

Annex 10a: Cooperation agreement with grant administration offices

(Clause 5.2 in conjunction with Clause 5.1 para. 1 General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations)

Cooperation agreement between

the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

and

the grant administration office (GAO¹)

I. Object of agreement, aim

Pursuant to Article 37 of the SNSF's Funding Regulations, the recipients of SNSF grants must arrange for their grants to be administered by a recognised grant administration office (GAO).

This agreement governs the working relationship between the SNSF and the GAO. The aim is to ensure proper, uniform and timely financial accountability with regard to the grants awarded by the SNSF.

II. Legal framework

The administration of SNSF grants is based on the following:

1. Funding Regulations of 27 February 2015;
2. General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations of 9 December 2015 (including Annexes);
3. SNSF provisions relating to individual funding schemes (regulations and calls).

¹ This agreement also applies to all other organisational units involved in administering the grant within the institution.

III. Recognition of a GAO

1. An institution's grant administration office (GAO) will be recognised by the Administrative Offices of the SNSF, provided the GAO undertakes to manage the grants in accordance with the relevant and applicable SNSF provisions and with this agreement.
2. The SNSF only recognises grant administration offices that manage at least 20 grants on average per year.
3. Annex 9 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations contains a list of the recognised grant administration offices.

IV. Rights and obligations of the GAO

1. Grant administration; principles

The GAO takes care of the central administration of the SNSF grants awarded to the employees of its institution. It is obliged to manage and disclose these SNSF grants separately from the institution's other funds. The GAO shall ensure that it has an appropriately staffed unit, in terms of skills and size, to administer the grants properly.

2. Financial reporting

The GAO prepares the interim and final financial reports as prescribed by the SNSF (in terms of layout and degree of detail), generally doing so annually. The GAO sends the grantee the reports in time for them to be submitted to the SNSF.

3. Grantees from different institutions

If the SNSF has awarded a grant to several recipients, it will pay the full amount to the GAO of the corresponding grantee (Article 32 paragraph 3 of the Funding Regulations). In such a case, the GAO of the corresponding grantee will carry out the financial reporting for the full amount.

4. Filing and archiving of receipts

The submitted receipts will be filed and archived as agreed with the SNSF. If these processes are electronic, the principles of proper data processing shall apply accordingly.

5. Monitoring of eligible costs

The GAO is obliged to check that the grantees are invoicing their institution only for eligible costs pursuant to the SNSF provisions governing the grant.

6. Monitoring of salaries and employment conditions

The GAO is obliged to review (where necessary together with the responsible personnel department of the institution) whether the salaries, employment conditions and social security contributions with regard to employees being funded by an SNSF grant comply with the SNSF provisions (Annex 12 of the General implementation regulations).

7. Information for the attention of grantees

The GAO will keep the grantees regularly informed of the account balance for their grant.

8. Call-up of annual instalments

The GAO will ensure that the grantees call up the annual instalments in good time.

9. Procedure in the event of inconsistencies and breaches

The GAO will make the grantees aware of any inconsistencies or breaches of the SNSF provisions governing use of the grant as soon as possible and arrange for the required corrective measures to be taken.

10. Information for the attention of the SNSF

In the event of conflicts and serious breaches of the SNSF provisions governing the use of the grant, the GAO will inform the SNSF as soon as possible. In particular, the SNSF should be informed as soon as possible if grantees are permanently or temporarily impeded from carrying out their research work. In this event, no payments may be debited to the SNSF grant until such time as the situation has been resolved. The SNSF will issue the necessary instructions in such cases.

11. Access to mySNF

For the purposes of fulfilling its remit, the GAO will have access to the personal and project data in mySNF to the extent necessary to administer the grant.

12. Investment of SNSF grants

The GAO may invest the SNSF grants for the purposes of generating a return but will be liable towards the SNSF for any loss incurred. The GAO is not required to provide the SNSF with a statement showing income earned and its use.

V. Rights and obligations of the SNSF

1. Information for the attention of the GAO

The SNSF undertakes to inform the GAO of grants that have been awarded to grantees carrying out research at its institution as well as of all further facts relevant to the administration of the grants. Information on the grants awarded will be provided via mySNF.

2. Non-payment

The SNSF may refrain from paying out instalments to grantees if interim or final reports are outstanding or if conditions or limits imposed by the SNSF have not been fulfilled or observed.

VI. Quality assurance

1. Discussions between the SNSF and GAO

Regular quality assurance discussions and meetings will be held between the managers from the GAO and the SNSF staff responsible for financial control. These discussions will serve to resolve any questions about managing the grants and will promote cooperation.

2. Instructions

The SNSF may issue the GAO with written instructions in individual cases.

For the SNSF:

For the grant administration office: