Co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland

General Information and Call for Proposals

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are launching a new phase of the programme “SCOPES - Scientific co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland 2009-2012”.

The present call for proposals will be **open from 15 December 2008 to 15 April 2009**. More information on the submission conditions and procedure are outlined below and on the SNSF website (<http://www.snf.ch/E/international/abroad/scopes/Pages/default.aspx>).

1. Background

Together with the Swiss Government, the SNSF has been promoting co-operation with scientists from Eastern European countries and from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union since 1990 by implementing a scientific co-operation programme in five consecutive phases. The commitment, which is part of a wider effort to strengthen economic, scientific and cultural ties between Switzerland and Eastern Europe is now being renewed.

In view of the continuous improvement of the programme and based on previous experience, some aspects of the programme have been reviewed and improved: SCOPES 2009-2012 offers an increased overall budget of 16 million CHF and a range of new possibilities in terms of project types and partner countries. A major emphasis has again been put on capacity development (young and female researchers). The financial coverage of the costs for Swiss scientists and partner countries have also been increased.

2. Objectives

The pursuit of knowledge is an important feature of human societies as well as a prerequisite for their continued development. The numerous challenges that transition countries in Eastern European, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union are confronted with, concern also the research and educational systems to a considerable degree. The difficult situation of the individual and the institutional level endangers the achievements of the most important tasks of any science system: the production and exchange of knowledge for the benefit of today's societies and the training of the next generation of qualified researchers. Therefore, the programme aims at improving the quality and increasing the networking level of scientific research.

SCOPES 2009-2012 must be seen in view of this general background. The programme aims at supporting individual researchers, research teams and research institutions from the target countries in their endeavour to overcome the difficulties of the transition period. From a Swiss perspective, the programme offers the possibility to fund scientific collaborations and promote synergies with the target countries.

The programme focuses on the funding of research projects of high quality, on the improvement of institutional framework conditions that enable a further increase of the research performance, and on improved integration of individuals and institutions into the international scientific community. This includes the participation and capacity building of female and young researchers.

3. Programme philosophy

3.1 Thematic issues

SCOPES is open for activities within all scientific disciplines ranging from humanities and social sciences to natural sciences, biology and medicine. As SCOPES does not provide thematic priorities, scientists are free to submit in a bottom-up way any thematic proposal that may contribute to the objectives of the programme. Projects are evaluated according to their scientific merit. However, to further stimulate the achievement of the programme's objectives, other important aspects must be taken into account:

- Relevance for transition (see 3.2)
- Capacity building (see 3.3)
- Partnership approach (see 3.4)

Taking these principles into account will considerably enhance the chances for a proposal to be accepted for funding.

3.2 Relevance for transition

The selected projects should not only be of academic interest, but rather be thematically oriented on important issues of the transition process and its consequences. Especially welcomed are themes which are priorities of the Swiss development cooperation of SDC:

- Health
- Education
- Water
- Agriculture/Rural development
- Environment
- Economy and employment
- Law, Democracy
- Conflict prevention and transformation
- Migration
- Governance issues
- Gender issues

The priorities mentioned above shall not represent a *numerus clausus* of themes eligible for funding. Further thematic fields may be financed if they demonstrate a contribution to the overall aim of the SCOPES programme.

3.3 Capacity building

Transition countries partially lack the resources and infrastructure required to carry out independent, effective, problem-oriented research which generates the necessary knowledge to solve existing development issues. Research co-operation is not only designed to produce research findings but also to help strengthen research systems. Therefore, younger scientists should be involved and promoted in Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships and teams should be a good mixture regarding age and gender.

3.4 Partnership approach

Research partnerships between teams and institutions in Switzerland and transition countries are an important instrument for both knowledge development and capacity building at institutional and individual level. Jointly established objectives and shared responsibility as well as accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, participation and efficiency are important principles in establishing partnerships.

4. Funding instruments

The following types of funding instruments are offered:

- Conference Grants (see 7.1)
- Joint Research Projects (see 7.2)
- Institutional Partnerships (see 7.3)
- Preparatory Grants (see 7.4)
- Valorisation Grants (see 7.5)

More details about these funding instruments can be found in the annexes and on the website: <http://www.snf.ch/E/international/abroad/scopes/Pages/default.aspx>

5. Submission

5.1 Eligibility of institution

Public research institutions in Switzerland and countries of Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union are eligible for participation in the programme.

Eligible research institutions in Switzerland and Eastern Europe

	Switzerland	Eastern Europe
Research partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities • ETH & associated institutions • Universities of Applied Sciences • Federal research institutions • Others (on a case-by-case basis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities • Institutes of the Academies of Sciences • National research institutions • NGO with research experience

5.2 Partner countries

There are two categories of partner countries:

Category A

The first category comprises the countries on the OECD-DAC list of ODA (Official Development Assistance) recipients (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/48/41655745.pdf>) :

- Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia
- South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia
- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- Moldova
- Ukraine

Category B

- EU-Member States: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,
- Croatia
- Russia

Category B countries have generally progressed further in the transition phase and may serve as an intermediate partner between the Swiss partner(s) and the partner countries from category A.

5.3 Eligible project consortia

For funding instruments that require the building of **consortia** (Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships), the following collaborations are eligible for funding:

a) Bilateral projects

(e.g. one partner from Switzerland and one partner from a partner country)

These are only possible with countries of the category A.

b) Multilateral projects

(e.g. one partner from Switzerland and two or more partners from partner countries)

These are possible with countries of the category A and with a combination of countries category A + B. In the case of a collaboration involving partners from the category A + B. At least 50% of the funding must go to the partner(s) from category A (see also annexe for more details concerning financial issues).

All partner teams must have a substantial role in the partnership and complement each other in order to have a reasonable and balanced consortium. Therefore, all the Eastern European partner teams should claim for equal budget amounts.

5.4 Technical submission & information

The call information will be available from 15 December 2008 on the SNSF website.

Proposals must be prepared jointly by the Swiss and Eastern European applicants. **The application must be submitted by the Swiss main applicant (= future co-ordinator of the project) through the SNSF web platform www.mysnf.ch. The online submission facility will be activated from 1 February 2009 onwards.**

A user account is needed in order to gain access to the web platform and to submit the proposal. To open an account, new applicants must register with SNSF as a new user. Once registered, the person will receive a username and password by regular mail (generally within five working days).

General questions concerning the application procedure may be directed to the SCOPES Programme Office (SNSF, International Co-operation, international@snf.ch). For questions related to www.mysnf.ch, the technical support hotline at 031 308 22 00 can be contacted.

The deadlines for application are given below. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted. Please also note that a second call under the SCOPES 2009-2012 programme will be launched in the autumn 2010.

5.5 Deadlines for the first call for proposals

Conference Grants

Applications can be submitted continuously.

Joint Research Projects

Applications must be submitted to SNSF by 15 April 2009.

Institutional Partnerships

Applications must be submitted to SNSF by 15 April 2009.

Preparatory Grants

Applications must be submitted to SNSF by 30 March 2009.

Valorisation Grants

Applications can be submitted towards the end of a funded Joint Research Project or Institutional Partnership and at the latest until 31.12.2012

6. Evaluation and selection

Applications for **Conference Grants, Preparatory Grants and Valorisation Grants** will be evaluated by the administrative offices of SNSF.

Applications for **Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships** will be evaluated by an evaluation panel. The decision of panel members will be based on external reviews. Following the panel recommendation, the Research Council of SNSF will decide upon the proposals to be funded.

The **evaluation criteria** are specific to each funding instrument and can be found in the annexes below.

7. Annexes

7.1 Conference Grants (CG)

7.1.1 Description

For good quality scientific conferences with international participation taking place in Switzerland funds can be made available to finance conference participation of Eastern European researchers. Pure training courses will not be supported.

7.1.2 Goals

Conference grants aim to strengthen the international networks of scientists from Eastern Europe and open new perspectives for their international co-operation as well as for the development of their scientific curricula.

7.1.3 Project duration

Maximum 7 days

7.1.4 Project consortia

The Swiss conference organiser must submit the proposal.

7.1.5 Eligible costs

Contribution to travel and accommodation costs for conference participants from partner countries (flat rate per person, see below). The maximum contribution per CG is CHF 10'000.

7.1.6 Submission

Applications may be submitted to SNSF during the whole period of the programme, but at least 3 months before the conference takes place.

7.1.7 Evaluation and selection

The quality of the conference and the candidates will be checked. Young scientists (<45) and active conference participants will be given preference. A gender balance is aimed at.

7.1.8 Financial issues

Region	Countries	Flat rate per person*
Western Balkan countries:	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	CHF 1500
South Caucasus:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	CHF 2000
Central Asia:	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	CHF 2500
Other countries:	Moldova, Ukraine	CHF 2000
EU-Member States:	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	CHF 1000
Other countries:	Croatia, Russia	CHF 1000

* All amounts shown are the maximum flat rate per person. Smaller amounts are also possible in order to support more participants if requested. About 50% of the funding should go to partner(s) from category A (chapter 5.2).

7.2 Joint Research Projects (JRP)

7.2.1 Description

At least one research team from Switzerland and one from Eastern Europe (composition of project consortia see chapter 5) undertake in close co-operation a specific research project. Research work is carried out at the participating research institutions. The co-operation offers opportunity for exchange.

The responsibility for the project is taken by the Swiss partner (= co-ordinator). It is possible to include one or more research partners from Eastern Europe. Partners from the country category B – if existing – could be involved by the Swiss co-ordinator for the support and possibly capacity development activities for the research teams from the country category A, if it makes sense and all partners agree.

7.2.2 Goals

The achievement of qualitatively good and preferably transition relevant research results within the framework of an international co-operation associated with knowledge transfer, from which the expertise, the profile as well as the European and international integration of the Eastern partners can be supported.

7.2.3 Project duration

24-36 months

7.2.4 Project consortia

See chapter 5.3

7.2.5 Eligible costs

The following costs will be accepted:

- Travel and accommodation costs for exchange visits and short stays (up to three months per person and year)
- Participation at international conferences (only Eastern European partners)
- Individual grants (only Eastern European partners)
- Equipment (only Eastern European partners; maximum 30% of the total amount per partner)
- Consumables (mainly for Eastern European partners)
- Co-ordination costs for Swiss partner(s)

7.2.6 Submission

Applications must be submitted to SNSF not later than April 15, 2009. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

A second call is foreseen in the second half of 2010.

7.2.7 Evaluation and selection

The external experts, members of the evaluation panel and the research council will evaluate the following aspects:

Scientific quality

- Current scientific interest and impact of the project (scientific significance)
- Novelty of the proposed research approach and research questions
- Suitability and originality of the methods to be used
- Experience and past performance of the applicants
- Specific abilities of the applicants for the proposed project

Relevance

- Significance for the economic and/or societal development of the partner country
- Strengthening of capacities for researchers and research institutions of partner countries (promotion of young scientists and women)
- Communication strategy for research results to potential users (dissemination/exploitation)
- Balanced distribution of duties, competences and responsibilities between the partners
- Contribution to (inter)national embedding and networking

Management/Budget

- The project proposal includes a clearly defined research objective, research results and indicators to track progress towards objectives.
- The proposed project management setup provides for good co-operation between Swiss and Eastern European partners.
- The cost/benefit ratio of the project is comparatively favourable.
- The research plan is realistic, the project is feasible.

7.2.8 Financial issues

Here are some examples of budgets that would fit the new model of project consortia:

Total amount per JRP with one Eastern European (EE) partner

	total
Swiss partner(s)	30'000
EE partners (only category A)	75'000
Total	105'000

Total amount per JRP with two Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	45'000
First EE partner (category A)	75'000
Second EE partner (category A or B)*	75'000
Total	195'000

Total amount per JRP with three Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	60'000
First EE partner (category A)	60'000
Second EE partner (category A) *	60'000
Third EE partner (category A or B) *	60'000
Total	240'000

Total amount per JRP with four Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	60'000
First EE partner (category A)	60'000
Second EE partner (category A)*	60'000
Third EE partner (category A or B)*	60'000
Forth EE partner (category A or B)*	60'000
Total	300'000

* see chapter 5.3 for further details

7.3 Institutional Partnerships (IP)

7.3.1 Description

Swiss partners support research institutions (University departments, institutes of the Academies, laboratories, etc.) in the partner countries in their efforts of restructuring and modernisation at institutional level. A partnership will comprise at least one researcher from Switzerland and one from Eastern Europe (composition of project consortia see chapter 5). The Swiss side is responsible for the project co-ordination. It is possible to include one or more research partners from Eastern Europe; at least half of the teams must come from the country category A.

Partners from the country category B – if existing – could be involved by the Swiss co-ordinator for the restructuring and modernisation of the research institutions as well as capacity development from the country category A, if it makes sense and all partners agree.

7.3.2 Goals

For further development of research institutions in Eastern Europe, various activities are possible:

- **in research:** e.g. improved use of scarce resources through co-operation, rebuilding of relevant research areas, development of research networks, qualification of young scientists, infrastructure (maximal 30%)
- **in education:** e.g. teaching content, further education of tutors, support in the Bologna process, infrastructure (maximal 30%)
- **in management:** e.g. quality assurance, strategic planning

through which the position of the specific transitions process is strengthened and its attractiveness and international competitiveness increased.

7.3.3 Project duration

24-36 months

7.3.4 Project consortia

See chapter 5.3

7.3.5 Allowable costs in the programme

The following costs will be accepted:

- Travel and subsistence costs (work meetings, workshops, training activities, etc.)
- Research infrastructure (maximum 30% of the budget, only partners from Eastern Europe)
- Contractual costs (maximum 10% of the budget, e.g. for subcontracts with experts)
- Co-ordination costs for Swiss partner(s)

No funds are allocated for research activities.

7.3.6 Submission

Applications must be submitted to SNSF not later than April 15, 2009. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

A second call is foreseen in the second half of 2010.

7.3.7 Evaluation and selection

The external experts, members of the evaluation panel and the research council will evaluate the following aspects:

Expected benefits for the scientific institution

- Current institutional needs and impact of the partnership (changes in structure and process)
- Quality and state-of-the-art of the proposed institutional approach
- Suitability and originality of the methods to be used
- Experience and past performance of the applicants
- Specific abilities of the applicants for the proposed project

Relevance

- Significance for the economic and/or societal development of the partner country
- Strengthening of capacities of researchers and research institutions of partner countries (promotion of young scientists and women)
- Communication strategy for the partnership outcome to potential users (dissemination/exploitation)
- Balanced distribution of duties, competences and responsibilities between the partners
- Contribution to (inter)national embedding and networking

Management/Budget

- The project proposal includes a clearly defined concept, development activities and indicators to track progress towards objectives.
- The proposed project management setup provides for good co-operation between Swiss and Eastern European partners.
- The cost/benefit ratio of the partnership is comparatively favourable.
- The partnership concept is realistic, the partnership is feasible.

7.3.8 Financial issues

Here are some examples of budgets that would fit the new model of project consortia:

Total amount per IP with one Eastern European (EE) partner

	total
Swiss partner(s)	30'000
EE partners (only category A)	75'000
Total	105'000

Total amount per IP with two Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	45'000
First EE partner (category A)	75'000
Second EE partner (category A or B)	75'000
Total	195'000

Total amount per IP with three Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	60'000
First EE partner (category A)	60'000
Second EE partner (category A) *	60'000
Third EE partner (category A or B) *	60'000
Total	240'000

Total amount per IP with four Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	60'000
First EE partner (category A)	60'000
Second EE partner (category A) *	60'000
Third EE partner (category A or B) *	60'000
Fourth EE partner (category A or B) *	60'000
Total	300'000

* see chapter 5.3 for further details

7.4 Preparatory Grants (PG)

7.4.1 Objectives

PG should improve the quality of the submitted JRP/IP proposals.

7.4.2 Description

Researchers who intend to submit a proposal have the opportunity to request funds for travel and subsistence costs in order to meet future partners. This meeting should allow partners to discuss and work on the application.

7.4.3 Allowable costs

- Contribution to travel and subsistence costs
- Maximum amount per PG: CHF 10'000 (flat rate per person)

Travel from/to Switzerland

Region	Country	Flat rate
Western Balkan countries:	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	CHF 1500
South Caucasus:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	CHF 2000
Central Asia:	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	CHF 2500
EU-Member States:	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,	CHF 1000
Other countries:	Croatia, Russia Moldova, Ukraine	CHF 1000 CHF 2000

7.4.4 Submission

Applications must be submitted to SNSF before 30 March 2009. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

The submission of PG is possible during the second call for proposals in 2010.

7.4.5 Eligibility

The eligibility of a Preparatory Grant is dependent upon the submission of a full proposal. Funds will only be granted upon reception of a main proposal which meets the eligibility criteria for a JRP/IP.

7.5 Valorisation Grants

7.5.1 Objective

Valorisation Grants aim to increase the effects and sustainability of the supported activities and the results achieved in the framework of JRP / IP (e.g. elaboration of publications, websites, organisation of conferences with stakeholders or the general public). Besides this, VG are possible for running JRP / IP which intend common activities with other JRP / IP in order to improve the effects of the outcomes.

7.5.2 Description

For JRP and IP which have generated transition relevant results, funds can be assigned to support their implementation or dissemination. Further measures benefiting a strengthened impact orientation such as extra financial support of co-operation between different JRP/IP will be considered, if the according synergy develops during the programme.

7.5.3 Eligible costs

Allowable costs are not defined. The financed activities must relate to the goals of SCOPES.

7.5.4 Submission

Applications may be submitted to SNSF during the whole programme period, but at least 3 months before the activities take place.

7.5.5 Evaluation and selection

The activities must contribute to an improved distribution / implementation of the results achieved in the JRP / IP.

8. Examples of budgets

Example of CG budget

Origin of conference participants	CHF
Armenia	2000
Bosnia-H.	1500
Croatia	1000
Kazakhstan	2000
Moldova	2000
Total	9500

Example of JRP / IP budget*

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	total
<u>Main Swiss applicant</u>				
Travel & accommodation costs	5000	5000	5000	15000
Consumables	2500	2500	2500	7500
Other costs	2500	2500	2500	7500
Total costs	10000	10000	10000	30000
<u>Co-applicant 1 from EE</u>				
Equipment	10000	0	0	10000
Consumables	5000	2000	2000	9000
Travel & accommodation costs	5000	10000	3000	18000
Individual grants (only JRP)	9000	9000	9000	27000
Other costs	6000	2000	2000	10000
Total costs	35000	23000	16000	74000
<u>Co-applicant 2 from EE</u>				
Equipment	5000	0	0	5000
Consumables	5000	5000	5000	15000
Travel & accommodation costs	5000	10000	3000	18000
Individual grants (only JRP)	10000	8000	7000	25000
Other costs	6000	2000	2000	10000
Total costs	31000	25000	17000	73000
<u>Total budget</u>				
Main Swiss applicant	10000	10000	10000	30000
Co-applicant 1	35000	23000	16000	74000
Co-applicant 2	31000	25000	17000	73000
Total	76000	58000	43000	177000

* Divided into amounts per year as required for the electronic submission

15 December 2008

OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES (not part of the SCOPES programme)

The following ongoing initiatives also fund research collaborations in Eastern Europe. The main differences are outlined below. For more details on their funding conditions and deadlines, please refer to the respective websites.

Bilateral Science and Technology co-operation programme with Russia (Leading House Russia)

Aim

The Federal Council approved a bilateral science and technology co-operation programme with different priority countries, among others Russia. The University of Geneva was designated as the Leading House (LH) and the EPFL as the Associated Leading House (ALH) for the implementation of this co-operation programme.

Budget

CHF 6.850 million are dedicated to bilateral S&T co-operation with Russia

Funding instruments

- Faculty exchange projects / Student exchange projects
- Utilisation of specific infrastructure projects
- Joint Research Projects

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Scientific Exchange Programme between Switzerland and the New Member States of the European Union (SCIE XNMS^{CH})

Aim

The main goal of the programme is to establish scientific collaborations, which will 1) develop individual researchers' capacities (human capital); 2) foster scientific progress and innovation (scientific prospects); 3) establish or enhance networks between researchers (networking).

Budget

CHF 28.5 million for Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia.

Funding instruments

- Research fellowships
- Short term research visits

Contact info

<http://www.crus.ch>

Research cooperation as part of the Swiss EU-Enlargement contribution

Aim

Support research cooperation and enhance the knowledge base in selected research topics as well as know-how and technology transfer.

Budget

CHF 28 million (Poland: 18 m, Hungary: 3.5 m, Lithuania: 6.5m)

Funding instruments

- Joint research projects with Swiss research institutions
- Institutional partnerships

Contact info

<http://www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch>

Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP)

Aim

The Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP) aims at establishing and strengthening transition-relevant social research capacities that contribute to social, economic and institutional reforms in the individual countries as well as to their regional integration.

Annual budget

1 million for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Funding instruments

1. Financing of social research projects;
2. Capacity building;
3. Regional cooperation and networking

Contact info

www.rrpp-westernbalkans.net

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