

*Vietnamese-Swiss Joint Research Projects*

## **Joint Research Projects: Call for Proposals 2024**

Opening date: 8 January 2024

Informative pre-registration (not mandatory): 28 February 2024

Closing date: 11 April 2024

A maximum of 10 projects will be funded for this call

## 1. Introduction

The Vietnamese National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) launch a joint call for the submission of applications to conduct Joint Research Projects (JRPs) with a duration of three or four years.

## 2. Joint Research Projects

Grants for Joint Research Projects (JRPs) are aimed at promoting collaborative projects with clearly defined goals, involving at least one partner based in Switzerland and one based in Vietnam. Applications should describe ambitious research and propose innovative approaches. The research is to be carried out at the research facilities involved; reciprocal visits and short stays in Switzerland for researchers from Vietnam and vice versa are also possible within the scope of a JRP.

**The project duration is exactly 3 years or exactly 4 years.** Projects with a duration outside this range will not be accepted.

## 3. Area of research

This call for proposals is open to all research areas (basic research and use-inspired research).

## 4. Eligibility

Each proposal for a JRP must have at least one main applicant based in Switzerland and one main applicant based in Vietnam; they are the lead scientists on the Swiss and the Vietnamese side respectively. They bear the main responsibility for the project, including its technical and administrative coordination as well as the timely delivery of scientific and financial reports. Further applicants based in Switzerland and/or Vietnam can also participate in a JRP.

### **Eligibility criteria in Switzerland**

Main and further applicants must all meet the eligibility requirements of the SNSF. The eligibility criteria for the main and further applicants are identical. The SNSF [Funding Regulations](#), the [General implementation regulations](#) and the [Regulations on Project Funding](#) are applicable, or applicable mutatis mutandis where not stated otherwise. Each applicant / further applicant can only submit one application per call.

Applicants can submit a proposal for a JRP under the present call even if they hold another SNSF grant or have applied for one. Moreover, grantees may submit proposals to all SNSF funding schemes during the funding period of a JRP, provided that there is no substantial thematic overlap. Please note that the present call is not in conflict with the restrictions applicable to the SNSF's national project funding in accordance with Article 13 of the Regulations on Project Funding. Ambizione and PRIMA grantees can contact the SNSF office to check their eligibility.

Project partners as described in Article 11.2 of the SNSF Funding Regulations are not entitled to receive funds from the SNSF if their affiliated institution is located in Vietnam.

### **Eligibility criteria in Vietnam**

The Principal Investigator (PI), Research Organization (RO) and research team members must all meet the eligibility requirements of NAFOSTED as stated in the [Circular No.12/2018/TT-BKHCHN](#)

[dated on 31 August 2018 regulating establishment and management of collaboration programs between NAFOSTED and its international partners to fund for joint research projects and scientific activities](#) (written in Vietnamese).

Each applicant on Vietnamese side can participate in maximum two (02) projects funded by NAFOSTED at one time, of which being PI in maximum one (01) project. Proposals in which the PI exceeds this allowance will be deemed ineligible.

## 5. Funding

JRP proposals include two separate budgets: one budget in CHF for the Swiss applicant or applicants (paid by the SNSF according to the SNSF's rules) and one budget in VND for the Vietnamese applicant or applicants (paid by NAFOSTED according to the NAFOSTED's rules). The two countries have agreed to fund up to 10 projects if a sufficient number of proposals of high quality are submitted.

- The total budget available in **Switzerland** is CHF 4,000,000. The maximum budget available for the Swiss side of a project is **CHF 300,000 for a 3-year project and CHF 400'000 for a 4-year project.**
- The total budget available in **Vietnam** is VND 25 billion. The maximum budget available for the Vietnamese side of a project is **VND 2.5 billion for a 3-year project and VND 3.5 billion for a 4-year project.**

### Eligible costs in Switzerland

- Personnel costs (salaries within the salary ranges and rates set by the SNSF and social security contributions of scientific and technical employees); please note that the salaries of applicants are not eligible costs
- Material costs, if they are directly linked to the research project, in particular material of enduring value, the cost of expendable items, field expenses, travel expenses or third party charges
- Direct costs incurred through the use of research infrastructure linked to the research work
- Costs for granting access to research data (Open Research Data, max. CHF 10,000 per project)
- Costs of organising conferences and workshops in connection with the funded research
- Costs of national and international cooperation and networking activities directly associated with the funded research

The SNSF regulations apply to the Swiss budget. However, overhead costs are not admissible. Please note that costs for open access publications can be requested separately via the OA platform of the SNSF.

With regard to international travel and subsistence, the overall principle is that airfare and insurance will be covered under the funded budget of the sending country, while accommodation, meals, subsistence, and local travel will be paid by the country hosting the visit.

### Eligible costs in Vietnam

- Personnel costs (salaries for research team members)
- Material and consumable costs that are directly linked to the research project
- Equipment costs (limited)

- Costs of organising conferences and workshops in connection with the funded research
- Costs of domestic travel and field expenses in the context of the funded research
- Costs for Vietnamese participants to travel between Vietnam and Switzerland and host visits of Swiss participants to Vietnam for cooperation and research activities directly associated with the funded research
- Costs for outsourcing services that are directly linked to the research project
- Costs for stationaries, communications, printing and photocopy in the context of the funded research
- Overhead costs

Please note that the requested budget shall be assessed by NAFOSTED and items that do not show clear relevance to research needs in the research plan or do not match national cost-norms and regulations can be cut down.

With regard to international travel and subsistence, the overall principle is that airfare and insurance will be covered under funded budget of the sending country, while accommodation, meals, subsistence, and local travel will be paid by the country hosting the visit.

## 6. Submission

Proposals are to be jointly prepared by Swiss and Vietnamese applicants. They must be submitted by the **Swiss main applicant** to the SNSF via its electronic submission system *mySNF* ([www.mysnf.ch](http://www.mysnf.ch)). Vietnamese applicants can have access to the electronic submission system.

**Pre-registration:** In order to facilitate the composition of the evaluation panel, main applicants are highly encouraged to open their application in mySNF as early as possible and fill in the data containers “Basic data I” and “Basic Data II” to indicate the disciplines and an outline summary of the planned research. **The deadline for pre-registration is 28 February 2024 at 5 pm (Swiss time).** Only the data containers corresponding to the above-mentioned information need to be filled out in mySNF by this pre-registration deadline and can also be further processed after the pre-registration and until the final submission deadline. Submissions will still be accepted even if no pre-registration is made by the aforementioned date.

No hardcopies of the application will be accepted at submission. Neither the SNSF nor NAFOSTED will be held responsible for the non-submission of an application. *Note: if selected for funding, Vietnamese award holders shall need to submit an additional legal research proposal and relevant documents in Vietnamese language to NAFOSTED for contract signing.*

**Submission on mySNF:** After login into *mySNF*, the correct funding scheme must be chosen: *Programmes (national and international) > Bilateral Cooperation (Initiatives of the State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation) > Vietnamese-Swiss Joint Research Projects*

The application consists of two parts:

- The *administrative part*, which must be completed online on mySNF
  - Personal data of the Swiss main applicant
  - Personal data of the Vietnamese main applicant
  - Personal data of any further applicants from Switzerland and/or Vietnam
  - Information on the employments of all applicants

- Basic data on the project (e.g. title, research field, starting date, duration, summary)
- Funding requested from the SNSF (funding requested from NAFOSTED to be added in separate form, see below)
- Information on authorisations required in Switzerland
- Other information (e.g. whether the project is related to other SNSF projects, the name of the Swiss university/research institution at which the planned project will be implemented, statement concerning already available funds or funds requested elsewhere)
- *Project documentation* (in PDF format), to be uploaded to *mySNF*
  - Research plan (must have the structure indicated in Annex 1)
  - [Funding requested](#) from NAFOSTED
  - CVs of all Swiss applicants (see [Guidelines](#))
  - CVs and research output lists of all Vietnamese applicants (must be filled in and downloaded from NAFOSTED's [OMS](#) before uploading to *mySNF*)
  - [Expected publications and training results for Vietnamese applicants](#) (please refer to the current list for eligible publications)
  - Equipment quotes (if applicable)
  - Other documents

All the information provided in the administrative part and all uploaded documents must be in English.

Please note that the SNSF uses a new CV format which is mandatory for the Swiss applicants. Filling in the information might take some additional time. You can find all relevant information here or you can find all relevant information [here](#). re. Vietnamese researchers use the template provided by NAFOSTED.

For specific questions related to [www.mysnf.ch](http://www.mysnf.ch), please contact the support team by e-mail ([mysnf.support@snf.ch](mailto:mysnf.support@snf.ch)) or telephone (+41 31 308 22 00). Please note that you need a user account in order to submit proposals via *mySNF*. To open an account on *mySNF*, please register with the SNSF as a user. Please note that opening a new account can take two to five days.

The submitted documents must comply with the principles of scientific integrity. All applicants take responsibility for the correctness of their contributions. If the project plan is not written in accordance with the rules of good scientific practice, all applicants will be held accountable and may be asked to provide a statement; ultimately, the project may not be considered. Reference is made to internationally recognised standards on good scientific practice as well as to the SNSF's Research Integrity Regulations.

**Data Management Plan (DMP):** A Data Management Plan (DMP) is requested for approved grants according to the requirements issued by the SNSF. Funds can only be released once the DMP has been submitted. Missing or inaccurate statements in the DMP need to be added/ revised at the latest before the release of the payment of the second instalment. A definitive and updated version of the DMP must be provided by the end of the project grant. For more details on the DMP format requirements and procedure see: [Data Management Plan \(DMP\) - Guidelines for researchers](#).

Please note that costs for Open Research Data (ORD) must be taken into account at the time of submission of the application. They cannot be covered by a supplementary grant.

**Informative pre-registration until the 28 February 2024.**

**Deadline for submission of applications**

**11 April 2024, 5 pm Swiss time**

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

## **7. Evaluation**

The evaluation process is highly competitive and only highly rated applications will be considered for funding. Peer reviewers and members of the evaluation panel must meet SNSF's and NAFOSTED's requirements to be evaluating experts.

**Peer review:** Proposals for JRPs will be reviewed according to standard international peer review procedures, jointly organised by the SNSF and NAFOSTED. External experts conduct a peer review of the applications, verifying the scientific quality of JRPs. At least 4 reviews (2 nominated by each funding agency) should be obtained per proposal. In special cases when the number of qualified reviewers is limited, both sides commit to have at least 2 reviews (1 from each side) for that specific proposal.

**Evaluation panel:** An evaluation panel will be set up, composed of an equal number of experts proposed by the SNSF and NAFOSTED. The panel meeting will take place in Switzerland (barring unforeseen circumstances). Based on the peer reviews, the evaluation panel will assign a rating of 1 to 9 to each project. The panel members' funding and rejection recommendations should both include a rationale. Priority will be given to applications with the highest ratings regardless of the research area.

**Decision:** The outcome of the joint evaluation panel should be a list of all proposals ranked from highest priority to "not recommended for funding", with the rationale. Based on the recommendation of the joint evaluation panel and available budget, the SNSF and NAFOSTED shall decide on the final list of proposals to be funded. Funding decisions on proposals of similar scientific quality around the funding line may be reached by drawing lots (random selection). At the SNSF, the funding recommendation will need to be approved by the Specialised Committee for International Cooperation and the Presiding Board. At NAFOSTED, the funding recommendation will need to be approved by the Board of Trustees for final decision.

**Evaluation criteria** (not listed in order of priority):

- Scientific relevance
- Originality of the aims and objectives
- Appropriateness of the methodology and feasibility
- Track record and expertise of the researchers
- Complementarity of the research partners

**The evaluation results will be communicated to the applicants by the end of 2024.** Swiss main applicants will receive a ruling from the SNSF. In case of rejection, the main reasons leading to the decision will be given. In case of approval, the Swiss budget and the conditions will be listed. If applicable, the Swiss main applicant will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the other Swiss applicants. The Vietnamese main applicant will be informed by NAFOSTED. In case of rejection, the main reasons leading to the decision will be given. In case of approval, the Vietnamese budget shall be subject to an additional financial assessment and will also need to be approved by the Board of Trustees for final funding budget decision. The Vietnamese main applicant will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the other Vietnamese applicants.

**Earliest starting date:** 1 January 2025

The JRPs need to start within one year after the decision.

## **8. Reporting**

Swiss and Vietnamese Principal Investigators (PIs) will report separately to the SNSF and NAFOSTED.

### **In Switzerland:**

The Swiss main applicant will be responsible for reporting to the SNSF. Standard SNSF regulations apply both for the financial and the scientific reports. The latter include a qualitative and a quantitative part (output data).

### **In Vietnam:**

The Vietnamese main applicant will be responsible for reporting to NAFOSTED. Standard NAFOSTED regulations apply both for the financial and the scientific reports. NAFOSTED shall conduct periodic assessments of the projects every year from the date of the signed contract, as well as 01 final assessment of the project after its completion.

## **9. Payments**

### **In Switzerland (SNSF funding)**

Standard SNSF rules apply. In principle, the budgets for JRPs are transferred in annual instalments to the Swiss main applicant at the beginning of a project year.

### **In Vietnam:**

Standard NAFOSTED rules apply. In principle, Vietnamese budget are transferred in parts right after contract signing and continuously every year based on the results of periodic and final assessments of the project.

## **10. VAT**

### **In Switzerland (SNSF funding)**

The JRP grants are not subject to VAT or other taxes and charges. However, research expenses are not excluded from VAT. Therefore, all eligible research expenses occurred during a JRP (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) can be charged to the programme, including VAT, unless the research institution (e.g. universities, public research organisations, etc.) is able to recover VAT.

**In Vietnam:**

All costs occurred during a JRP are subject to current Vietnamese regulations on VAT as well as other taxes and charges.

## 11. Publications and intellectual property

The PIs are obliged to publish research results generated by the JRPs in appropriate form and according to SNSF's and NAFOSTED's standards as well as regulations.

On the NAFOSTED's side, it is mandatory for each research project to publish at least 02 publications on the prestigious international journals selected by NAFOSTED. In addition, the research projects which have training result (Master, PhD) as an outcome will be given the priority.

In terms of intellectual property rights, PIs are subject to the relevant Swiss and Vietnamese laws and regulations on intellectual property. They must consult both the Swiss and Vietnamese host institutions concerning their relevant IP regulations. If applicable, the Swiss and Vietnamese PIs must discuss and submit an additional agreement on sharing of intellectual property rights before signing the funding contract. It is the responsibility of each research partner to ensure the efficient protection and proper distribution of any intellectual property arising from the accomplishments of the joint research projects.

In principle, on the Vietnamese side, the rights to the research results gained from the implementation of scientific and technological tasks funded by NAFOSTED are owned by the State, represented by NAFOSTED, unless otherwise stated in the signed contract for funding. On the Swiss side, the rights to the research results gained in the course of research work funded by the SNSF are owned by the PIs or their employer. PIs are obliged to define such rights together with their employer by no later than the time the funded research work is completed.

## 12. Further information and contacts

**In Switzerland**

Swiss National Science Foundation

Delphine Marchon

International Cooperation

Wildhainweg 3, P.O. Box 8232

CH-3001 Berne

Phone: +41 (0)31 308 23 19

E-mail: [delphine.marchon@snf.ch](mailto:delphine.marchon@snf.ch) or [international@snf.ch](mailto:international@snf.ch)

Website: [www.snsf.ch](http://www.snsf.ch)

**In Vietnam:**

National Foundation for Science and Technology Development

Planning and General Affairs Department

39 Tran Hung Dao, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi

Phone: +84 (24) 39367750 – ext

E-mail: [thanhhuyen@most.gov.vn](mailto:thanhhuyen@most.gov.vn) or [nafosted@most.gov.vn](mailto:nafosted@most.gov.vn)

Website: [www.nafosted.gov.vn](http://www.nafosted.gov.vn)



## **Annex 1: Guidelines for writing the research plan (scientific part of the proposal)**

The research plan must **not exceed 20 pages and 80,000 characters (with spaces)**; this includes title or front page, summary, footnotes, illustrations, formulae, 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.

The SNSF and NAFOSTED do not consider applications that do not meet the formal requirements and/or are manifestly inadequate.

The research plan needs to be structured as follows:

### **1. Summary of the research plan** (max. 1 page, counts towards the maximum 20 pages)

Should include the most important features of your research plan and place your project in a broader scientific context.

### **2. Research plan**

#### **2.1 Current state of research in the field**

By citing the most important publications in the relevant field, please set out the scientific background and basis of the project, explain the need to perform research on the topic you propose and briefly describe important research currently being conducted internationally.

#### **2.2 Current state of own research and partnership aspect**

- Please describe briefly the work done by the different applicants in the relevant research field or in related fields and indicate the relevant publications.
- Explain how the different applicants complement each other for the proposed research project.
- Describe past collaborations that involved the Swiss and Vietnamese partners (if applicable).

#### **2.3 Detailed research plan**

Against the background described in sections 2.1 and 2.2, state the aims that you plan to attain during the lifetime of the project. Please consider the following points:

- Which investigations and/or experiments do you plan to carry out/are necessary to attain the stated aims?
- What is the rationale for getting the project started and how do you intend to develop the work later on?
- What is the expected added value (synergistic benefit) of the collaboration?

Information concerning the methods necessary to attain the aims:

- Which are the methods available to you?
- To which other methods do you have access and how?
- Which methods need to be developed?

Data and data collection:

- Which data are available to you and from where?
- Which data need to be collected?

## 2.4 Work division, schedule and milestones

- Please indicate how you plan to divide the work among the different partners.
- As far as possible, please give an approximate schedule for the work to be carried out within the project and indicate the most important milestones. In particular, please describe the major tasks of the staff to be employed within the project by the different partners.
- List the planned visits between the Swiss and Vietnamese research groups (visiting scientist, hosting scientist, purpose of visit, date and duration of visit).

## 2.5 Importance, impact and results

### Scientific importance and impact

Please describe briefly the importance of your research for the scientific community and the impact you expect from the project on research, training and teaching in your field/discipline.

Please indicate how you will publish/communicate your results.

### Expected results and dissemination plan

Describe in detail the project outcomes you envisage, including new theories, methods, materials; scientific significance and potential application. Explain how you will share these findings with stakeholders and the community. Address the potential for knowledge transfer to industry (if applicable).

For Vietnamese applicants in particular, the form for reporting expected publications and training results must be filled in and uploaded separately to *mySNF*.

### Broader impact

If your application concerns use-inspired research, please indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be. The following points should be addressed:

- Need for research as perceived by practitioners/industry: are there any knowledge gaps? Are innovations and improvements expected?
- Transferability of results: to what degree can research results be put into practice?
- Other potential impacts: in which spheres outside science could the implementation of the research results entail changes and what is the nature of these changes?

## 3. Bibliography (does not count toward the 20 pages)

## 4. Ethical, safety and regulatory issues (does not count toward the 20 pages)

Does your proposed work raise ethical, safety or regulatory issues? If yes, how will you deal with them?

Please indicate whether the proposed research includes:

	Switzerland (yes/no)	Vietnam (yes/no)
Research on humans		
Research on human embryonic stem cells		
Research on animals		
Research on GMO or pathogens		