
Guidelines for the research plan

Sinergia programme

August 2021

1. Research plan

The research plan is used in the evaluation process to answer the following questions related to the Sinergia assessment criteria:

- **Is the research approach described in the proposal well-conceived, consistent and risk-balanced?**
- **Are the researchers convincing as a team and do they have the necessary expertise to carry out the project?**
- **Does the proposal present an interdisciplinary approach and does the collaboration of the applicants create an added value?**
- **Does the proposed research address important challenges, present a novel approach and have a potential for impact in or beyond academia?**

Make sure that the relevant information is clearly described.

Furthermore, the research plan must be written in accordance with the rules of good scientific practice and sources must be cited correctly. It must consist of original text that has been written by the applicants themselves. A limited amount of text or other material by third parties or text published by the applicants themselves is permissible in the sections concerning the state of research, as well as when describing standard methods. The quoted texts must be clearly designated as such (quotation marks or appropriate wording) and a verifiable source must be mentioned nearby and in the bibliography. See also the SNSF dossier on [scientific integrity](#).

Adopt the titles of the sections listed below, either word for word or in approximate terms. In general, the research plan must not contain any annexed documents.

1. **Summary** (maximum 1 page)

Give a synopsis of the entire research plan. In particular, summarise the main goals of the project and how these goals may exceed the state of the art. Also give a brief overview of the research approach and implementation.

2. **Project description**

*(The research plan must **not exceed 20 pages and 80,000 characters (with spaces), for projects with 2 applicants and 30 pages and 120,000 characters (with spaces) for project with 3 or 4 applicants; this includes illustrations, footnotes, formulae and tables (and, if applicable, the table of contents), but not the bibliography. A minimum of point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing must be used. In general, the research plan should not contain any annexed documents.)***

2.1 Goals of the projects	Specify the approach you are taking and the concrete results that you aim to achieve in the period of funding.
2.2 Interdisciplinarity and added value of the collaboration	Describe what makes the proposal interdisciplinary, why an interdisciplinary approach is necessary and in to what extent the project is more than the sum of its parts. Outline to what extent the collaboration of the different applicants is essential to achieve the research goals and creates an added value. Specify the complementarity and role of each applicant.
2.3 Breakthrough character and potential impact	Describe to what extent the proposal addresses important challenges and presents a novel approach. In what way does the proposed research go beyond existing models, theories, doctrines, research approaches, methods, etc.? In what way does it open up new lines of research and have a high potential for impact in or beyond academia? Describe the impact the project may have for science and, if applicable, beyond academia (e.g. on economy, industry, policy or administration). In addition, mention the form in which you make your research results public (e.g. articles in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceeding, outreach, etc.). Please, mention not only academic output but also wider outreach measures.
2.4 State of the art relevant to the project	Which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies? In which areas is research needed, and why? Mention the relevant references.
2.5 Research approach	Give the assumptions and hypotheses from which the project starts. Specify the scientific approach, combination of different methods, techniques, etc. to be used in addressing the overall goals of the project. Describe the methods that first have to be developed.

2.6 Project implementation	Describe how you plan to reach the anticipated goals. Show the planned contribution by each team member and project partner (if applicable), including each PhD student, postdoc and other staff positions requested in the proposal. Compile a schedule consistent with your budget plan that includes all planned tasks (who, when, how). Which specific measures will be taken to enhance interaction between project participants?
2.7 Risk management	If applicable, state in what respect the planned research goals may not be reached and which alternatives may be foreseen. Outline the most risky and critical parts of the project and provide a contingency plan for risk mitigation. Note that the availability of preliminary data is not a requirement in itself.

3. Bibliography

List all the sources of relevant prior and/or ongoing work referred to in the research plan.

2. Recommendations for the budget

Before drafting the application, applicants should consider which project costs they wish to apply for and whether these costs are eligible for Sinergia funding. A maximum amount of 3.2 Mio CHF may be requested in one Sinergia application. All eligible costs must be project-related and well justified. Outline the tasks of the staff members and give sufficient information regarding the necessity and the planned use of research funds and equipment. If budget items are not sufficiently justified, budget cuts may be applied.

The following costs are eligible for Sinergia grants:

- a. the salaries of scientific and technical staff in research projects according to 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 data³ as well as of providing open access to research data⁴;
- c. direct costs incurred through the use of research infrastructure linked to the research work;
- d. costs of organising conferences and workshops associated with the funded research;
- e. internal project coordination costs, particularly scientific coordination, workshops and other collaborative and networking activities associated with the funded research.

If positions for collaborators (doctoral students, postdocs or other employees) are

to be covered by SNSF funding, the SNSF salary ranges and blanket amounts for social security contributions have to be applied (see annex 12 of the general implementation regulations below).

In Sinergia, applicants may not apply for funding of their own salary. Applicants are also not allowed to be simultaneously employed in another SNSF project.

3. Annexes

3.1 Annex 12: Salary scales for doctoral students, salary ranges and guidelines for postdocs and other staff members, blanket amounts for social security contributions

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_XII_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.2 Annex 2: Grants for scientific open access e-publications (publication grants)

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_II_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.3 Annex 4: Support grants based on the 120% model

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_IV_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.4 Annex 5: Mobility grants for doctoral students working on SNSF- funded research projects

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_V_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf

3.5 Annex 7: Costs for gender equality measures: Gender equality grant

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Annex_VII_Ausfuhrungsreglement_Beitragreglement_E.pdf