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Statutes

of the Swiss National Science Foundation

The Foundation Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation,
in execution of Clause V of the Deed of Foundation of 26 April 2002 on the establishment of the Swiss National Science Foundation, hereinafter the SNSF,
issues the following Statutes:

I. Purpose

Article 1 Objectives

¹The SNSF promotes scientific research in Switzerland.

²It promotes the international competitiveness and integration of this research as well as its capacity to solve problems.

³It pays particular attention to the promotion of young researchers.

Articles 2 Principles¹

¹The SNSF awards funds primarily on the basis of scientific quality criteria. In addition, it considers the specific needs of the disciplines. All disciplines are equally valued. The SNSF acts independently and transparently and is guided by equal opportunities principles.²

²SNSF funds may not be used for research with an immediate commercial purpose or to supplement other funds.

³The SNSF may pay membership fees as a member of international organisations, in particular.

Article 3³ Types of funding

¹The SNSF engages in project and career funding, carries out programmes and supports infrastructures and science communication. Furthermore, the SNSF may support, in particular, measures to valorise research and initiatives in favour of research co-ordination.

¹ Title amended based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

² Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

³ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

² Based on its federal mandate, it carries out programmes, in particular National Research Programmes and the National Centres of Competence in Research programme.

³ It may accept evaluation mandates from the Confederation or from third parties, provided that this does not interfere with the execution of its main tasks.

II. Funds

Article 4 Capital resources

¹ The capital resources consist of the foundation capital, the reserves and the surplus or loss carried forward.

² The foundation capital consists of the amount of 333,000 Swiss francs endowed by the founders, a non-recurring contribution of one million Swiss francs from the Swiss Confederation and the assets declared to be part of the foundation capital.

Article 5 Operating funds

The operating funds of the SNSF are drawn from its revenues, in particular from the federal contributions, donations from third parties and income on assets. Donations from third parties and income on assets may also be used to form capital resources.

Article 6 Use of funds

¹ The SNSF sets out its income and expenditures in an annual budget.

² A funding plan is drawn up for the operating funds to be used for research funding.⁴

³ Operating funds that are not used within a year may be used to make provisions and reserves or be carried forward to the following year as a surplus. Federal regulations must be complied with when setting aside reserves.

III. Organisation

Article 7 Bodies

The bodies of the SNSF comprise:

- a. the Foundation Council;
- b. the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council;
- c. the National Research Council;
- d. the Research Commissions;
- e. the Administrative Offices;
- f. the auditors⁵.

⁴ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

⁵ Inserted based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

A. The Foundation Council

Article 8 Members and composition

¹ The Foundation Council is composed of no more than 50 members.

² The majority of members represent Swiss academic organisations (Article 10). The organisations appoint their representatives themselves.

³ No more than 20 members from business and politics are appointed by the Federal Council.

⁴ A deputy must be appointed for each member of the Foundation Council.

Article 9 Term of office

¹ The term of office of a member of the Foundation Council is four years in parallel with the legislative period of the National Council.

² General elections are held for each new term of office.

³ The represented organisations themselves define the number of times their representatives may be re-elected.

Article 10 Represented academic organisations

¹ The following organisations are entitled to be represented in the Foundation Council:

- a. the cantonal universities;
- b. the Federal Institutes of Technology in Zurich and Lausanne;
- c. the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities;
- d. the ETH Board;
- e. the science academies;
- f. the Swiss Lawyers Association;
- g. the Swiss Society of Economics and Statistics.

² The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences appoints four representatives from the universities of applied sciences and the Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education appoints one representative from the universities of teacher education.

³ The Foundation Council may invite other academic organisations to appoint a representative to the Foundation Council until the maximum permissible number of members is reached.

Article 11 The Presiding Board

¹ The Foundation Council elects a President and a Vice President from within its ranks.

² The term of office of the President is limited to eight years. Any term of office as a member of the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council is not counted.

Article 12 Tasks

¹ The Foundation Council is the supreme body of the SNSF. It ensures the systematic pursuit of the foundation's purpose.

² It assumes the following inalienable tasks:

- a. It issues the election regulations for the election of the National Research Council.
- b. It defines the SNSF's position with regard to fundamental science policy issues. In so doing, it relies on the recommendations of the National Research Council and on the appraisal of the said recommendations by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.
- c. Based on a recommendation from the National Research Council, it approves the principles of the SNSF's research funding policy and, in particular, the multi-year plan.
- d. It appoints independent auditors.
- e. Within the scope of what is legally permissible and subject to approval by the Federal Council, it may amend the Statutes and ask for the Deed of Foundation to be amended.
- f. It approves the annual report and the annual financial statement.
- g. It makes decisions with regard to increases in the foundation capital.
- h. It regulates the remuneration of the members, Executive Committee and Presiding Board of the Foundation Council, the National Research Council, the Research Commissions and the specialised bodies appointed by the National Research Council.
- i. It supervises the activities of the bodies of the SNSF and periodically receives reports from its Executive Committee.

Article 13 Meetings

¹ The Foundation Council holds a general meeting at least once per calendar year. The President may call further meetings to discuss urgent matters.

² The presence of a majority of the members of the Foundation Council or of their representatives constitutes a quorum. Resolutions require a simple majority. However, amendments of the Statutes or of the Deed of Foundation require a three-quarters majority of the members present or of their representatives.

³ The President participates in voting and has the casting vote in the event of a stalemate.

⁴ If the President is absent, he/she is represented by the Vice President.

B. The Executive Committee of the Foundation Council

Article 14 Membership and composition

¹ The Executive Committee of the Foundation Council consists of 15 members.

² The President and the Vice President of the Foundation Council are ex officio members of the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.

³ Nine members are elected from among the representatives of the organisations mentioned in Article 10. They are elected by the members of the Foundation Council who represent the said organisations.

⁴ Four members are appointed by the Federal Council from among the members it has appointed to the Foundation Council.

Article 15 Term of office

¹ The term of office of the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council is four years in parallel with the term of office of the Foundation Council.

² The term of office of its members is limited to eight years subject to Article 11 paragraph 2.

Article 16 Tasks

¹ The Executive Committee of the Foundation Council deals with all Foundation Council matters except for those that are expressly assigned to another body.

² In particular, it has the following tasks:

- a. It elects the members of the National Research Council and, from among those members, its Presiding Board.
- b. Together with the President of the National Research Council, it elects the Directors of the Administrative Offices, sets out their duties and defines their salaries.
- c. It approves the service level agreement with the Swiss Confederation.
- d. It approves the introduction of new funding schemes at the request of the National Research Council.
- d^{bis}. Based on the recommendations of the National Research Council, it discusses the SNSF's position on fundamental research policy issues and defines such issues in urgent cases.
- e. It approves the Organisational Regulations of the National Research Council.
- f. It regulates the powers of representation and signatory powers within the SNSF.
- g. At the request of the National Research Council, it approves uniform regulations for the Research Commissions. By agreement with the relevant governing bodies of educational institutes, it recognises the individual Research Commissions and approves their regulations.
- h. It approves the budget and, based on a recommendation from the National Research Council, the funding plan, both of which it forwards to the responsible federal department for approval.⁶
- i. It reports periodically to the Foundation Council and the responsible federal department on the activities of the SNSF.⁷
- j. Based on a recommendation from the National Research Council, it issues provisions on the award of grants and defines the procedures to be applied thereto. If necessary, it obtains the approval of the Federal Council.
- k. It defines the upper limit for grants that may be awarded to members of the National Research Council and the specialised bodies appointed by it.
- l. It issues regulations with regard to the personnel employed at the Administrative Offices.
- m. It directly supervises the activities of the National Research Council and of the Administrative Offices. In so doing, it is supported by the internal audit unit (Article 31) and the Compliance Committee (Article 32).⁸
- n. It approves the acceptance of evaluation mandates at the request of the National Research Council.⁹

³ It may instruct the National Research Council or the Administrative Offices to carry out further tasks independently.

⁶ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

⁷ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

⁸ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

⁹ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

Article 17 Meetings

¹ The Executive Committee of the Foundation Council holds at least one general meeting per quarter. It regularly meets and holds discussions with the Presiding Board of the Research Council. If necessary, the President may call further meetings or have issues decided by circular letter.

² The presence of a majority of the members of the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council constitutes a quorum. Resolutions require a simple majority.

³ The President participates in voting and has the casting vote in the event of a stalemate.

⁴ If the President is absent, he/she is represented by the Vice President.

C. The National Research Council

Article 18 Members and composition

¹ The National Research Council is composed of no more than 100 members.

² The appropriate representation of the main areas of science must be ensured in its composition.

³ The members of the National Research Council have international research credentials and in-depth knowledge of the research environment. Furthermore, they take an interest in science and science policy issues beyond the limits of their own discipline.

Article 19 Term of office

¹ The term of office of the National Research Council is four years.

² General elections are held for each new term of office.

³ The term of office of members of the National Research Council is limited to eight years.

⁴ In justified cases, the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council may approve exceptions where the maximum term of office is exceeded.

⁵ The term of office ends in any case if the member retires from science as his/her main source of income or reaches the age of 70. In both cases, the relevant member steps down by the end of the current term of office at the latest.

Article 20 Research activities by members

¹ The members of the National Research Council continue their scientific activities as their main source of income during their term of office.

² Subject to Article 23 paragraph 5¹⁰, they may submit grant applications to the SNSF in accordance with the provisions applicable to such applications.

Article 21 Tasks

¹ The National Research Council is the scientific body of the SNSF. Its members are jointly responsible for its tasks.

² Its tasks are as follows:

¹⁰ Inserted based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

- a. Ahead of elections and by-elections in the National Research Council, it defines the scientific profile of the members to be elected and nominates candidates for attention of the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council based on an application procedure. As long as the maximum permissible number of members of the National Research Council is not reached, it may recommend the election of new members to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.
 - b. It submits nominations for membership of its Presiding Board to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.
 - c. It compiles proposals for attention of the Foundation Council or its Executive Committee with regard to the principles of the SNSF's research funding policy and, in particular, with regard to the multi-year plan and the service level agreement with the Swiss Confederation.
 - d. It requests the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council to introduce new funding schemes or adjusts the existing funding schemes to the new framework conditions.
 - e. It carries out the scientific evaluation of funding applications submitted to the SNSF and makes funding decisions.
 - f. It monitors and supervises the research work supported by the SNSF as well as the implementation of the corresponding research results.
 - g. It approves the implementation plans that are to be submitted to the federal authorities for endorsement in the context of National Research Programmes.¹¹
 - h. It monitors the call for proposals for funding schemes and approves the corresponding implementing provisions.
 - i. It draws up the necessary decrees on the awarding of grants and the attendant procedures and submits them to the Executive Committee of the Executive Council for approval.
 - j. It draws up joint regulations for the Research Commissions and submits them to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council for approval.
 - k. It supervises the Research Commissions.
 - l. It draws up the annual funding plan and submits it to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council for approval.¹²
 - m. It requests the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council to accept evaluation mandates.¹³
 - n. It ensures that its decisions comply with the relevant regulations and the principles of the evaluation procedure. In so doing, it is supported by the Compliance Committee (Article 32).¹⁴
- ³ Unless the Statutes and the Organisational Regulations (Article 22 paragraph 2) provide otherwise, the Presiding Board (Article 23) carries out the tasks assigned to the National Research Council.

Article 22 Organisation

¹ The National Research Council is led by the Presiding Board (Article 23) and consists of divisions and specialised committees. It may appoint specialised commissions for clearly defined areas.

² It specifies its organisation in the form of regulations and submits it to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council for approval. In so doing, it may assign further clearly defined tasks to its President and to the Administrative Offices.

¹¹ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

¹² Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

¹³ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

¹⁴ Inserted based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

³ Representatives of the responsible specialised administrative units of the Confederation may join the divisions and specialised bodies concerned with programmes mandated by the Confederation as observers without voting rights subject to prior consultation with the responsible federal department.¹⁵

Article 23 The Presiding Board

¹ The Presiding Board of the National Research Council is composed of a President and the Presidents of the divisions and specialised committees. It elects one of its members as deputy to the President.

² The term of office of the Presiding Board corresponds to the term of office of the National Research Council.

³ The office of President may be designated a full-time office in the Organisational Regulations.

⁴ The term of office of the President is limited to eight years. Article 19 paragraph 3 does not apply.

⁵ The President may not submit any grant applications to the SNSF during his or her term of office. Support for the President to continue his or her research activities is regulated by the Foundation Council.¹⁶

⁶ In particular, the Presiding Board coordinates work within the divisions and specialised committees and supervises the funding decisions of the SNSF. It reports periodically to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council on the activities of the National Research Council.

⁷ It is supported by the Compliance Committee (Article 32) in ensuring the quality and legality of the funding decisions of the SNSF.

⁸ After discussions in the National Research Council, it approves the recommendations concerning fundamental research policy questions as well as the proposed principles of the SNSF's research funding policy.

D. The Research Commissions

Article 24 Recognition

¹ The Executive Committee of the Foundation Council may recognise Research Commissions at the Swiss institutes of higher education by agreement with the governing body of the relevant institution.

² As SNSF bodies, the Research Commissions are the link between the relevant institution and the SNSF.

Article 25 Tasks

¹ The tasks and competencies of the Research Commissions are set out in joint regulations.

² In particular, the Research Commissions may be entrusted with the independent execution of tasks with regard to the promotion of young researchers.

Article 26 Reporting

The Research Commissions report regularly on their activities to the National Research Council.

¹⁵ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

¹⁶ Inserted based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

E. The Administrative Offices

Article 27 Tasks

¹ The Administrative Offices support and advise the Foundation Council and its Executive Committee, the National Research Council, the Research Commissions and the specialised bodies appointed by the National Research Council in the execution of their tasks and carry out all administrative activities of the SNSF.

² Their main tasks are as follows:

- a. They run the secretariat of the Foundation Council and its Executive Committee and of the National Research Council and the specialised bodies appointed by it.
- b. They prepare the work to be taken on by the Foundation Council, its Executive Committee and the National Research Council and implement their resolutions. In particular, they are responsible for preparing the research policy planning documents for attention of the National Research Council.
- c. They administer all funding activities of the SNSF, support the National Research Council and the specialised bodies appointed by it in performing the scientific evaluations, prepare their decisions and ensure that these decisions are implemented. They are supported by the Compliance Committee (Article 32) in ensuring the quality and legality of the funding decisions of the SNSF.
- d. They ensure effective communication with the public and valorisation of the funding activities of the SNSF.
- e. They maintain regular contacts with research funding organisations and research policy institutions in Switzerland and abroad and represent the SNSF in the relevant bodies.
- f. They report on their activities periodically to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.

³ ...¹⁷

⁴ The Administrative Offices carry out their administrative activities on their own authority within the scope of the administration budget approved by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.

⁵ They may on their own initiative make submissions and propose measures to the Foundation Council, its Executive Committee and the National Research Council that lie within the sphere of responsibility of these bodies.

Article 28 The Executive Management

¹ The Executive Management of the Administrative Offices is composed of a Director, a Deputy Director and a Vice Director.

² It ensures that the Administrative Offices are organised appropriately, provides effective management and controlling instruments and ensures that aids and services needed to carry out administrative activities efficiently are made available. In so doing, it is supported by the internal audit unit (Article 31).¹⁸

Article 29 Supervision

The Administrative Offices are supervised by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.

¹⁷ Repealed based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

¹⁸ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

IV. Auditing and Compliance¹⁹

Article 30 The external auditors

¹ The Foundation Council appoints the external auditors.

² The external auditors examine the accounts and annual statement of the SNSF to ensure their compliance with statutory regulations and with the Statutes of the SNSF.

Article 31 The internal audit unit

¹ The internal audit unit supports the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council and the Executive Management in carrying out their supervisory and management tasks.

² It reports to the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.

³ The details are set out in regulations issued by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council by agreement with the Executive Management.

Article 32²⁰ Compliance

¹ The Executive Committee of the Foundation Council supervises the scientific activities of the SNSF and is supported by the Compliance Committee in so doing. In addition, the Compliance Committee supports the National Research Council, the Presiding Board of the National Research Council and the Administrative Offices in assuring the quality and legality of the funding decisions taken by the SNSF.

² The Compliance Committee is appointed by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council.

³ The details are set out in regulations issued by the Executive Committee of the Foundation Council by agreement with the Presiding Board of the Research Council.

V. Final provisions

A. Repeal of existing regulations

Article 33 Repeal of existing regulations

These Statutes replace the Statutes of the Swiss National Science Foundation of 20 September 2002.

Article 34 Amendment of legal framework

The responsible bodies must amend the legal framework as necessitated by these Statutes and issue a new legal framework within six months of its entry into force.

¹⁹ Title amended based on the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

²⁰ Amended pursuant to the Foundation Council's decision of 30 March 2012.

B. Entry into force

Article 35 Entry into force

¹These Statutes are subject to approval by the Federal Council.

²The approved Statutes enter into force on 1 January 2008.

Berne, 30 March 2007

The Foundation Council:

sign. Dr Fritz Schiesser
President

sign. prof. Anne-Claude Berthoud
Vice President

The amended Statutes were approved by the Swiss Federal Council on 4 July 2007.

Berne, 30 March 2012

The Foundation Council:

sign. attorney-at-law Gabriele Gendotti
President

sign. prof. Anne-Claude Berthoud
Vice President

The amendments made to the Statutes on 30 March 2012 were approved by the Swiss Federal Council on 27 June 2012. They have been in force since 1 July 2012.