FNSNF
SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

SCOPES 2013-2016

Scientific Co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland

General information and second call for proposals

Last year, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) launched a new phase of the programme "SCOPES - Scientific co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland".

In the framework of SCOPES 2013–2016, two calls are foreseen

- a first call for proposals for Joint Research Projects, open from 20 March to 20 September 2013 (this call is closed)
- **a second call for proposals for Institutional Partnerships (= IP, open from 20 May to 15 November 2014).**

Preparatory Grants (PG) can only be submitted during an open call in order to prepare a JRP/IP. Applications for **Valorisation Grants** (VG) are usually submitted towards the end of a successfully conducted JRP/IP. Applications for **Conference Grants** (CG) can be submitted throughout the entire duration of the programme.

1. Background

Together with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the SNSF has been promoting co-operation with scientists from Eastern European countries and from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union (NIS) since 1990 by implementing a scientific co-operation programme in seven consecutive phases. The commitment is part of a wider effort to strengthen economic, scientific and cultural ties between Switzerland and Eastern Europe and NIS.

An overall budget of 16 million CHF is available for the whole phase 2013-2016.

2. Objectives

The pursuit of knowledge is an important feature of human societies as well as a prerequisite for their continued development. The numerous challenges that transition countries in Eastern European, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union are confronted with, concern also the research and educational systems to a considerable degree.

The difficult situation of the individual and the institutional level endangers the achievements of the most important tasks of any science system: the production and exchange of knowledge for the benefit of today's societies and the training of the next generation of qualified researchers. Therefore, the programme aims at improving the quality and increasing the networking level of scientific research.

SCOPES 2013-2016 must be seen in view of this general background. The programme aims at supporting individual researchers, research teams and research institutions from the target countries in their endeavour to overcome the difficulties of the transition period. From a Swiss perspective, the programme offers the possibility to fund scientific collaborations and promote synergies with the target countries.

The programme focuses on the funding of research projects of high quality, on the improvement of institutional framework conditions that enable a further increase of the research performance, and on improved integration of individuals and institutions into the international and especially in the European scientific community.

3. Programme philosophy

3.1 Thematic issues

SCOPES is open for activities within all scientific disciplines ranging from humanities and social sciences to natural, technological science and engineering sciences, biology and medicine. As SCOPES does not provide thematic priorities, scientists are free to submit in a bottom-up way any thematic proposal that may contribute to the objectives of the programme. Projects are evaluated according to their scientific merit. However, to further stimulate the achievement of the programme's objectives, other important aspects must be taken into account:

- Relevance for transition (see 3.2)
- Capacity building (see 3.3)
- Partnership approach (see 3.4)

Taking these principles into account will considerably enhance the chances for a proposal to be accepted for funding.

3.2 Relevance for transition

The selected projects should not only be of academic interest, but rather be thematically oriented on important issues of the transition process and its consequences. Therefore, the significance of the planned research for the sustainable development of the partner country must be demonstrated in the application.

3.3 Capacity building

Transition countries partially lack the resources and infrastructure required to carry out independent, effective, problem-oriented research which generates the necessary knowledge to solve existing development issues. Research co-operation is not only designed to produce research findings but also to help strengthen individual and institutional research capacities. Therefore, younger scientists should be involved and promoted in Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships and teams should be a good mixture regarding age and gender.

3.4 Partnership approach

Research partnerships between teams and institutions in Switzerland and transition countries are an important instrument for both knowledge development and capacity building at institutional and individual level. Jointly established objectives and shared responsibility as well as accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, participation and efficiency are important principles in establishing partnerships (see also KFPE's New Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships -> http://www.kfpe.ch/11-Principles).

4. Funding instruments

The following types of funding instruments are offered:

- Conference Grants (see 7.1)
- Joint Research Projects (see 7.2, closed)
- Institutional Partnerships (see 7.3)
- Preparatory Grants (see 7.4)
- Valorisation Grants (see 7.5)

More details about these funding instruments can be found in chapter 7.

5. Submission

5.1 Eligibility

Researchers working at research institutions in Switzerland and in countries of Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union are eligible for participation in the programme.

The main applicant must be employed at a Swiss research institution.

The scientific personnel in Switzerland and Eastern Europe/NIS must be employed at an institution that does not conduct research for commercial purposes.

Eligible research institutions in Switzerland and Eastern Europe/NIS

	Switzerland	Eastern Europe/NIS
Research partners	• Cantonal universities • ETH & associated institutions • Universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education • Swiss federal and cantonal research institutions	• Institutions of higher education, universities • Institutes of the Academies of Sciences • National/State research institutions

5.2 Partner countries

There are two categories of partner countries:

Category A
The first category comprises the countries on the OECD-DAC list of ODA (Official Development Assistance) recipients (see

http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/DAC%20List%20used%20for%202012%20and%202013%20flows.pdf):

- Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia
- South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia
- Central Asia: Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- Moldova, Ukraine

Category B

- EU-Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,
- Russia, Kazakhstan

Category B countries have generally progressed further in the transition phase and may serve as an intermediate partner between the Swiss partner(s) and the partner countries from category A.

5.3 Eligible project consortia

For funding instruments that require the building of **consortia** (Institutional Partnerships), the following collaborations are eligible for funding:

a) Bilateral projects
(e.g. one partner from Switzerland and one partner from a partner country)

These are only possible with countries of the category A.

b) Multilateral projects
(e.g. one partner from Switzerland and two or more partners from partner countries)

These are possible with countries of the category A and with a combination of countries category A + B. In the case of a collaboration involving partners from the category A and B, at least 50% of the funding must go to the partner(s) from category A.

All partner teams must have a substantial role in the partnership and complement each other in order to have a reasonable and balanced consortium. Therefore, all the Eastern European partner teams should claim for more or less equal budget amounts.

5.4 Technical submission & information

Proposals must be prepared jointly by the Swiss and Eastern European and NIS applicants. The application must be submitted by the Swiss main applicant (= future co-ordinator of the project) through the SNSF web platform www.mysnf.ch.

The application must be submitted in English. The main and the co-applicants cannot submit more than one application under the present call. Successful applicants from the first call (JRP) last year cannot submit a second application.

Proposals must be submitted online via the mySNF portal. User-registration can be obtained on the mySNF homepage: www.mysnf.ch. The call documents and the relevant provisions, funding

regulations, general implementation regulations for the funding regulations and guidelines for the submission of proposals via the mySNF portal can be downloaded from the SNSF web site. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to the applicant in a written form.

General questions concerning the programme and the application procedure may be directed to the SCOPES Programme Office (Evelyne Glättli, International Co-operation, E-mail: international@snf.ch, phone: 031 308 22 22).

For questions related to www.mysnf.ch, the technical support hotline can be contacted:

- Phone: + 41 31 308 22 88 (English)
- Phone: + 41 31 308 22 99 (Français)
- Phone: + 41 31 308 22 00 (Deutsch)
- E-mail: mysnf.support@snf.ch

The deadlines for application are given below. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

5.5 Deadlines for the second call for proposals

Institutional Partnerships
Applications must be submitted to SNSF by **15 November 2014** (until midnight).

Preparatory Grants in order to prepare an IP
Applications can be submitted from now on until the end of October 2014.

Conference Grants
Applications can be submitted continuously until the end of 2016.

Valorisation Grants
Applications for Valorisation Grants can only be requested as a follow-up of an accepted JRP or IP at the latest until 31.12.2016.

6. Evaluation and selection

Applications for **Conference Grants, Preparatory Grants and Valorisation Grants** will be evaluated by the administrative offices of SNSF.

Applications for **Institutional Partnerships** will be evaluated by an evaluation panel. Following the panel recommendation, the Research Council of SNSF will decide upon the proposals to be funded.

The **evaluation criteria** specific to each funding instrument can be found in chapter 7.

7. Funding instruments

7.1 Conference Grants (CG)

7.1.1 Description

For good quality scientific conferences with international participation taking place in Switzerland funds can be made available to finance conference participation of Eastern European and NIS researchers. Pure training courses will not be supported.

7.1.2 Goals

Conference grants aim to strengthen the international networks of scientists from Eastern Europe/NIS and open new perspectives for their international co-operation as well as for the development of their scientific curricula.

7.1.3 Project duration

Maximum 7 days

7.1.4 Project consortia

The Swiss conference organiser must submit the proposal.

7.1.5 Eligible costs

Contribution to travel and accommodation costs for conference participants from partner countries (flat rate per person, see below). The maximum contribution per CG is CHF 10'000.

7.1.6 Submission

Applications may be submitted to SNSF during the whole period of the programme, but at least 3 months before the conference takes place.

7.1.7 Evaluation and selection

The quality of the conference and the candidates will be checked. Young scientists (<45) and active conference participants will be given preference. A gender balance is aimed at.

7.1.8 Financial issues

Region	Countries	Flat rate per person*
Western Balkan countries:	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	CHF 1500
South Caucasus:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	CHF 2000
Central Asia:	Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	CHF 2500
Other countries:	Moldova, Ukraine	CHF 2000
EU-Member States:	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	CHF 1000
Other countries:	Croatia, Kazakhstan, Russia	CHF 1000

* All amounts shown are the maximum flat rate per person. Smaller amounts are also possible in order to support more participants if requested.

7.2 Joint Research Projects (JRP)

The JRP call was launched last year and is closed now.

There will be no other JRP call in the programme period 2013-2016.

7.3 Institutional Partnerships (IP)

7.3.1 Description

Institutional Partnerships (IPs) are intended to contribute to the structural development and modernisation of research and teaching institutions in Eastern Europe. The aim is to increase their attractiveness and international competitiveness by improving basic overall conditions. **Research should not be the main component of an IP**.

Grants for IPs are meant to establish medium to long-term partnerships between research institutions in Eastern Europe and Switzerland. The funds of an IP are earmarked to overcome shortcomings of the Eastern European institutions and to contribute to :

- Improvement of institutional and research management
- Improvement of teaching and training, development of curricula
- Modernisation of methodology and approaches
- Improvement of networking
- Research infrastructure

A partnership will comprise at least one research institution (or a smaller unit within an institute/department) from Switzerland and one from Eastern Europe (composition of project consortia see chapter 5.2). The Swiss side is responsible for the overall partnership co-ordination. It is possible to include one or more partners from Eastern Europe; at least half of the partners must be countries in category A.

Partners from countries in category B could be engaged by the Swiss co-ordinator for the restructuring and modernisation of the partner institutions as well as the capacity development at the institution from category A. All partners need to agree to this.

Various activities are possible in order to reach the goals outlined above (not all must be included):

- Development of research networks (organization of international workshops)
- Training of the next generation of scientists (support of young scientists, promotion of women) through the organization of training courses, doctoral workshops, etc.
- Improvement of research /teaching infrastructure
- Development of new curricula, courses
- Improvement of teaching: training of tutors, common summer schools
- Support in the Bologna process
- Improvement of research management and general management (e.g. human resource management, strategic management, financial management, IT management, technology transfer management)

Examples of IPs during previous programme phases:

- Network for environmental assessment and remediation in aquatic systems: environmental curriculum and training at postgraduate level
- Advanced process engineering for Master and joint PhD education
- Promotion of forest and wood sciences in … to mitigate the effects of climate changes on long-term forest development
- Improvement of teaching methods and development of new curricula for a course in general physics

- Implementation of a new teaching concept for selected paediatric disciplines in …

7.3.2 Project duration

24-36 months

7.3.3 Project consortia

Bi- and trilateral partnerships are possible (see details under 5.3)

7.3.4 Allowable costs in the programme

A detailed budget is required. Projected expenses must be justified and related to the proposed activities:

- Travel expenses in connection with visits to the partner institution (exchange of faculty members, postdoctoral and doctoral students)
- Living expenses for the visiting project partners
- Support of jointly organized workshops, training activities, etc.
- Research infrastructure (maximum 30% of the budget, only partners from Eastern Europe)
- Contractual costs (maximum 20% of the IP budget, e.g. for management training courses)
- Consumables necessary for the proposed work
- Co-ordination costs for Swiss partner(s): personnel costs to provide part-time support to the IP
- Other costs (must be justified)

Grants may not be used to cover overhead costs and research activities.

7.3.5 Submission

Proposals must be submitted to the SNSF **no later than 15 November 2014 (midnight)**. They must be prepared jointly by the Swiss and Eastern European applicants. Late and incomplete proposals will not be accepted.

7.3.6 Evaluation criteria

The proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation panel selected by the National Research Council of the SNSF. The following evaluation criteria will be applied:

- Scientific, educational and technological merit
- Significance and potential impact of the proposed activities for the participating institutions and their standing /role within their national/regional context.
- Originality of the proposed approach
- Experience and past performance of applicants, specific qualifications of applicants for the proposed activities
- Feasibility of proposed approach
- Potential synergy between the partners
- Potential for follow-up long-term collaboration
- Promotion of young and female researchers

7.3.7 Financial Details

Here are the maximum amounts of budgets for project consortia (see chapter 5.3):

Total amount per IP with one Eastern European (EE) partner

	total
Swiss partner(s)	30,000
EE partners (only category A)	75,000
Total	**105,000**

Total amount per IP with two Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	45,000
First EE partner (category A)	75,000
Second EE partner (category A or B)	75,000
Total	**195,000**

Total amount per IP with three and more Eastern European (EE) partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	60,000
First EE partner (category A)	60,000
Second EE partner (category A)*	60,000
Third EE partner (category A or B)*	60,000
Total	**240,000**

7.4 Preparatory Grants (PG)

7.4.1 Objectives

PG should improve the quality of the submitted IP proposals.

7.4.2 Description

Researchers who intend to submit a proposal have the opportunity to request funds for travel and subsistence costs in order to meet future partners. This meeting should allow partners to discuss and work on the application. The meeting must take place before the deadline of submission of the IP application.

7.4.3 Allowable costs

- Contribution to travel and subsistence costs
- Maximum amount per PG: CHF 10'000

Travel from / to Switzerland (flat rate per person)

Region	Country	Flat rate
Western Balkan countries:	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	CHF 1500
South Caucasus:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	CHF 2000
Central Asia:	Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	CHF 2500
EU-Member States:	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,	CHF 1000
Other countries:	Croatia, Russia Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine	CHF 1000 CHF 2000

7.4.4 Submission

Applications must be submitted to SNSF before **31 October 2014**. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

7.4.5 Eligibility

The eligibility of a Preparatory Grant is dependent upon the submission of a full proposal. Funds will only be granted upon reception of a main proposal which meets the eligibility criteria for an IP. The funding of the PG does not depend on the result of the evaluation process of the IP.

7.5 Valorisation Grants

7.5.1 Objective

Valorisation Grants aim to increase the effects and sustainability of the supported activities and the results achieved in the framework of JRP/IP (e.g. elaboration of publications, websites, organisation of conferences with stakeholders or the general public). Besides this, VG are possible for running JRP which intend common activities with other JRP in order to improve the effects of the outcomes.

7.5.2 Description

For JRP/IP which have generated transition relevant results, funds can be assigned to support their implementation or dissemination. Further measures benefiting a strengthened impact orientation such as extra financial support of co-operation between different JRP/IP will be considered, if the according synergy develops during the programme.

7.5.3 Eligible costs

Allowable costs are not defined. The financed activities must relate to the goals of SCOPES.

7.5.4 Submission

Applications may be submitted to SNSF during the whole programme period, but at least 3 months before the activities take place.

7.5.5 Evaluation and selection

The activities must contribute to an improved distribution/implementation of the results achieved in the JRP/IP.

Institutional Partnerships: Proposal (template)

1 Summary (max. 1 page)

2 Proposal

2.1 Current situation (max. 1 page per institution)

Describe the current situation of the participating research institution(s) or, if applicable, the sub-unit of an institutions in Eastern Europe. Please analyse internal factors (strengths and weaknesses of the institutions) as well as external factors (opportunities and threats present in the environment of the institutions) -> SWOT analysis.

2.2 Past performance (max. 1 page per institution)

Elaborate for each partner institution in Eastern Europe its past performance concerning research (mention the most important publications), teaching, use of scientific infrastructure as well as services to external clients (consultancy, mandatory activities etc.). Describe the position of the institution in its national context and list memberships in regional, national and international networks.

2.3 Significance for national standing (max. 1 page per institution)

Provide a strategic plan concerning the future priorities of the participating Eastern European institution(s) and where the institution(s) is/are going over the coming years in the (inter)national context.

2.4 Action plan and division of tasks (max. 10 pages)

Please develop – based on the SWOT analysis – the objective(s) of the IP and write a detailed action plan listing all planned activities to reach the objective(s). Include a list of the available resources and the means required.

List how the different tasks and responsibilities will be divided between the project partners.

Milestone / indicator	Associated activity	Expected duration	Responsible project partner

3 Expected outcomes

3.1 Economic/societal significance (max. 1 page)

Explain the significance of the planned institutional partnership for the economic, societal as well as scientific/innovation development of the partner countries also in terms of transition relevance.

3.2 Institutional and individual capacity building (max. 1 page)

Describe the expected short- and mid-term effects for institutional capacities:

- Concerning individuals, especially the involvement of young researchers and women (e.g. newly introduced scheme for the promotion of talented young scientists)
- Concerning structure (e.g. a newly established information desk for international cooperation or a unit for public relations)
- Concerning processes (e.g. controlling introduced)
- Concerning management (e.g. quality management introduced)

4 Communication strategy (max. 1 page)

Describe the strategy to ensure the active involvement of key stakeholders of the institutional change/development.

5 Management structure (max. 1 page)

Describe the management scheme for the partnership and point out the collaboration between the Swiss and Eastern European teams. A separate **letter of commitment** signed by the authorities of the participating institutions must be provided.

10 June 2014