

Guidelines for NCCR Reporting

1. Introduction

Pursuant to the decree relative to the Federal Law on Research of July 25 2000 (Art. 8f), the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR). The following are guidelines for NCCR reporting.

2. Purpose of the reporting

The purpose of the annual reporting is:

- To monitor, assure and improve the quality of the NCCR concerned
- To provide a basis for a decision on the continuation of funding for the coming year
- To issue instructions and suggestions to the NCCR management
- To provide information for the Swiss National Science Foundation's reporting on the use of financial resources vis-à-vis the public and the authorities (cost-benefit analysis)

3. Procedure

Information in the NCCR is passed from ground level up; the process is completed once the NCCR management receives written feedback from the SNSF (see diagram).

The NCCR managements must ensure that they receive the necessary information from the individual projects in order to guarantee the punctual submission of the progress reports. These internal procedures are set down in the internal regulations of the NCCRs.

First, the NCCR office of the SNSF checks the reports (inclusion of official forms, full completion of documents). In the case of an incomplete submission, the progress reports are returned to the NCCR managements for completion.

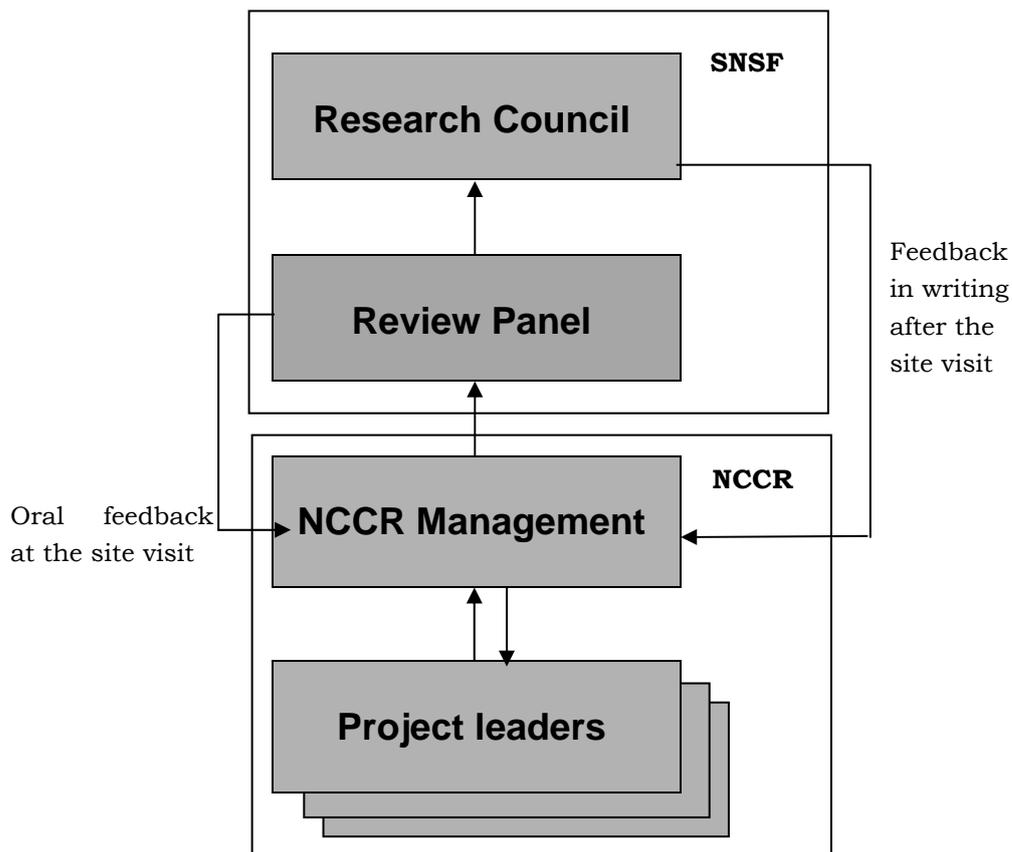
The review panels appointed by the SNSF carry out site visits at the NCCRs once a year, and assess their performance based on the written progress reports, the oral presentations, laboratory visits etc. at the end of the site visit the review panels provide orally the NCCR managements and the representatives of the Home Institutions with the findings resulting of their internal discussions. The review panels provide the Research Council of the SNSF with brief reports. It will mainly look at goal attainment and the quality of research, knowledge and technology transfer

(KTT), education/training/advancement of women and management. In addition, the review panels assess integration and coherence, structural impact and plans for next steps of the NCCRs.

In their reports, the review panels advise the SNSF to continue funding the NCCRs or to terminate them. The panels can also propose recommendations in their reports.

The Research Council processes the recommendations made by the review panels, and is responsible for approval or rejection of the reports submitted by the NCCR Directors. It decides on the continuation of the NCCRs, which may be linked to conditions or recommendations. The NCCR managements receive written feedbacks from the Swiss National Science Foundation on the decisions of the Research Council including excerpts of the review panel reports.

As set down in the Federal Decree on Research (Art. 8g, Para. 2), the SNSF may ask the Federal Department of Home Affairs to terminate NCCRs, even when under contract, if organisational or scientific reasons would most likely prevent the NCCRs from reaching their targets, and which could not be overcome even with the introduction of countermeasures.



4. Timing of the Progress Reports

NCCRs are under contract initially for up to four years. Four progress reports must be submitted during this period.

- The first progress report is to be made by the end of the ninth month of the first year of contract. Its purpose is to check if the start has been carried out successfully by the NCCR. It may therefore be comparatively brief as far as science is concerned. It should not detail any achievements, such as publications, which were completed prior to the founding of the NCCR. With the first report the NCCR Managements provide their concepts in education/training, advancement of women, KTT and communication.
- The second progress report (by the end of the 21st month) provides an overview of the twelve months following the first report.
- The third progress report should be a synthesis of the entire duration of the NCCR to date, i.e. a total of 33 months. The review panel uses it as an instrument for early detection of problem areas. This is to provide enough time to introduce corrective measures prior to the next funding decision. The report must be submitted together with a coherent concept for the continuation of the NCCR.
- The fourth progress report during the contract period provides an insight to work carried out since the last report (i.e. over the last 12 months). It must be submitted together with the full proposal for the continuation of the NCCR.

The reports for the years 5 – 12 follow the same rules as in the first four years.

5. Content of the Progress Reports

The reports are divided into three parts:

1. Section 1: It documents the development of the NCCR in relation to research, KTT, education and training and advancement of women, communication, structural aspects and management.
2. Section 2: Lists/Statistics: The lists contain information on various aspects, such as personnel, academic awards, publications and other output. The statistics are presented in tabular form and contain a range of output data. They are produced by the reporting tool NIRA.
3. Section 3: This section compares the budget of the current contract year with the actual expenses (12 months forecast). This target vs. actual comparison is not to be confused with the accounts that must be drawn up at the end of each contract year. The whole financial reporting must be done with the reporting tool NIRA.

In addition, this section contains the definitive budget for the subsequent year as well as the provisional budgets for the remaining years, up to the end of the contract period.

The SNSF provides for each reporting year the respective cover sheet and the explanations. They can be downloaded under www.nccr.ch. Since the review panels are international and interdisciplinary in composition, the reports shall be written in English and importance given to intelligibility.

6. Confidentiality

The NCCR reports are dealt with by the SNSF and his bodies in strict confidence. They may not be passed on to a third party or be used for one's own purposes or that of others. The members of the review panels are obliged to sign a confidentiality agreement. However, the personal and output data, and the key features of the budget can be published by the SNSF.

The NCCR management can also use the report in dealings with other financial providers. The SNSF has to be informed.

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