
Guidelines for the research plan and budget

Sinergia programme

February 2016

1. Research plan

The research plan is used in the evaluation process to answer the following questions related to the Sinergia assessment criteria:

- **Does the proposed research represent a substantial contribution with breakthrough character beyond disciplinary boundaries?**
- **Is the research approach described in the proposal well-conceived, consistent and risk-balanced?**
- **Does the proposal present a truly interdisciplinary approach with a highly qualified and complementary research team?**
- **Is the requested budget appropriate?**

Make sure that the relevant information is clearly described.

Furthermore, the research plan must be written in accordance with the rules of good scientific practice and sources must be cited correctly. It must consist of original text that has been written by the applicants themselves. A limited amount of text or other material by third parties or text published by the applicants themselves is permissible in the sections concerning the state of research, 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. See also the SNSF dossier on scientific integrity: www.snsf.ch > The SNSF > Research policies > Scientific integrity.

Adopt the titles of the sections listed below, either word for word or in approximate terms. In general, the research plan should not contain any annexed documents.

1. Summary *(maximum 1 page)*

Give a synopsis of the entire research plan. In particular, summarise the main goals of the project and how these goals may exceed the state of the art. Also give a brief overview of the research approach and implementation.

2. Project description

(maximum 20 pages/80,000 characters (with spaces), for projects with 2 applicants; 30 pages/120,000 characters (with spaces) for project with 3 or 4 applicants, including illustrations, footnotes, formulae and tables, but without references/bibliographies; min. font size 10 and line spacing 1.5; annexes are not accepted.)

2.1 Goals of the projects	Specify the approach you are taking and the concrete results that you aim to achieve in the period of funding.
2.2 Interdisciplinarity	Describe what makes the proposal interdisciplinary and why an interdisciplinary approach is necessary. From the interdisciplinary perspective, specify the complementarity and role of each applicant.
2.3 Relevance and impact	Describe the scientific relevance of your research and the impact the project may have for the different disciplines and for science as a whole (research and education/teaching). In addition, mention the form in which you wish to make your research results public (e.g. articles in science journals, monographs, conference proceedings, etc.). If applicable, indicate whether and to what extent the project is expected to have a broader impact (e.g. on economy, industry, policy or administration) and what this impact will be.
2.4 State of the art relevant to the project	Which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies? In which areas is research needed, and why? Mention the relevant references.
2.5 Research approach	Give the assumptions and hypotheses from which the project starts. Specify the scientific approach, combination of different methods, techniques, etc. to be used in addressing the overall goals of the project. Describe the methods that first have to be developed.
2.6 Project implementation	Describe how you plan to reach the anticipated goals. Show the planned contribution by each team member and project partner (if applicable), including each PhD student, postdoc and other staff positions requested in the proposal. Compile a schedule consistent with your budget plan that includes all planned tasks (who, when, how). Which specific measures will be taken to enhance interaction between project participants?
2.7 Risk management	If applicable, state in what respect the planned research goals may not be reached and which alternatives may be foreseen.

3. Bibliography

List all the sources of relevant prior and/or ongoing work referred to in the research plan.

2. Budget

The applicants must submit a detailed budget setting out the costs incurred at the various institutions. The budget should range from CHF 50'000 to CHF 3.2 million, and should be proportional to the number of participating research groups and to the duration of the project (typically CHF 200'000 per year and research group).

The budget is used to assess **whether the requested budget is appropriate with respect to the anticipated goals of the project.**

The budgeted resources should be reasonable and fully justified in the proposal. Costs that are not eligible are deleted by the SNSF and costs (or cost components) that cannot be justified or are out of proportion are reduced. Budgets may also be reduced due to thematic overlaps with other grants or relative to the quality of the proposal. These cutbacks can take the form of an overall deduction or of cuts to specific budget items.

The budget can be directly submitted via the relevant entry mask in *mySNF* for each applicant.

Eligible costs are laid down in **article 8 and 9 of the Regulations on Sinergia grants**, article 28 of the *Funding Regulations*, and explained in more detail in chapter 2 of the *General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations*, which contain more detailed provisions.

The eligible costs are:

- **Salaries of employees hired for the project** within the salary ranges and rates set by the SNSF (see point 3.1 in the annex), **but no salaries of applicants.** The three categories of employees defined by the SNSF are doctoral students, postdocs (named academic with doctoral degree in *mySNF*), and further staff. This last category includes employees with a degree who do not plan to do a doctorate, employees with a doctorate who do not wish to pursue an academic career (and are therefore not regarded as postdocs) or technicians and auxiliary staff.
- **Social security contributions**
- **Costs of equipment** and costs of material of enduring value are eligible for funding if the equipment is **of key importance to the proposed Sinergia project** and will be acquired specifically for the Sinergia project. If the costs of equipment exceed CHF 100'000, co-financing by the research institution will be required. Such co-financing generally corresponds to 50% of the costs. Equipment and facilities that generally form part of the basic infrastructure, operation and standards of a scientific institution **may not** be debited to the SNSF grant. These include, in particular standard IT equipment incl. hardware and software, laboratory facilities and equipment, any other facilities and equipment routinely made available for the relevant research field in a research institution or environment.
- **Material costs** (equivalent to **research funds in *mySNF***) must be **directly linked to the proposed research project.** They include different types of research costs such as the cost of expendable items, field expenses, travel costs, computing time, costs for data management, costs for scientific open access e-publications (see point 3.2 in the annex). The costs for using infrastructures directly linked to the execution of the funded project are also eligible, with the exception of general costs for the maintenance and service of infrastructures.
- **Research funds** further include subcontracting costs, and costs incurred by project partners. The salaries of project partners and/or their employees are not eligible for funding. Furthermore, the costs generated by project partners and subcontracting must be of minor significance compared to the total budget for the project.
- **Research funds** also include organisation and travel costs for conducting conferences and workshops **in the context of the proposed project**, as well as costs for internal project coordination, particularly scientific coordination,

workshops and other collaborative and networking activities associated with the funded Sinergia project.

- **Costs for career measures** (i.e. 120% support grants, mobility grants, gender equality grants, see points 3.3-3.5 in the annex) are also eligible research funds. They can be requested in form of a supplementary grants during the ongoing project.

The following table displays how the budget table should be filled out by each applicant and how it then appears in *mySNF*:

Applicant 1 (budgeted items, if applicable and justified)	Year 1	Year 2 (if applicable)	Year 3 (if applicable)	Year 4 (if applicable)
Equipment: Equipment < 100 kCHF Equipment > 100 kCHF				
Research funds: Expendable items Field expenses Computing time Data management Direct costs of infrastructure use Open access e-publications Subcontracting (name and costs) Project partner (name and costs) Travel Conference organization Coordination activities				
Personnel salaries: -Doctoral students (name, if known and salary) -Academic with doctoral degree (name, if known and salary) -Further staff (name, if known and salary)				
Social security contributions (calculated automatically by mySNF): Doctoral students Academic with doctoral degree Further staff				
Total SNSF (CHF)				

3. Annexes

Points 3.3 to 3.5 are subject to small changes until end of 2016.

3.1 Salary scales for doctoral students, salary ranges and guidelines for postdocs and other staff members, blanket amounts for social security contributions

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_XII_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragereglement_E.pdf

3.2 Grants for scientific open access e-publications (publication grants)

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_II_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.3 Support grants based on the 120% model

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_IV_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.4 Mobility grants for doctoral students working on SNSF-funded research projects

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_V_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.5 Costs for gender equality measures: Gender equality grant

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_VII_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf