
Guidelines for the lifetime management of joint research projects and institu- tional partnerships (grants)

Scientific cooperation between Eastern Europe and
Switzerland (SCOPES)

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SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS
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Preamble

The Swiss National Science Foundation

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is Switzerland's foremost institution in the promotion of scientific research. Established as a foundation under private law, it has funded research work in all scientific fields on behalf of the Swiss Confederation since 1952. The focus is on basic research, part of which may be geared to practical application.

In fulfilling its mandate to promote scientific research, the SNSF has devised a variety of funding schemes under which researchers can submit applications and request financial support. The funding schemes are organised as follows:

- Projects
- Careers
- Programmes (SCOPES and others)
- Infrastructures
- Science communication

SCOPES

The SCOPES programme (Scientific co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland), which is financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), promotes scientific co-operation between research groups and institutions in Switzerland and Eastern Europe as well as the new independent states of the former Soviet Union (NIS).

Project funding documentation

The SCOPES documentation consists of:

- Call document
- [Guidelines for the lifetime management of SCOPES Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships \(including different forms\)](#), providing assistance in managing projects.

These documents are available on the SNSF's website (www.snf.ch / Programmes / SCOPES / Documents). The guidelines are based primarily on the [Funding Regulations](#), the [General Implementation Regulations](#) for the Funding Regulations and the [Organisational Regulations](#) of the National Research Council and are not legally binding.

Their sole purpose is explanatory and they do not in any circumstances substitute the mentioned formal legal documents or any other provisions applicable to procedures and grants. Depending on the funding scheme, there may be slight deviations from the evaluation procedure as described in the guidelines.

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1. The ruling

The SNSF forwards the final decisions on applications to the Swiss main applicant in the form of a ruling (in accordance with the Federal Act on Administrative Procedure). If your project has been approved, the letter you receive will contain the following information:

- Amount of the funds awarded, split into annual instalments
- Duration of the grant
- If applicable, any conditions that need to be met before the funds are transferred
- Due date of the first scientific report
- If applicable, any further comments/conditions
- Information on the right of appeal

2. Responsibilities

When approval is given, applications become projects or grants (in financial terms) and applicants become grantees. The Swiss main applicant is responsible vis-à-vis the SNSF for each application or grant.

All Swiss applicants and applicants from partner countries accept personal responsibility for the success of the project. However, only the Swiss main applicant represents the research group before the SNSF. Such representation is legally binding. He or she becomes the responsible grantee for the SNSF. The SNSF addresses all communications concerning the grant to this person and all the awarded funds are transferred to this person's institution (in most cases, the grant administration office). The entire grant is administered at this institution, from where funds can be transferred to the institutions of the other grantees. Each grantee is responsible vis-à-vis the SNSF for using the funds received appropriately.

The research group defines the co-operations and legal relationships between its members, particularly with regard to authorship rights, access to data and research results. If a new responsible grantee is chosen within a research group, the new and the current responsible person must jointly file a corresponding application with the SNSF.

The responsible grantee is responsible for the following tasks vis-à-vis the SNSF:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds
- Requesting personnel, changes of personnel and salary adjustments
- Submitting scientific reports and entering output data
- Submitting financial reports
- Informing the SNSF about any changes affecting the grantees (e.g. moves, changes to employment terms)
- Coordination between the research teams and management of the project
- Transferring funds to the other grantees

Responsible grantees can delegate some of these tasks to project partners or secretariats in *mySNF* in order to reduce their administration workload (see chapter 11).

3. Getting started

3.1 Start of funding

The project must start no later than 6 months after the date of the approval letter. The starting date must fall on the first day of a month and must not be earlier than the date stated in the ruling. The responsible grantee informs the SNSF about the starting date when requesting the release of funds via [mySNF](#). The SNSF confirms the release of the grant when the first instalment is transferred.

3.2 Release of funds

The responsible grantee requests the release of the approved funds and the payment of every annual instalment via [mySNF](#). The funds are paid in annual instalments in accordance with the ruling. Prior to the release of funds, you must submit a lay summary in one of the national languages of Switzerland. The lay summary will be published in the SNSF's projects database. Furthermore, all necessary authorisations (for animal testing, tests on humans, etc.) and additional documents must have been submitted via [mySNF](#). These documents can be uploaded under "Request for release of funds" under "Other annexes". In addition, any conditions stated in the ruling must be met.

For the following years, you must request the payment of instalments via [mySNF](#). As a rule, the payment can be requested no earlier than 1 month before the start of the next funding year.

3.3 Transferring funds to other grantees

Funds may only be transferred to researchers who are listed as other grantees in the ruling.

Funds transfers to the other applicants are exempt from value-added tax. With regard to the value-added tax legislation, it is important that the funds are not requested via an invoice, but exclusively via a payment request. The responsible grantee needs to make the payment.

In principle there are various methods for transactions. If the transfer of funds from the partner institutes to the relevant research teams is reliable, funds may be transferred to the accounts of the institutes. Transfers to partners may also be made to the accounts of individuals participating in a project, provided that the legal requirements of the partner country are taken into consideration. It is not advisable to transfer the whole sum in one go, but rather in (3-monthly or 6-monthly) instalments, especially when no prior transfers have been made to the partner country. Only when the chosen bank and transfer method have proved reliable and when the partnership is going well should larger amounts be transferred.

3.4 Employment of staff

Any new appointments, staff turnover or salary adjustments in Switzerland are subject to approval by the SNSF. A corresponding request must be placed with the SNSF in

advance in the form of a "change of personnel" notification via [mySNF](#). You will find the web-based forms on mySNF if you select the relevant project and click on the corresponding section. Notifications of personnel changes are the responsibility of the responsible applicant. However, in order to reduce his/her administration workload, they may be delegated to third parties (see chapter 10). For approved projects, employees can be registered online prior to the release of funds. This process can be simplified by adopting data directly from the application or from any previous projects.

Employment relationships must be regulated by the grantees' institution by means of a written contract. The institutions are responsible for compliance with the statutory labour and social insurance provisions. The SNSF specifies binding salary brackets and norms for different staff categories in Switzerland. In particular, the provisions concerning doctoral students pursuant to Clause 6.4.5 of the [General Implementation Regulations](#) for the Funding Regulations must be complied with (employment for a maximum period of four years as of the date of matriculation etc.).

It is not necessary to notify personnel changes in the partner countries. They have to be mentioned in the progress report.

4. Reports

4.1 Scientific reports

A comprehensive progress report has to be submitted every 12 months. The report has to cover all sub projects. The progress report has to follow the provided guidelines.

You will receive the corresponding requests automatically in the form of e-mails sent via *mySNF*.

Since autumn 2011, grantees have entered output data on SNSF projects (scientific publications, scientific events, knowledge transfer events, collaborations, etc.) in addition to sending the scientific reports. You can update and complete these data at any time via *mySNF*, i.e. even after the conclusion of the project, but no later than the due date of a scientific report. Please bear in mind that the SNSF is only interested in data that are directly linked to the funded project. The SNSF uses these data for the following purposes:

1. Along with the scientific results and the progress made in the preceding project, the data provide a basis for the evaluation of follow-up projects.
2. The data are entered in the web-based research database p³ ([p3.snf.ch](#)), where researchers and the general public can gain information on the research work funded by the SNSF.
3. The data serve as a basis for aggregated and anonymised quantitative analyses, e.g. with regard to the number of publications and patents produced in connection with SNSF projects in the course of a year.

4.2 Financial reports

All grantees who have received funds must annually submit a financial report. If possible, the financial report and the corresponding receipts should be submitted exclusively in electronic form via [mySNF](#). The grantee is responsible for the submission. The

report is generally compiled by the grant administration office (financial department, fund administration or similar entity) of the grantee's institution and transmitted to the grantee for examination via *mySNF*. The specific processes, e.g. for the transmission of receipts, are defined by the grant administration offices of the individual institutions.

The other grantees are responsible for the compilation of a financial report at their institution on the funds allocated to them and for the transmission of this report along with all receipts to the responsible grantee or to the latter's grant administration office. Hence, the responsible grantee solely enters his/her project costs in his/her financial report along with the instalments transferred to the project partners. The responsible grantee or the grant administration office compiles a [financial overview](#) of all sub-projects, reviews it and submits it along with all reports and receipts to the SNSF. This financial overview also serves as the basis for the figures to be entered in *mySNF*. If possible, the financial reports and receipts should be submitted exclusively in electronic form via *mySNF*. For this reason, the other grantees should make their reports available to the responsible grantee in electronic form.

The partners from partner countries (also have to compile an annual financial report. They have to complete the appropriate [excel list](#) and submit it with the relevant receipts. The financial report has to cover the project parts in Switzerland and the partner countries.

Receipts which are not written in English, German or French should be complemented with a short explanation in one of these languages, either on the official account forms or on the receipts themselves. All receipts for foreign currency transactions should also state the equivalent amount in Swiss francs. The co-ordinator must account for the use of the funds transferred to the partner. Confirmation that a specific sum has been received by the partner is insufficient.

5. Budget items

The main budget items listed in SNSF rulings and letters of approval or in subsequently approved budgets and the corresponding amounts are binding on grantees. In principle, transfers of amounts from one budget item to another must be approved in writing by the SNSF in advance. However, across the entire running time of the project, you may transfer amounts up to a **total of CHF 20,000** without approval if the budget transfers do not violate or circumvent any requirements or conditions set by the SNSF.

5.1 Equipment and components

This category comprises all apparatus, appliances and material of permanent value. This may be bought in the partner country, in Switzerland or in a third country (taking service and repairs into consideration). Purchases may be made in the partner country by the leader or a trusted party of the Eastern European research group to whom the money may be transferred by the project co-ordinator (original receipts must be presented to the SNSF). Material bought in a third country may be paid directly by the co-ordinator in Switzerland. In this case the Eastern European partner must confirm that he has received the goods.

5.2 Ownership of Equipment and other Material Investments

Equipment and any other material investments bought by means of the financial contribution of SCOPES shall become the property of the Partners who are entitled to accept, possess and use it in accordance with the research plan. The Partners being in possession of this equipment and/or material investments shall ensure that it is duly made available for the purposes of the project and remains available for its scientific purposes beyond the duration of SCOPES project.

5.3 Research Funds (consumables, field expenses)

Consumables include (e.g. chemicals), maintenance and rental for apparatus. Original receipts must be provided for all expenditure.

Field expenses includes all expenses for participation in congresses, workshops, travel and stay in the partner institutions. Research stays in the partner country should also be allotted to this budget category. Research stays in the partner country should not exceed 3 months per year per person. Any longer stay must be justified. Researchers carrying out a research stay will receive a daily allowance for various expenses. The daily allowance will not exceed CHF 150.- a day or 3500.- a month. A form for this category will be available.

5.4 Individual grants of the partners

The payments of the individual grants are to be immediately confirmed with signature by the person(s) receiving the contributions. The confirmation should include the project number, the duration of involvement, the percentage of working time allotted to the project. A form for individual grants will be available.

5.5 Not eligible costs

- Expenditure incurred before and after the dates of the project
- Interest of debt, purchase of land and buildings
- Fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation, bribes
- Activities supported from other sources
- Pay taxes or duties of any kind, nor to buy insurances of any kind in any of the countries involved,
- Administrative costs in Switzerland

5.6 Currency exchange rate

With regard to exchange rates: the actual conversion rates (rates of the day) of the transfers/payments are to be applied in accordance with the transfer/payment receipts of the bank etc. The conversion from local currency to CHF in the financial report (pivot summary in excel sheet for partners abroad) as of the end of the reporting period must be done using the rate of the day on the final day of the reporting period.

6. Extensions

You can place a request with the SNSF for the cost-neutral extension of a grant or project. This may be necessary if the project has been delayed for unforeseeable reasons and money could therefore not be spent. Such a cost-neutral extension must be applied for in writing.

7. Repayment of remaining amounts

Upon expiry of the grant, you need to repay any unused funds no later than 30 days after compiling the final financial report, unless the funds in question amount to less than CHF 50. The amount is to be repaid to the following account of the SNSF:

PC 30-3767-5 Schweizerischer Nationalfonds, 3012 Bern; the corresponding grant number must be mentioned. Unused funds have to be paid back to the responsible applicant. Once an overview of all project contributions is available, he or she is responsible for any repayments to the SNSF.

8. Sanction

In the case of any improper use of the allocation made by the SNSF or of violations of any terms and conditions by the project partners, the SNSF shall be entitled to apply the following sanctions:

- Letter of reprimand
- Letter of warning
- Reduction, suspension or reimbursement of grants
- Non consideration of any further proposal for a limited period

9. Working with *mySNF* - especially for project partners (other applicants) and secretariats

Almost all of the mentioned processes can be carried out electronically in *mySNF* without physical signature. The responsibility for this lies with the grantees. You may, however, authorise third parties (e.g. project partners, secretariats) to assist you in managing the projects. This is only possible if these persons are registered *mySNF* users and hence have their own access to *mySNF*. The authorised persons may fill in the online forms for the following processes, whereby the responsible grantees must, in a final step, transmit the data to the SNSF from their own user account:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds
- Submitting scientific reports
- Submitting financial reports (only relevant if main grant is not administered by a grant administration office)

The following processes can be delegated entirely to third parties, who can fill in the online forms and transmit them to the SNSF - the responsible grantee always receives an e-mail confirmation of the transmission:

- Requesting personnel, changes of personnel and salary adjustments
- Entering output data
- Entering the lay summary
- Request for payment of an installment

Furthermore, the grantees can specify in *mySNF* that copies of all automated correspondence (e.g. the request to compile a scientific report) be sent to the authorised persons by e-mail.

You will find all settings with regard to the authorisation of third parties in your *mySNF* account in the main navigation bar on the left under "Manage authorisations".

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