
Key aspects of the lifetime management of research projects abroad (grants)

January 2018

Preface

This manual is intended for coordinators of research projects abroad (funding in international programmes, Sinergia, Money follows researcher, Money follows Co-operation line) who feel the need for more specific information in addition to the existing regulations and guidelines.

The existing lifetime management documentation comprises:

- the [Guidelines for the lifetime management of research projects \(grants\)](#), provide guidance on project administration.

This documentation is available on the SNSF website (www.snsf.ch). The guidelines are based primarily on the [Funding Regulations](#), the [General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#), the [Regulations on project funding](#) and the [Organisational Regulations](#) of the National Research Council. However, they are not legally binding. Their sole purpose is explanatory and they do not in any circumstances substitute the mentioned formal legal documents or any other provisions applicable to procedures and grants. Depending on the funding scheme, additional requirements may be issued; these will be set out in the relevant call documentation.

Points to be considered:

1. Transfer to another country:

Funds may only be transferred to researchers abroad who are designated as grantees in the ruling. Such grantees must open a project-specific account with their institution, if needed (generally with the grant administration office).

Funds transfers to the grantees involved are exempt from value-added tax. The transfers are generally effected by the responsible corresponding grantees in Switzerland. For the financial report, the transfers must be documented by the relevant receipts, on which the transferred amount is visible in the relevant currency (generally Swiss francs), as well as a confirmation of receipt from the bank of the partner abroad.

2. Employment of staff abroad

New hires, staff turnover, salary adjustments must be approved by the SNSF, unless they take place in international programme funding (r4d programme, enlargement programme for Croatia, SCOPES). A corresponding request must be sent to the SNSF in advance on [mySNF](#) via "Messages/Requests". You will find the web-based forms on mySNF if you select the relevant project and click on the corresponding section. Although Messages/Requests are the responsibility of the corresponding grantee, they may be delegated to third parties in order to reduce the administration workload (see the paragraph about delegating to third parties at the end of the document). For already approved projects, the new members of staff may be reported online even before the grant is released for payment.

Employment relationships must be regulated by the foreign grantees' institution by means of a written contract. The institutions are responsible for compliance with the statutory labour and social insurance provisions of the country in question. The salary scales defined by the SNSF (see Annex 12 of the [General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#)) only apply to Switzerland, and the rates for employees abroad may therefore be lower. The maximum rates are generally also binding in the case of employees abroad.

3. Overhead

Pursuant to Article 4 of the [Overhead Regulations](#), projects that involve using the grant abroad are generally not entitled to any overhead. Any other provisions must be clearly stated in the call documents.

4. Financial reports

All grantees who have received money in the form of instalments must annually submit a financial report. If possible, the reports and the corresponding receipts should be submitted in full in electronic form via [mySNF](#). Such receipts will only be accepted if they are clearly legible on the submitted scan. All reports are the responsibility of the grantees. The corresponding responsible grantee or the grant administration office compiles a [financial overview](#) of all sub-projects and submits it along with all reports and receipts to the SNSF. This financial overview also serves as the basis for the figures to be entered in mySNF. If expenses incurred for a foreign partner are paid for directly from the budget of the Swiss coordinator, this must be declared in the report.

In the case of research groups, the other foreign grantees must have a financial report compiled at their institution about the funds they have been allocated; the report must subsequently be sent, along with all receipts, to the corresponding grantee or his/her grant administration office. The grantee is responsible for the submission. For this reason, the other grantees should make their reports available to the responsible grantee in electronic form.

They must complete the appropriate [Excel list](#) and submit it with the relevant receipts, listed chronologically in the Excel file. A legible receipt must be provided as proof for each expense. If the receipt is in a language other than English, German, French or Italian, a note indicating the expense in question must be added in English. The note may be written by hand directly on the receipt. To confirm the salary payments, please use only the [Salary list](#) and transfer only the total annual (accounting period) salaries or social security contributions to the Excel list. For salary payments, proof that the employee had received the relevant amount must be provided.

With regard to exchange rates: the actual conversion rates (rates of the day) of the transfers/payments are to be applied, in accordance with the transfer/payment receipts of the bank etc. The conversion from local currency to CHF in the financial report ("Summary calculation pivot in local currency" in the Excel sheet for foreign partners) as at the end of the reporting period must be done using the rate on the final day of the reporting period. The aim of this conversion is solely to provide an overview in CHF as at the end of the report year. The partner abroad must in any case continue its accounting in the local currency, and the balance at the end of each report year must be carried over to the next report ([Excel list](#)) and shown there.

Any currency differences that may result from the annual conversion in Swiss francs must only be offset based on the actual final balance in the foreign currency.

If the above-mentioned points are not mentioned in the submitted report, the SNSF reserves the right to return the entire report for revision.

5. Repayment of remaining amounts

Upon expiry of the grant, you need to repay any unused funds no later than 30 days after compiling the final financial report, unless the funds in question amount to less than CHF 50. The amount must be refunded to the following account of the SNSF: Postfinance AG, 3000 Bern, IBAN CH14 0900 0000 3000 3767 5, account number: 30-3767-5, BIC: POFICHBEXXX, Schweizerischer Nationalfonds, 3001 Bern

As concerns research groups, unused funds have to be paid back to the corresponding grantee. He/she is responsible for all refunds to the SNSF after all project grants have been allocated in the [Full overview](#).

6. Cost-neutral extensions

Cost-neutral extensions are generally possible, but they should only be applied for after consulting with all of the grantees. In order to ensure that the extension will indeed be cost-neutral, we need the actual envisaged balance for all subprojects as at the original end-date of the grant as well as a budget for the extension period, apportioned to the various subprojects.

7. Information for foreign grantees and administrative offices working with mySNF

Almost all of the mentioned processes can be carried out electronically in mySNF without physical signature. The responsibility for this lies with the grantees. You may, however, authorise third parties (e.g. project partners, secretariats) to assist you in managing the projects. This is only possible if these persons are registered mySNF users and hence have their own access to mySNF. The authorised persons may fill in the online forms for the following processes, whereby the responsible grantees must, in a final step, transmit the data to the SNSF from their own user account:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds
- Submitting scientific reports
- Submitting financial reports (only relevant if main grant is not administered by a grant administration office)

However, the corresponding grantees can fully delegate the following processes to third parties. They can fill in the online forms and transmit them to the SNSF - the corresponding grantee always receives an e-mail confirmation of the transmission:

- Requesting personnel, changes of personnel, salary adjustments and cost-neutral extensions (messages/requests)
- Entering output data
- Entering the lay summary
- Request for payment of an installment

Furthermore, the corresponding grantees can specify in mySNF that copies of all automated correspondence (e.g. the request to compile a scientific report) be sent to the authorised persons by e-mail.

You will find all settings with regard to the authorisation of third parties in your mySNF account in the main navigation bar on the left under "Manage authorisations".