

PRIMA

Guidelines for submitting a proposal via mySNF

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1. Submission of proposal

1.1 Contact of the SNSF Administrative Offices

For questions please contact: prima@snf.ch

1.2 Regulations and relevant documents

The PRIMA Regulations and relevant documents are available on our website in [German](#), [French](#) and [English](#) (see section "Documents"). Alternatively, the documents are also accessible in your PRIMA application on mySNF under "Information/Documents".

1.3 Eligibility of the applicant

The eligibility windows are governed by Article 5 of the PRIMA Regulations. For any questions regarding your eligibility, do not hesitate to contact us: prima@snf.ch

1.4 Mobility

The PRIMA grantee may plan stays at host institutions for a maximum duration of 24 months. The time can be spent at more than one host institution and/or split into a number of short periods (Article 9 of the PRIMA Regulations).

If the research location has not been changed since the doctoral degree or the equivalent qualification to a doctoral degree, applicants must plan a stay at a host institution (Article 5 paragraph e of the PRIMA Regulations).

The mandatory documents for a stay at a host institution include an invitation of the host institution and a detailed budget for the additional costs.

1.5 Submission and next deadlines

Proposals have to be submitted electronically via the web platform mySNF (www.mysnf.ch). The application must be submitted **no later than 17:00 Swiss local time (i.e. UTC + 1)** on the day of the submission deadline. There will be one call per year with the submission deadline in November.

1.6 Access to mySNF

All new users have to register first on mySNF (www.mysnf.ch). Select the corresponding division and funding instrument (Careers/PRIMA). Please note that it may take several days to process your request for a mySNF account. If you already have a mySNF account, please check that the role "grant applicant" is present.

1.7 Create a new application on mySNF

Select the corresponding division and funding instrument when creating a new application on mySNF: Careers/PRIMA

Before making any entries or uploading files, make sure to read all information in this document as well as in the header of every container carefully.

1.8 Duration of the grant

PRIMA grants are awarded for a maximum of five years. The minimum duration of funding is three years.

If the maximum duration of the grant is not requested, the applicant should give an explanation for the shorter duration (e.g. in the cover letter).

Please note that projects with a shorter duration than the maximum possible duration of five years do not have a higher chance of being granted.

1.9 Eligible research institutions

All publicly funded research institutions in Switzerland are eligible, i.e. universities, university hospitals, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education, research centres (e.g. PSI, EMPA, EAWAG) or institutes of postgraduate education (e.g. IDIAP, IHEID).

1.10 Earliest and latest possible starting date for the grant

The earliest possible starting date is 1 September 2019. The start of the grant can be postponed by no more than 12 months after the earliest possible starting date, i.e. 1 September 2020.

1.11 Resubmission

Pursuant to article 14 of the PRIMA Regulations, applicants whose application was rejected may apply at the most a second time for a PRIMA grant regardless of the subject matter of the project as long as the applicant still fulfils all personal requirements.

In case of a resubmission, please upload in the container "Research plan" a separate document providing a point-for-point response to the critique raised in the rejection letter and a comment on significant changes or additions in the research plan, if applicable. This statement must not be longer than 2 pages.

1.12 Gross salary of the applicant and work time percentage

The salary of the applicant will be determined by the SNSF in agreement with the research institution (e.g. research associate level, junior group leader, scientific collaborator, etc.). The social security contributions of the employer will be covered as well. If the applicant would like to insert more accurate figures for the salary, please contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution.

The fields labelled "Social security contributions (%)" are automatically calculated according to the selected research institution in the container "University or research institution" For a complete list of rates for social security contributions see:

[Annex 12 of the General implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations](#)

If not available, you may enter "n/k" in the field "Salary bracket".

Child allowances differ in every canton. For more details please contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution.

For clinical scientists, the salary share dedicated to research is covered by the PRIMA grant. Pursuant to Article 6 of the PRIMA Regulations, clinical scientists can opt to dedicate a share of their work time to clinical activities (max. 20% Years 1-2; max. 50% Years 3-5).

PRIMA grantees are in principle expected to work full time (100%). A lower work time percentage of at least 80% is permissible (Article 6 paragraph 2) and should be explained (e.g. in the cover letter).

1.13 Budget limit for project funds and what may be requested

The budget limit for project funds is **CHF 750'000 for 5 years**, i.e. an average of CHF 150'000 per annum. The salary of the applicant is not included in this maximum amount. The budget should be as detailed as possible (e.g. separate entries are required for equipment, access costs to infrastructure, consumables, travel, personnel, etc.). Costs for open access publications are not eligible costs under PRIMA grants and must be applied for separately via mySNF (<http://www.snf.ch/oa>). Changes in the budget after the submission of the application are not possible. For more details see Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the PRIMA Regulations.

Research funds may be used to employ personnel (e.g. technician, laboratory assistant, supporting assistant, postdoctoral researcher, etc.). There is no restriction on the work-time percentage of personnel as long as the employment is justified in the application.

Candidates may apply to appoint a PhD student. The salary scales for doctoral candidates are fixed by the SNSF. In such cases, the research institution must confirm the supervisor of the doctoral thesis in writing. Furthermore, the supervisor of the doctoral thesis and the research institution must guarantee the due completion of the doctoral thesis after expiry of the grant or if the project is prematurely abandoned (see paragraph 1.19 below and article 12 of the PRIMA Regulations).

Personnel salaries may be different for every institution. The applicant should therefore contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution for the corresponding salary standards. For more details on salary scales for doctoral candidates and salary ranges in general see:

[Annex 12 of the General implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations](#)

1.14 Data Management Plan

The proposal must include a [Data Management Plan](#) (DMP) set up according to the requirements issued by the SNSF. The aim of a DMP is to plan the lifecycle of data. It offers a long-term perspective by outlining how data will be generated, collected, documented, shared and preserved. The DMP is an integral part of the grant proposal. **The proposal can only be submitted once the DMP has been completed.** The [content of the DMP](#) is directly entered in the mySNF submission form. It is not possible to upload a DMP as a separate PDF file. Applicants must enter a DMP that is understandable, suits their project and meets the standards set by their research community. Please keep in mind the time needed to complete the DMP during the submission procedure.

At this stage, the DMP is considered a draft and excluded from the evaluation process. It is not part of the scientific evaluation process and is not shared with external reviewers. However, the definitive DMP must be provided by the end of the project at the latest.

1.15 External peer-reviewing

Applicants are entitled to submit together with their funding proposal a list with the names and addresses of persons who are not to be asked for an external review (exclusion list). The SNSF may abide by this list if a valid reason is provided and if a sufficient number of other experts are available. However potential external reviewers submitted by the applicant will not be considered.

1.16 Personal requirements

Eligible are researchers and clinical scientists.

Researchers:

- have a doctorate (PhD) or at least three years of research activity after obtaining their higher education degree (equivalent qualification to a doctorate).
- have acquired at least two years of research experience after their doctorate or equivalent to a doctorate.
- submit their application between two and ten years after their PhD defense or after the date of the equivalent qualification to a doctorate.

Clinical scientists:

- have a medical exam (state examination or equivalent).
- have acquired at least three years of clinical work after their medical exam.
- submit their application up to 14 years after their medical exam.

The time periods are calculated on the basis of the relevant submission deadline for PRIMA applications.

1.17 Career plan

No form or template is provided by the SNSF. The career plan must not exceed one page (a minimum of point 10 font size). The past career achievements should be described very briefly. The career plan should include the objectives during and after completion of the PRIMA grant. In particular the reasons why the PRIMA grant may increase the chances to be appointed as a professor should be stated.

1.18 Choice of research institution

In general, it is advisable to justify the choice of the research institution (e.g. in the cover letter), in particular for the following cases:

- At the time of the submission deadline the applicant has already spent more than one year at her present Swiss research institution.
- The applicant has already spent more than one year as postdoctoral researcher in the past at the selected research institution.
- The applicant would like to return to the research institution where she received her PhD or her medical exam.
- The applicant would like to join the research institution of her PhD advisor.

1.19 Written confirmation of the research institution

Important: Applicants must contact as soon as possible the research institution to ask for a written confirmation.

The written confirmation of the research institution refers to the obligations which are stated in the PRIMA Regulations, in particular Article 8 and Article 12.

The written confirmation of the research institution consists of two separate letters:

1. **Detailed confirmation** of the research institution signed by the scientific contact person (leader of the research group) mentioned in the application and the head of the institute/department.
2. **General confirmation** of the vice rectorate for research (or equivalent)

Both confirmations must follow the text template provided on the SNSF website and be written on paper using the official letterhead of the research institution. They must be added to the application and will only be regarded as complete if all the points relevant to the application are addressed. The text template is available in [German](#), [French](#) and [English](#).

1.20 Support letters

The submission of support letters is not required. However, applicants are free to include support letters to their application (e.g. from the scientific contact person, collaborators, etc.). The documents should be uploaded in the container "Other annexes". **Support letters forwarded to the SNSF by mail or by e-mail will not be considered.**

1.21 Evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases. In phase 1, the National Research Council of the SNSF makes an initial selection based on the documents submitted. Applications selected for phase 2 are peer-reviewed. Candidates selected for phase 2 are invited to an interview to present their research project and career plan.

Applicants not considered for phase 2 will receive the decision around the end of April. Candidates invited to phase 2 will be informed about the outcome around mid-April. The interviews are held in Mai. These candidates will be informed about the final decision around mid-August.

2. Instructions for CV, major scientific achievements and research output list

2.1 General remarks

The SNSF has signed the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), which recommends funders to be explicit about the criteria used in evaluating the scientific productivity of applicants.

The scientific quality, value and impact of the entire research output is taken into consideration (including datasets, software, prototypes) in addition to research publications. In this context, the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the name of the journal in which it was published. Furthermore, during its evaluation procedure, the SNSF takes

into account the scientific discipline, academic age and personal situation (e.g. career breaks, child care duties).

In order to comply with the DORA, the SNSF requests a standardised set of information from all applicants, i.e. the "CV and major scientific achievements" and the "Research output list".

These two documents must be written in the same language as the research plan, and must be structured as specified below. The documents are sent out for peer-reviewing. Proposals that lack the relevant information will not be considered for evaluation.

2.2 Instructions for the CV and major scientific achievements

The CV (maximum 3 pages; minimum font size 10 points) and a short statement of major scientific achievements (maximum 1 page) should be assembled in one document and be written in the same language as the research plan. The document is used to assess the following criteria:

- eligibility of the applicant for PRIMA;
- scientific qualifications of the applicant, based on past achievements;
- ability of the applicant to conduct original research of high scientific quality and impact under her own responsibility.

The CV must be structured as follows. It is important that **all dates include month and year**. Additional points can be added, if relevant to the proposal:

1. Personal information, including the researcher ID (e.g. OrcID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID) and photo
2. Education: date of PhD defence/ medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam)/ MD thesis and the name of the advisor/s.
3. Employment history including current position/s with the name/s of the advisor/s
4. Institutional responsibilities
5. Approved research projects
6. Supervision of junior researchers at graduate and postgraduate level (summary information, the names of the junior researchers should be indicated)
7. Teaching activities (summary information)
8. Memberships in panels, boards, etc., and individual scientific reviewing activities
9. Active memberships in scientific societies, fellowships in renowned academies
10. Organisation of conferences
11. Prizes, awards, fellowships
12. Career breaks (provide justification)

In the section "Major scientific achievements" (maximum 1 page to be attached to the CV) the applicant describes her most important scientific achievements. Please describe for each achievement the specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

2.3 Instructions for the research output list

The research output list is used in the evaluation process to assess the scientific productivity and qualification of an applicant with regard to the proposed project and her ability to successfully conduct and document a research project. Both aspects are also taken into account in the evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed research project.

Depending on the research field, the applicant's position in the list of authors may give an indication on her contribution to the scientific work (see also: Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: [Integrity in scientific research, Principles and procedures](#)).

The research output of an applicant is used, among others, as a measure of her scientific independence. The total number of publications or the number of publications per year is not considered to be the only indicator of performance.

Please separate your publications resulting from your PhD/medical exam (or prior) and from your postdoctoral time and highlight the 5 most important. For all publications listed from your postdoctoral time, please give a very short comment on your contribution; in particular for publications with several authors, where the applicant is not first or last author, or for disciplines where the authors are in alphabetical order.

The applicant's name in the list of authors and the publication year must be clearly visible (e.g. boldfaced or underlined). Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. **Do not use "et al." to shorten the list of authors**, unless the research project was conducted by a large international collaboration with more than 50 authors and a direct link to the full publication is given.

All these items are intended for evaluators to specifically assess the scientific quality and relevance of the research output. In order to support the principle of open electronic access to scientific knowledge nationally and internationally, please provide a direct internet link for each publication, if applicable. All publications attached in the container "Other annexes" will not be taken into account and will be deleted.

The research output list should be structured as follows (if applicable). Under points 1 - 4 only "published", "in press" or "accepted" publications can be listed:

1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals
2. Peer-reviewed books/monographs
3. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings
4. Contributions to books
5. Patents and licenses
6. Oral contributions to conferences (talk or poster)
7. Outreach activities (e.g. public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, scientific art performances, etc.)
8. General contributions to science (e.g. spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes, etc.)
9. Other artefacts with documented use (e.g. maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, arXiv-articles (only "published", "in press" or "accepted" articles), contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)

3. Instructions for the research plan

3.1 General remarks

The research plan provides the basis for scientific evaluation, particularly of the quality of the proposed research project, i.e. its scientific relevance, topicality, originality, feasibility and the suitability of its methods. Together with the CV and the applicant's track record, the research plan also serves as a basis for assessing the researcher's scientific qualifications, particularly her expertise with regard to the project.

The SNSF's requirements with regard to the form and content of the research plan help to ensure the comparability of applications. This is an important prerequisite for a comparative evaluation based on the principle of competition and for the equal treatment of all applicants.

The research plan must consist of original text that has been written by the applicant herself. A limited amount of text (or other material, graphs, etc.) by third parties or text published by the applicant herself is permissible in the sections concerning the state of research (2.1) and the state of her personal research (2.2) 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. The SNSF uses a special software to compare texts and analyse suspected cases of plagiarism. A number of universities have made such programs available to their students and employees. We recommend that you contact your institution for further information. For more details see the SNSF dossier on scientific integrity:

www.snsf.ch > The SNSF > Research policies > Scientific integrity

In mathematics, natural and engineering sciences, biology, medicine, psychology, economics and political sciences, applications have to be submitted in English. In all other research areas, applications can be submitted in one of the official Swiss languages. An English translation must be enclosed if requested by the SNSF.

Special rules apply for political sciences. Researchers will still be able to submit proposals in an official Swiss language should this be justified for scientific reasons, particularly if working in a specific language is appropriate to the nature of the research topic.

The SNSF does not consider applications that do not meet the requirements for the research plan, the formal requirements for applications (Article 14 of the [Funding Regulations](#)) and the requirements for research integrity and good scientific practice (Article 15 of the [Funding Regulations](#)).

3.2 Structure of the research plan

The research plan must not exceed **15 pages** (including cover/title page, DIN A4) and **60'000 characters** (with spaces); this includes the title or title page, possible table of contents, summary, footnotes (explanatory notes or comments at the bottom of a page), illustrations, formulae, tables, but not the bibliography (list of sources/references at the end of the document). A minimum of point 10 font size (e.g. Times New Roman; condensed fonts not allowed) and 1.5 line spacing must be used. In general, the research plan should not contain any annexed documents. The research plan may not contain any annexed documents and must be uploaded as a single file. The research plan needs to be structured as follows:

1. Summary	In the summary (maximum 1 page), please present the background and rationale of the project, list its overall objectives and specific aims , mention the methods to be used , and briefly discuss the expected results and their impact for the field.
2. Research Plan	
2.1 Current state of research in the field	Describe your project in the context of the current state of knowledge in your field. Reference to the most important publications, particularly by other authors. Please describe: - which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies; - in which areas research is needed, and why; - which important, relevant research projects are currently underway in Switzerland and abroad.
2.2 Current state of personal research	Present the research work you have already undertaken in the relevant field or in related fields, describe the results obtained so far as well as the relevance of these preliminary undertakings for your project.
2.3 Detailed research plan	Based on the information provided under 2.1 and 2.2, please specify the approach you are taking and the concrete objectives that you aim to achieve in the period of funding. The following points should be addressed: - describe the studies or experiments needed and/or envisaged to reach the set goals. Assess the risks involved and propose alternatives if necessary; - characterise existing sources and datasets and describe the data collection strategy and possible alternative strategies; - methods by which the research goals are to be reached (applicant and collaborations) and methods that first have to be developed; - explain the role and the planned work of each member of the research team (incl. applicant, personnel and collaborations). Your description should be as detailed as necessary to enable an expert to assess whether your methodology is appropriate and your project feasible. Please refer to the work described here in the budget you submit via mySNF.
2.4 Schedule and milestones	Please compile a schedule that includes the most important milestones (e.g. table, Gantt chart, etc.). This plan should also indicate the main tasks with which the persons funded by the SNSF/involved in the project are to be entrusted.
2.5 Relevance and impact	Please describe the scientific relevance and expected impacts of your project for the discipline and for science as a whole (research and education/teaching). Please mention the form in which you wish to publish your research results (articles in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceedings, etc...). If applicable, please indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be.
3. Bibliography	List the sources of all concluded and/or ongoing work referred to in the research plan. Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. Do not use "et al." to shorten the author list. (Exception: the author list can be shortened if a publication involves large international consortia with over 50 authors. In this case, a link to the complete reference has to be included). The bibliography is not included in the maximum number of pages (15) and characters (60'000) count.

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