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## **Organisational Regulations of the National Research Council of 14 November 2007**

Based on Article 22, paragraph 2 of the Statutes,  
the National Research Council  
hereby adopts the following regulations:

### **Chapter 1      General regulations**

#### **Article 1      Scope**

These Regulations define the organisation and competencies of the National Research Council (hereinafter "Research Council").

#### **Article 2      Structure**

<sup>1</sup> The Research Council is divided into Divisions and cross-divisional Specialised Committees and governed by the Presiding Board. Each Division or Specialised Committee has a President and a Vice President.

<sup>2</sup> The Presiding Board, the Divisions and the Specialised Committees are supported by a number of bodies as defined in these Regulations.

<sup>3</sup> All members of the Research Council together form the Plenum.

<sup>4</sup> The Administrative Offices assume secretarial and administrative tasks on behalf of the bodies of the Research Council.

#### **Article 3      Decision-making**

<sup>1</sup> A majority of the members of a body constitute a quorum. Decisions are made by a simple majority vote of those present. The President also votes and in the event of a stalemate he/she has a casting vote.

<sup>2</sup> In matters of urgency, decisions can be made in written form. They require the approval of a majority of members.

## **Article 4            Meetings**

<sup>1</sup> The bodies of the Research Council meet at least once a year.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes are taken during meetings.

## **Article 5            Withdrawals (recusals)**

<sup>1</sup> Persons involved in the funding activities of the SNSF, including external reviewers and employees at the Administrative Offices, shall withdraw if

- a. they have a personal interest in the matter;
- b. they are related or linked to a person involved in the procedure as an applicant or a grantee, whether in direct line or collaterally (up to third degree), by marriage, by registered partnership or by cohabitation;
- c. they collaborate closely with an applicant or recipient of funds;
- d. there are any other conflicts of interest.

<sup>2</sup> The person concerned shall declare his or her interests spontaneously without being asked.

<sup>3</sup> If the withdrawal is contested, the body of which the person is a member or by which the person is appointed shall decide.

<sup>4</sup> Members of evaluation bodies or other persons involved in the evaluation must withdraw from the entire evaluation procedure if one of the applications under evaluation is their own. The withdrawal obligation also applies to any decisions taken prior to the launching of a call.<sup>1</sup>

## **Article 6            Official/Professional secrecy**

<sup>1</sup> Persons involved in the funding activities of the SNSF, including external reviewers, are bound by official/professional secrecy. Information that is not publicly accessible or known shall be treated as confidential.

<sup>2</sup> Official/Professional secrecy is not be lifted when the involvement with the SNSF comes to an end.

# **Chapter 2            Organisation and Responsibilities**

## **Section 1            The Plenum**

### **Article 7**

<sup>1</sup> The Plenum discusses fundamental issues that are either internal (activities and funding policies of the SNSF) or external (science and research policies).

<sup>2</sup> The Plenum may recommend to the Presiding Board the development of new ideas and may mandate groups to discuss specific subjects in more depth.

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<sup>1</sup> New wording pursuant to the decision of the National Research Council of 20.3.2018, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 9.5.2018, in force with immediate effect.

## **Section 2      The Presiding Board**

### **Article 8      Composition**

<sup>1</sup> The Presiding Board consists of the President of the Research Council and the Presidents of the Divisions and Specialised Committees. One of the members is elected Vice President.

<sup>2</sup> If the President of a Division or Specialised Committee is absent, the Vice President of the respective Division or Committee assumes his or her role on the Presiding Board and has the right to vote.

<sup>3</sup> The President of the Research Council is not a member of a Division or Specialised Committee. The other members of the Presiding Board are not eligible to stand for election as president of another Division or Specialised Committee during their term of office. Vice Presidents may hold more than one vice presidency.

### **Article 9      Competencies**

Unless otherwise stated in the Statutes or these Regulations, the Presiding Board assumes the tasks assigned to the Research Council. In particular it

- a. approves decisions of the Divisions, Sections, Specialised Commissions and Specialised Committees unless these Regulations or the Implementation Regulations issued by the Presiding Board explicitly state otherwise;
- b. issues the Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations upon request of the Divisions, Sections and Specialised Committees<sup>2</sup>;
- c. approves recommendations concerning basic scientific policy decisions and the principles on which the SNSF's research funding policies are based;
- d. may appoint working groups or commissions;
- e. elects on request of the Divisions and Specialised Committees their Vice Presidents as well as the members of the Specialised Committees, Specialised Commissions and Presiding Boards and permanent external members of the Evaluation Commissions;
- f. makes decisions on grant applications for a research semester for members of the Research Council who leave office;<sup>3</sup>
- g. may subdivide the Divisions of the Research Council into Sections on request of the said Divisions.

### **Article 10      Rejection of decisions during the approval process**

<sup>1</sup> If the Presiding Board does not approve the decision of a Division, Section, Specialised Committee or Specialised Commission, it returns the said decision to the decision-making body so that the latter may discuss it further and make a new recommendation.

<sup>2</sup> In well-founded cases, e.g. where breaches of the law or arbitrary changes to the practice are concerned, the Presiding Board may deviate from the new recommendation and make a unilateral decision.

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<sup>2</sup> Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015.

<sup>3</sup> New wording pursuant to the decision of the National Research Council of 15.2.2012, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 2.3.2012, in force since 1.7.2012.

## **Article 11      The President**

<sup>1</sup> The President represents the Research Council within the panels, commissions and other bodies of the SNSF and in public.

<sup>2</sup> Within the scope of the presidential credit defined in the budget, the president may at his or her own discretion support measures that are in line with the objectives embodied in the Statutes of the SNSF.<sup>4</sup>

## **Section 3      The Divisions**

### **Article 12      Organisation**

<sup>1</sup> The Research Council comprises the following Divisions:

- a. Humanities and Social Sciences (Division I), research funding in the area of the humanities and social sciences;
- b. Mathematics, Natural and Engineering Sciences (Division II), research funding in the area of mathematics, the natural sciences and engineering;
- c. Biology and Medicine (Division III), research funding in the area of biology and medicine;
- d. Programmes (Division IV), funding of research in the framework of National Research Programmes, National Centres of Competence in Research and other programmes.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to Article 8, paragraph 3, first sentence, every member of the Research Council is a member of a Division.

### **Article 13      Responsibilities**

<sup>1</sup> The Divisions are responsible for carrying out the tasks set out in Article 21, paragraph 2, letters e – i of the statutes, namely for the assessment of proposals (chapter 3).

<sup>2</sup> They prepare statements of the Research Council concerning research policy issues as well as recommendations with regard to research funding policies of the SNSF.

### **Article 14      Sections**

<sup>1</sup> Subject to the Presiding Board's approval, the Sections independently assess proposals, make funding decisions, and monitor and supervise the funded research project as well as the publication and implementation of findings.

<sup>2</sup> The Divisions may assign further preparatory work to the Sections for subsequent discussion in the Divisions.

<sup>3</sup> The Sections are chaired by a member of the divisional Presiding Board.

### **Article 15      Specialised Commissions**

#### **a. Appointment and responsibilities**

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Article 21 paragraph 2, letters e – h of the Statutes, the Presiding Board of the Research Council may assign to Specialised Commissions clearly defined tasks which require methodical, contextual and specialist knowledge that is lacking in the Division.

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<sup>4</sup> New wording pursuant to the decision of the Presiding Board of the National Research Council of 6.5.2015, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 6.5.2015.

<sup>2</sup> Specialised Commissions are appointed by the Presiding Board of the Research Council on request and under the aegis of a Division. Specialised Commissions have their own budgets, which are itemised in the annual funding plan and managed under the supervision of the relevant Division.

<sup>3</sup> The details are defined by the Presiding Board of the Research Council.

#### **Article 16            b. Composition of Specialised Commissions**

<sup>1</sup> As a rule, Specialised Commissions are composed of members of the Research Council and permanent external experts.

<sup>2</sup> The President of the Specialised Commission must be a member of the Research Council. Steering Committees of National Research Programmes are excepted from this rule.

<sup>3</sup> External experts are equal to members of the Research Council as regards their work within the Specialised Commission.

#### **Article 17            Review Panels**

<sup>1</sup> The Divisions have the competence to appoint Review Panels for scientific assessments.

<sup>2</sup> Review Panels are composed of external experts as well as a minimum of two members of the Division. They are presided over by a member of the Division. They do not have their own budget and are obliged to submit their decisions to the Division or Section for approval.

### **Section 4            Specialised Committees**

#### **Article 18            Organisation**

<sup>1</sup> The following Specialised Committees are appointed:

- a. International Co-operation;
- b. Careers;
- c. Interdisciplinary Research.

<sup>2</sup> The details are defined by the Presiding Board of the Research Council.

<sup>3</sup> The Specialised Committees define the profiles of members to be elected from within the Divisions of the Research Council. Based on these profiles, they nominate candidates for election by the Presiding Board.

<sup>4</sup> Specialised Committees nominate potential external experts for election by the Presiding Board.

#### **Article 19            Responsibilities**

<sup>1</sup> In their field of specialisation, Specialised Committees are responsible for carrying out the tasks set out in Article 21, paragraph 2, letters e – i of the Statutes.

<sup>2</sup> They develop a strategy for their field of specialisation for the attention of the Presiding Board of the Research Council and prepare statements of the Research Council concerning research policy issues as well as recommendations with regard to the research funding policies of the SNSF.

## **Article 20 Evaluation Commissions**

### **a. Appointment and Responsibilities**

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Article 21 paragraph 2, letters e – h of the Statutes, Specialised Committees may assign to an Evaluation Commission clearly defined tasks requiring methodical, contextual and specialist knowledge that is not at the Division's disposal to a sufficient degree.

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation Commissions do not have their own budget and submit their decisions to the Specialised Committee for approval.

## **Article 21 b. Composition of Evaluation Commissions**

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation Commissions include at least one member of the Research Council and external experts.

<sup>2</sup> The President and the Vice President of the Evaluation Commission are members of the Specialised Committee.

<sup>3</sup> External experts are equal to members of the Research Council as regards their work in the Evaluation Commission.

<sup>4</sup> The President and the Vice President of the Evaluation Commission as well as its members from within the Research Council and non-permanent external members are elected by the Specialised Committee. Permanent members are elected by the Presiding Board based on recommendations from the Specialised Committee.

## **Chapter 3 Roles in the assessment procedure**

### **Section 1 Funding proposals and grant extensions**

#### **Article 22 Formal examination**

The Administrative Offices are responsible for the formal examination of funding proposals pursuant to Articles 10 - 19<sup>5</sup> of the Funding Regulations.

#### **Article 23 Material examination<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The scientific, criteria-based examination of funding proposals pursuant to Article 24 et seq. of the Funding Regulations is carried out by the relevant bodies. If the division sets up a panel, its members are appointed by the division.

<sup>2</sup> For all proposals, the relevant body appoints the referees and co-referees from within its midst. It may delegate this task to the Administrative Offices.

<sup>3</sup> The referees appoint the experts for the external review pursuant to Article 25 of the Funding Regulations. They may delegate this task to the Administrative Offices.

<sup>4</sup> The relevant body may preselect proposals it deems clearly fundable or clearly not fundable respectively.

<sup>5</sup> The evaluation of proposals by the relevant body comprises:

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<sup>5</sup> Editorial amendment; Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015, in force since 1.1.2016.

<sup>6</sup> Amended based on the decision of the Presiding Board of the National Research Council of 8.12.2021, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council via circular resolution pursuant to the recommendation of 17.3.2022, in force since 1.1.2022.

- a. Discussion within the relevant evaluation body, which considers the independent recommendations presented by the referees, and taking into account the external reviews;
- b. individual rating by the members of the relevant body based on a uniform grading system;
- c. overall ranking based on a recognised statistical method, applied to the grades awarded by the relevant body's members.

<sup>6</sup> The proposals are funded within the scope of the assigned resources according to the overall ranking. Lots may be drawn if only some proposals can be funded from a group of proposals that cannot be scientifically further differentiated.

<sup>7</sup> The Presiding Board may define exceptions to the above provisions for individual funding schemes and programmes.

#### **Article 24            Non-consideration of manifestly inadequate proposals<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The non-consideration of proposals that are manifestly inadequate in terms of quality is effected by the Administrative Offices as the final authority for such non-consideration based on a written recommendation from the referee.

<sup>2</sup> The relevant bodies inform the Presiding Board of the Research Council annually of the total number of proposals rejected under the simplified procedure.

#### **Article 25            Scientific conferences and publication grants**

<sup>1</sup> The Divisions, Sections, Specialised Committees and Specialised Commissions have the final say with regard to the approval of grants for scientific conferences and publications.

<sup>2</sup> The Presiding Board of the Research Council determines maximum amounts for:

- a. conferences grants which are approved by scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices as the final authority;
- b. publication grants which are approved by scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices as the final authority after consulting with the referee.

<sup>3</sup> The Divisions and the Specialist Committees inform the Presiding Board of the Research Council annually about the number of grants and the amount of funding approved pursuant to paragraph 2.

#### **Article 26            Grants to complete a project<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The Divisions, Sections and Specialised Committees have the final say concerning applications for grants to complete projects pursuant to Article 36 of the Funding Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> The Presiding Board defines maximum amounts with regard to applications for grants to complete projects. The final say with regard to such applications lies with

- a. the president of the Division, Section, Specialised Commission or Specialised Committee after he/she has heard the referee's recommendation;
- b. scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices.

<sup>3</sup> The relevant bodies inform the Presiding Board of the Research Council annually about the number of applications for supplementary grants and the assessment and decision-making procedures applied.

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<sup>7</sup> Editorial amendment; Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015, in force since 1.1.2016.

<sup>8</sup> Editorial amendment; Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015, in force since 1.1.2016.

## **Article 27 Excellence grants<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Article 3 of the Project Funding Regulations, the Divisions, Sections and Specialised Committees have the final say with regard to decisions to either extend or not extend an ongoing grant in cases of outstanding scientific achievement.

<sup>2</sup> The relevant bodies inform the Presiding Board about the number of grant extensions and the assessment and decision-making procedures applied.

## **Section 2 Other requests**

### **Article 28 Reconsideration requests**

<sup>1</sup> Requests to reconsider decisions are examined by the scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices.

<sup>2</sup> In the absence of any signs of a flawed decision, they will refuse requests to reconsider decisions as the final authority for such requests.

<sup>3</sup> If signs of a flawed decision are in evidence, they will put the matter before the referee along with a recommendation to consider the request.

<sup>4</sup> Should the referee decide to consider the request, he or she will propose a new decision to the body responsible for the assessment. In all other cases, the request will not be considered.

<sup>5</sup> The relevant bodies inform the Presiding Board about the number of reconsideration requests and the assessment and decision-making procedures applied.

### **Article 29 Requests without financial implications**

The following persons or entities have the final say:

- a. based on a recommendation from the referee, the Divisions, Sections and specialised bodies with regard to any modification or termination of a non-financial condition explicitly mentioned in the funding decision or with regard to any significant modification of the research plan, namely as a result of changes to the infrastructure to be used in the research;
- b. the referees with regard to any move of the research location to another institution;
- c. the scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices with regard to all other requests from grantees that do not have any financial implications on the total amount already being paid and particularly with regard to any changes in personnel, adjustments to budget items or extension of grants without any cost impacts.

### **Article 30 Additional personnel expenses and transfer of balances**

The scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices have the final say with regard to grants for covering additional personnel expenses pursuant to Clause 6.4 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations as well as with regard to permission to transfer account balances to a follow-up proposal pursuant to Clause 6.5 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Editorial amendment; Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015, in force since 1.1.2016.

<sup>10</sup> Editorial amendment; Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015, General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations of 9.12.2015, both in force since 1.1.2016.

## **Chapter 4      Responsibility for reporting**

### **Article 31**

<sup>1</sup> The referees are responsible for scientific supervision as well as for reviewing and approving the final scientific report on the funded research work. Review and approval of the interim scientific report may be delegated to the scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices by the referees.

<sup>2</sup> The scientific collaborators at the Administrative Offices are responsible for financial controlling, in particular for auditing and approving the financial reports on the awarded funds. They will reclaim any leftover amounts subject to Articles 32 paragraph 2 and 33 paragraph 2.<sup>11</sup>

## **Chapter 5      Competencies in special cases**

### **Article 32<sup>12</sup>      Premature termination of funding**

<sup>1</sup> Any premature termination of funding that needs to be ordered due to a significant change or due to non-compliance with the funding requirements will be decided by the Administrative Offices.

<sup>2</sup> Any premature termination of funding that needs to be ordered due to any misuse or breach pursuant to Article 43<sup>13</sup> of the Funding Regulations will be decided by the Presiding Board based on a recommendation from the relevant Division, Section or specialised body.

### **Article 33<sup>14</sup>      Reimbursement**

<sup>1</sup> The Administrative Offices decide whether to have funds already credited to the grantee's account reimbursed in the event of a premature termination of funding pursuant to Article 32 paragraph 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Presiding Board decides based on a recommendation from the relevant Division, Section or specialised body whether to have funds already credited to the grantee's account reimbursed in the event of a premature termination of funding pursuant to Article 32 paragraph 2.

## **Chapter 6      Interim measures in the event of a shortage of personnel**

### **Article 34<sup>15</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> In the event of any shortage of personnel, the Divisions, Sections and Specialised Committees may, subject to the Presiding Board's approval, ask external experts, namely former Research Council members, to participate in the assessment of proposals for a period of one year, which may be extended to no more than two years, and assign to them the role of referee.

<sup>2</sup> The participating external experts are entitled to cast a vote when decisions on applications are made.

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<sup>11</sup> Wording based on the decision of the Presiding Board of the Research Council of 17.9.2013, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 11.12.2013, in force since 1.1.2014.

<sup>12</sup> Wording based on the decision of the Presiding Board of the Research Council of 17.9.2013, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 11.12.2013, in force since 1.1.2014.

<sup>13</sup> Editorial amendment; Funding Regulations of 27.2.2015, in force since 1.1.2016.

<sup>14</sup> Wording based on the decision of the Presiding Board of the Research Council of 17.9.2013, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 11.12.2013, in force since 1.1.2014.

<sup>15</sup> New wording pursuant to the decision of the National Research Council of 13.2.2013, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 1.3.2013, in force since 1.4.2013.

<sup>16</sup> Repealed based on the decision of the National Research Council of 13.2.2013, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 1.3.2013, in force since 1.4.2013.

## **Chapter 7 Transitional and final provisions**

### **Article 35 Entry into force and replacement of existing regulations**

<sup>1</sup> These Regulations are subject to approval by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council. The approved regulations will enter into force as of 1 January 2008, thereby replacing the Organisational Regulations of the National Research Council of 12 December 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Other provisions and resolutions that address the same issues as, but are contradictory to, these Regulations will be deemed to be repealed as of 1 January 2008.

### **Article 36<sup>17</sup>**

### **Article 37<sup>18</sup>**

### **Article 38<sup>19</sup>**

### **Article 39 Amendment of terminology and classification**

Based on the decision of the National Research Council of 15 February 2012, the new terminology and the new classification of funding categories have been used throughout these Regulations.<sup>20</sup>

*Approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 14 December 2007.*

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<sup>17</sup> Repealed based on the decision of the National Research Council of 15.2.2012, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 2.3.2012, in force since 1.7.2012.

<sup>18</sup> Repealed based on the decision of the National Research Council of 15.2.2012, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 2.3.2012, in force since 1.7.2012.

<sup>19</sup> Repealed based on the decision of the National Research Council of 15.2.2012, approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 2.3.2012, in force since 1.7.2012.

<sup>20</sup> Approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on 2.3.2012, in force since 1.7.2012. Articles 12, 15 and 18 have been amended.