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## Regulations on project funding

of 5 April 2023

The Research Council

based on Articles 3 and 48 of the Regulations on research grants (hereinafter "Funding Regulations") issues the following Regulations:

### Chapter 1      Project funding

#### Article 1      Objectives and principles

<sup>1</sup> The Swiss National Science Foundation (hereinafter "the SNSF") provides project funding to enable qualified researchers to conduct research projects on self-chosen topics and with self-chosen goals independently and under their own responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> The SNSF awards grants for research projects. Through project funding, it aims to award researchers a basic grant that is appropriate for the planned research. In particular, researchers can apply for coverage of research costs and staff salaries as well as for the funding of scientific cooperation, networking and communication; however, they may not apply for their own salaries. Subject to Article 2 paragraph 4, the project funds awarded may be distributed freely among the applicants.

<sup>3</sup> Grants are awarded based on the scientific appraisal of the submitted proposals.

<sup>4</sup> Project funding grants are governed by these Regulations as well as the other applicable rules of the SNSF. The Funding Regulations of the SNSF<sup>1</sup> apply, in particular.

#### Article 2      Duration of funding, minimum grants

<sup>1</sup> The grants are awarded for a minimum of one year and a maximum of four years.

<sup>2</sup> Over the entire duration of the grant, an amount not exceeding CHF 250,000 on average may be requested per annum and per applicant. In each case, the maximum grant may not exceed an average of CHF 1 million per annum and project. In justified cases, the SNSF may award a higher grant on request. A higher amount than the average may be requested for any individual year, provided the total grant over the entire duration does not exceed the permitted maximum. The annual instalments awarded may not be exceeded.

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<sup>1</sup> [Funding Regulations of the SNSF](#)

<sup>3</sup> The minimum amount that may be requested in research applications submitted to the SNF is CHF 100,000. The SNSF does not consider applications for lower amounts.

<sup>4</sup> In collaborative projects, the maximum budgeted amount for applicants employed by a research institute outside Switzerland in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 6 may not exceed the average budgeted grant for the other applicants.

## **Chapter 2      Requirements for the submission of proposals**

### **Article 3      Personal requirements, general**

<sup>1</sup> Natural persons are eligible to submit applications if they meet the general eligibility requirements for the submission of applications pursuant to Article 10 of the Funding Regulations of the SNSF. The requirements set out in Article 13 of the Funding Regulations with regard to the proposed research must also be met.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants with a doctorate must have obtained the latter four years before the submission date of the application. Applicants without a doctorate must generally have completed three years of research work as their main source of income since obtaining their higher education degree. Such research work will be regarded as equivalent to a doctorate.

<sup>3</sup> Researchers who assume an independent research position in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5 below less than four years after obtaining their doctorate may submit project funding applications as soon as they assume the said position.

<sup>4</sup> Applicants must be in a position to carry out research projects under their own responsibility and to lead project staff both scientifically and as personnel.

<sup>5</sup> Applicants must make a substantial contribution to the proposed research and their work must not be directed by instructions from third parties.

<sup>6</sup> In collaborative projects with at least 3 applicants, one applicant may be employed by a research institute outside Switzerland, provided their expertise is required for the project. However, this does not apply to applications which, based on agreements between the SNSF and other funding organisations, must involve an applicant outside Switzerland (e.g. WEAVE projects or EU consortia projects).

<sup>7</sup> In addition, the provisions of Chapter 3 of these Regulations must be met.

### **Article 4      Other personal requirements**

<sup>1</sup> Applicants must be able to show that

- a. they are conducting their research activities along with any scientific teaching activities to an extent equivalent to at least 50% FTE. Researchers devoting less than 50% of their time to scientific activities are eligible if their scientific research and teaching activities are usually carried out in the context of another professional activity;
- b. they are employed at least for the duration of the project at a research institution eligible for research funding from the SNSF or have been given assurance of such employment in writing;

c. the necessary research infrastructure is at their disposal.

<sup>2</sup> If the proposed project is not to be conducted in the context of a position, applicants must show that they are independently conducting scientific research in Switzerland as their main source of income. The SNSF may demand further information on the research conditions.

#### **Article 5            Formal requirements**

<sup>1</sup> The submission dates are 1 April and 1 October.

<sup>2</sup> In all other respects, any further formal requirements for the submission of applications apply, in particular the Funding Regulations of the SNSF and its Implementation Regulations.

### **Chapter 3           Applications and eligible costs**

#### **Article 6            Applications**

<sup>1</sup> Project funding applications must be submitted in accordance with the requirements issued by the SNSF for such grants and must contain all the necessary data and documents.

<sup>2</sup> The applicants must describe the proposed research project in the research plan.

<sup>3</sup> Applicants may only submit one application per call.

<sup>4</sup> The SNSF may restrict the submission of project funding applications by grantees of other SNSF funding schemes, in particular career funding, in the corresponding regulations and calls.

#### **Article 7            Eligible costs for the project**

<sup>1</sup> Project funding grants, incl. excellence grants, may be used to cover the following costs:

- a. the salaries of scientific and technical staff in research projects within the scope of the salary ranges and rates prescribed by the SNSF;
- b. material costs that are directly related to the research work, namely material of enduring value, expendable items, field expenses, travel expenses, third-party charges, cost of computing time and data<sup>2</sup> as well as of providing open access to research data<sup>3</sup>;
- c. direct costs incurred through the use of research infrastructure linked to the research work;
- d. costs for the organisation of conferences and workshops in connection with the funded research;
- e. costs for national and international cooperation and networking activities carried out in connection with the funded research;
- f. additional costs for coordinating the research project in the case of applications with three or more applicants;
- g. For applicants from abroad, the rates for the country concerned apply, and the SNSF's maximum rates apply as the upper limit

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<sup>2</sup> Amended based on the decision of the National Research Council of 9 December 2015, in force since 1 January 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Amended based on the decision of the National Research Council of 21 March 2017, in force since 1 April 2017

<sup>2</sup> The costs must be applied for and quantified in the proposal.

<sup>3</sup> The requirements for assumption of the costs are set out in separate provisions issued by the SNSF. In particular, the SNSF may set upper limits for individual cost categories as well as binding rates for salaries and minimum requirements for employment positions.

<sup>4</sup> The SNSF may award global budgets and approve transfers between the individual cost categories during the funding period. The details are set out in separate provisions of the SNSF.

<sup>5</sup> Grants to cover costs incurred through exemption from teaching duties may be applied for and awarded in accordance with separate provisions stipulated by the SNSF, provided that the exemption from teaching duties has a direct positive effect on the funded research.<sup>4</sup> This provision applies only to projects in the humanities and social sciences.

#### **Article 8 Eligible costs for career measures**

<sup>1</sup> The following costs for career measures are covered:

- a. Flexibility grants<sup>5</sup> of the SNSF for employees with care responsibilities;
- b. Mobility grants;
- c. Gender equality grant.

<sup>2</sup> The requirements for the assumption of costs and the ceilings set by the SNSF are laid down in the separate provisions issued by the SNSF for these grants.

<sup>3</sup> The grants must be requested in the applications or during the running time of the grant. The SNSF may stipulate that the costs of some of these measures be debited to the grant without any corresponding request having been made. In such cases, the SNSF pays an additional amount (deficit guarantee) if the project funds prove to be insufficient.

<sup>4</sup> The SNSF awards grants to cover the costs of salaries for the period during which researchers are relieved of their clinical activities and can focus on their research projects. These grants aimed at protecting the research time of clinical researchers may be applied for and awarded in accordance with separate provisions stipulated by the SNSF within the limited period defined by the SNSF. This provision applies only to clinical research projects.

#### **Article 9 Grants for collaborative projects**

Collaborative projects require that:

- a) they are submitted by several applicants;
- b) the specialist knowledge and the scientific contribution of two or more applicants are required;
- c) collaboration is essential for achieving the research goals and creates an additional benefit.

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<sup>4</sup> Editorial amendment of 1 December 2018, in force with immediate effect.

<sup>5</sup> Amended based on the decision of the National Research Council of 15 August 2017, in force since 1 January 2018.

#### **Article 10 Grants for interdisciplinary projects**

Interdisciplinary research in terms of these Regulations means research that goes beyond the limits of existing disciplines. The disciplines may be represented by one applicant or by several applicants. An application is deemed to be interdisciplinary if the following requirements are met:

- a) the intended research goals require the integration of elements (such as theories, methods, concepts) from two or more disciplines;
- b) combining these elements is not yet customary in the field concerned;
- c) the various disciplines contribute to the proposed research from different perspectives.

#### **Article 11 Grants for project completion**

If, for unforeseeable reasons, additional funds are needed for the successful completion of a project, an application for a project completion grant pursuant to Article 36 of the Funding Regulations may be submitted.

### **Chapter 4 Applicants and submission of applications**

#### **Article 12 Applicants, several applicants and project partners**

<sup>1</sup> Applications for project funding grants may be submitted by a single person or by several persons (applicants).

<sup>2</sup> Several applicants are eligible if they are needed to achieve the targets set for the planned project. In the case of two or more applicants, one person must be designated as the applicant engaging in correspondence with the SNSF.

<sup>3</sup> Each applicant must meet the eligibility requirements for the submission of applications pursuant to these Regulations and the Funding Regulations, and each is personally responsible for the project.

<sup>4</sup> Project partners are researchers who contribute to a research project through cooperation without being responsible for the project. They must be designated as such in the application. Within the scope of their contributions such as analyses etc., project partners benefit from the SNSF grant. However, they do not count as (remunerated) employees of the project and are not among those responsible for the project as a whole. They may not refer to the support received from the SNSF as a grant they have acquired themselves.

<sup>5</sup> The relationship between the applicants and, after approval of the grant, between the grantees is governed by the Funding Regulations of the SNSF.

#### **Article 13 Project grants in relation to other forms of funding awarded by the SNSF; two or more project grants**

<sup>1</sup> In the project funding scheme, grantees may receive a maximum of three grants from the SNSF for the same funding period, provided at least one grant is for an EU consortium project or has been granted on the basis of a lead agency, Weave or International Con-investigator scheme evaluation. Career

funding grants held by persons who are eligible as applicants for the project funding scheme are deemed to be project funding grants in this case.

<sup>2</sup> All research projects that overlap in time must have a clear thematic distinction from each other and all applicants must prove that he or she can make a substantial personal contribution to all the projects.

<sup>3</sup> In order to make a thematic distinction pursuant to paragraph 2, it is necessary to show that all projects are clearly different in terms of topic, aim, object of study and research question.

<sup>4</sup> It is possible to apply for a project grant for the period after expiry of a support measure by the SNSF that was subject to the restrictions applicable to project funding. Overlaps of a few months are permissible.

#### **Article 14          Re-submission**

The SNSF only considers a re-submitted application if it is a significantly modified version of the rejected application.

### **Chapter 5          Assessment criteria and grants**

#### **Article 15          Assessment criteria, scientific evaluation**

<sup>1</sup> The relevant criteria for the award of project funding grants are the scientific quality of the research projects and the scientific qualifications of the applicant.

<sup>2</sup> Scientific evaluation is conducted in accordance with the criteria set out in Article 24 paragraph 2 of the Funding Regulations:

- a. scientific quality of the proposed research project: scientific relevance, topicality and originality, suitable methods, and feasibility;
- b. scientific qualifications of the researchers: scientific track record and ability to carry out the research project.

<sup>3</sup> For applications in use-inspired basic<sup>6</sup> research, the project's broader impact is considered in the evaluation as an element of its scientific quality in accordance with paragraph 2 letter a.

<sup>4</sup> In the case of collaborative projects, the aspect of how cooperation is conceived and organised with a view to achieving the joint research goals is also evaluated.

#### **Article 16          Grants**

Project funding grants are awarded and managed according to the applicable rules of the SNSF, in particular according to the Funding Regulations of the SNSF and its Implementation Regulations.

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<sup>6</sup> Amendment of 27 October 2017, in force with immediate effect.

**Article 17          Reporting**

<sup>1</sup> Holders of project funding grants are obliged to submit to the SNSF reports in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the SNSF.

<sup>2</sup> In particular, output data must be provided 18 months after the start of the project at the latest and a final report upon conclusion of a project.

**Chapter 6          Applicable law, transitional provisions and entry into force****Article 18          Applicable law**

Unless these Regulations provide otherwise, the provisions of the Funding Regulations of the SNSF and its Implementation Regulations apply.

**Article 19          Transitional provisions**

<sup>1</sup> These Regulations are applicable to the funding arrangements initiated prior to their entry into force. However, if rights assigned to grantees on approval of funding are not in accordance with the new Regulations, such rights will nonetheless remain in force.

<sup>2</sup> Awarded or ongoing Sinergia grants are considered to be project funding grants in terms of Article 13 paragraph 2.

**Article 20          Entry into force**

These Regulations come into force on 1 July 2023.