

Regulations on Research Grants for Longitudinal Studies (Longitudinal Study Regulations)

of 1 February 2017

The National Research Council

based on Article 8 of the Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants¹ of 1 January 2016 (hereinafter "Funding Regulations"),

hereby issues the following Regulations:

Chapter 1 General Provisions

Article 1 Principles

¹ The Swiss National Science Foundation (hereinafter "the SNSF") awards grants for longitudinal studies in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.

² Grants for population or indication-specific studies with a longitudinal design are awarded for the following purposes:

- a. to fund research infrastructure that facilitates the collection and analysis of population and illness-related data over protracted periods;
- b. to support projects which are highly relevant to healthcare in Switzerland.

³ Such grants are generally awarded to multicentric projects that receive funding from several research institutions (hereinafter "Funding Institutions").

Article 2 Specific features of the scheme

¹ Grants may be awarded for longitudinal studies under the following conditions, all of which must be fulfilled. The project must:

- a. be dedicated to an issue that can only be answered via a longitudinal approach;
- b. require a time frame that exceeds the duration of project funding pursuant to Article 2 of the Regulations on project funding;
- c. bring together a research group comprising researchers from at least three different institutions; and
- d. lay the foundations for further, innovative research projects.

¹ http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_reglement_16_f.pdf

Article 3 Project duration

Grants for longitudinal studies are awarded for a maximum of three years and will end on 31 December 2020 at the latest.

Article 4 Amount of funding

The grant awarded by the SNSF supplements the grants received from the Funding Institutions. While the SNSF grant will be commensurate with the scale of the study, it cannot as a rule exceed CHF 2 million per year. The application must be accompanied by a detailed budget based on the project stages and milestones defined in the research plan and showing the grants from the Funding Institutions.

Article 5 Funding Partners

¹The longitudinal studies must receive financial support from the Funding Institutions and, as the case may be, from third parties (hereinafter “Funding Partners”). Evidence of the origin, nature and extent of such support must be provided to the SNSF.

²The decision to accept a Funding Partner lies with the SNSF and requires that the institution in question is not profit-oriented. Funding Partners are not eligible if they are incompatible with the interests and objectives of the funding scheme or of the SNSF in general.

Chapter 2 Requirements for an application

Article 6 Personal requirements

¹Eligibility to apply is governed by Article 10 of the Funding Regulations.

²The applicants must be natural persons. An application may be submitted by more than one applicant (Article 12 of the Funding Regulations). The applicants must designate one applicant as their representative vis-à-vis the SNSF, which representation shall be legally binding.

³All applicants must show that they have successfully carried out research work for several years and must be capable of running a multicentric project drawing on various specialist disciplines.

⁴If there are two or more applicants, each applicant must have a clearly defined role that is conducive to the successful completion of the project.

⁵Project partners comprise researchers who make a partial contribution to the project without bearing any individual responsibility. They must be designated as such in the application. They do not have the right to refer to the funding received from the SNSF as a grant they have themselves acquired. They benefit from the SNSF grant based on the services they provide for the project (Article 11 paragraph 2 of the Funding Regulations).

Article 7 Further requirements

¹Other formal requirements for the submission of proposals are set out, in particular, in Article 14 of the Funding Regulations, Article 2 of these Regulations and the information provided in the call for proposals.

²Applications must be submitted in English, as must all supporting documentation.

Chapter 3 Application procedure

Article 8 Call for proposals and deadlines

¹The SNSF will issue one public call for proposals for longitudinal studies on the SNSF website.

²Applications must be submitted to the SNSF by the submission deadline prescribed in the call in electronic form via the *my*SNSF portal.

Article 9 Evaluation procedure

¹ International experts will take part in the evaluation procedure.

² The SNSF does not consider proposals that clearly do not meet one or more of the evaluation criteria.

³ The scientific quality of the applications is evaluated and rated according to the evaluation criteria listed in Article 10 of these regulations. Applications whose rating does not qualify them for a grant within the budget available for this call for proposals will be rejected.

Article 10 Assessment criteria

The evaluation is based on the main criteria applicable to project funding pursuant to Article 15 of the Project Funding Regulations, as well as on the following, additional criteria:

- a. the project team's expertise, especially the applicants' experience of designing and conducting longitudinal studies and of managing and internationally networking multicentric projects;
- b. the scientific potential of the study, its value and function as a research platform in the context of national and international cooperation;
- c. interdisciplinary cooperation between the participating researchers; potential for national and international networking with other (longitudinal) studies; plan to ensure that data is accessible for third-party research projects;
- d. importance of the research topic to healthcare in Switzerland; collection of representative data with national coverage;
- e. appropriateness and feasibility of the longitudinal study design, medium and long-term planning of studies and funding with clearly defined stages and milestones, including the results expected in each case and their potential significance, quality of data gathering, analysis and protection of data according to international standards;
- f. joint execution and funding plan issued by all Funding Partners; in particular assurances by the Funding Institutions as regards strategy and financing, and available human and material resources; plan for use of existing research infrastructure, e.g. clinical trial units;
- g. the results generated during previous funding periods, the achievement of milestones set for the previous period, and the implementation of recommendations and conditions in accordance with the submitted research plan.

Article 11 Eligible costs

¹ In principle, the same conditions apply to longitudinal studies as to funded projects. Eligible costs of longitudinal studies include the following in particular:

- a. salaries of personnel employed for the project according to the SNSF-approved rates for project staff; salaries for doctoral students are excluded;
- b. material costs that are directly related to the project's execution; especially set-up costs, the costs of recruiting and following up on study participants, the costs of data gathering and analysis, and the costs of operating and maintaining the database;
- c. travel expenses; costs of coordinating the multicentric study.

² The following costs are not covered:

- d. the costs of research projects: assumption of such costs must be applied for separately under the project funding scheme; exception: a maximum of CHF 200,000 over a one-year period can be used for projects conducted within the research group which serve primarily to optimise data gathering and the formulation of hypotheses (pilot studies) – hereinafter called “small nested projects”. A plan for the thematic orientation and selection of such small nested projects must be submitted with the application.
- e. procurement and operation of large equipment.

Chapter 4: Final provisions

Article 12 Supplementary provisions of the SNSF

¹ Unless the present Regulations provide to the contrary, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and of the General implementation regulations of the Funding Regulations apply.

² In particular, Chapters 4 and 5 of the Funding Regulations govern without restriction the legal relations formed in the context of these Regulations between the SNSF and the applicants.

³ The research groups are obliged to participate actively in the SNSF's information and exchange activities in connection with longitudinal studies and to cooperate actively with the Swiss Biobanking Platform (SBP), which coordinates biobanks within Switzerland.

Article 13 Entry into force

These Regulations enter into force on 1 February 2017.