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Statutes of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) of 10 May 2023

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Establishment of the Foundation

On 1 August 1952, the Swiss Association of the Natural Sciences, the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, the Swiss Society for the Humanities, the Swiss Lawyers' Association and the Swiss Society of Statistics and Economics established the **Swiss National Science Foundation**, a foundation within the meaning of Article 80ff. of the Swiss Civil Code (SCC) with its registered office in Bern. The Foundation is subject to the supervision of the Swiss Confederation. The Statutes require the approval of the Federal Council. Within the scope of the statutory provisions, the requirement to obtain approval also applies to individual regulations.

Preamble

In the knowledge that:

- research into nature, life, society and culture is a source of knowledge and progress,
- conducting high-quality research in accordance with ethical principles is indispensable for human well-being, the creation of sustainable living conditions, a caring society and technological development,
- successful research boosts innovation and is dependent on impartial, trustworthy science,
- results-oriented research is forward-looking and takes place within the framework of interdisciplinary international collaboration,
- public research funding from the Confederation and the promotion of competitive research form a central pillar of Switzerland's success as a location for research and science,

the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), as a scientific organisation for the promotion of research, issues the following Statutes:

Section I – Purpose and principles

Article 1 Purpose

¹ The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) promotes high-quality scientific research.

² It strengthens Switzerland as a centre for science by enhancing the competitive capacity of its research and supporting national and international links between researchers.

³ In fulfilling its tasks, it is committed to the sustainable development of society, the economy and the environment, and to equality of opportunity.

Article 2 Principles

¹ The SNSF supports research projects and measures that convey and increase the value and utility of research. In so doing, it takes account of the needs of scientific research and encourages its diversity. All scientific disciplines are treated equally.

² It places particular emphasis on promoting basic research and supporting early-career researchers.

³ It awards funding on the basis of scientific quality as part of a fair and transparent funding process.

⁴ It does not support research or measures of a directly commercial nature.

⁵ It may pay membership fees to national or international organisations. It shall not use federal contributions for other purposes, such as the accumulation of capital.

⁶ It performs its tasks autonomously.

Section II – Organisation

Article 3 Bodies

The bodies of the SNSF comprise:

- a. the Foundation Council;
- b. the Research Council,
- c. the Delegates Assembly;
- d. the Executive Management;
- e. the auditor.

Article 4 General principles for the bodies

¹ Appointments to the bodies are made transparently and with due regard to the required expertise and diversity.

² In the event of conflicts of interest, the members of the bodies shall recuse themselves.

³ The members of the bodies are compensated appropriately for their work.

⁴ They may be removed for good cause at any time.

Article 5 Foundation Council: Composition, election, term of office

¹ The Foundation Council comprises 6-10 members and is composed of:¹

- a. the President, elected by the Federal Council at the request of the Foundation Council;
- b. 5-9 further voting members, elected by the Foundation Council at the request of the Foundation Council Electoral Committee.

² The Foundation Council Electoral Committee is composed of members of the Foundation Council, the Research Council and the Delegates Assembly, and at least one external expert.

³ Persons eligible for election to the Foundation Council shall have links with the purpose of the Foundation and be able to contribute specific expertise to the management of the Foundation. Appropriate gender diversity must be ensured. A minimum of three women and three men shall serve on the Foundation Council.

⁴ The Foundation Council shall have wide scientific and research experience as well as proven knowledge in the fields of economics, law and politics. At least half of its members shall have experience of high-level research and excellent knowledge of the Swiss research landscape.

⁵ It elects a Vice President from among its members. She or he must have proven experience in the fields of education, research and innovation. In other matters, the Foundation Council organises itself.

⁶ The term of office of Foundation Council members pursuant to paragraph 1 letters a and b is four years. They may be re-elected once.

⁷ Members may be removed for good cause at any time by a two-thirds majority of the members. The Foundation Council may submit a request to the Federal Council for the removal of the President. In order to be valid, such a request requires a two-thirds majority of the members.

Article 6 Foundation Council: Tasks

¹ The Foundation Council is the supreme body of the SNSF.

² The Foundation Council:

- a. is tasked with the overall management of the Foundation, ensures that the purpose of the Foundation is fulfilled and supervises the bodies;
- b. approves, at the request of the Research Council, the multi-year programme put before the Federal Council;
- c. concludes, at the request of the Research Council, the service level agreement with the SERI;
- d. decides on the overarching strategy regarding partnerships and cooperations;
- e. decides, jointly with the Research Council, on position statements and consultations with particularly far-reaching implications for research funding;
- f. decides, jointly with the Research Council, on position statements regarding evaluations of the SNSF by third parties;
- g. approves the budget, the annual financial statement and the annual report;

¹ Amended by decision of the Foundation Council of 27 May 2025, approved by the Federal Council on 25 June 2025, entering into force on 27 May 2025.

- h. establishes the Foundation Council Electoral Committee, elects the members of the Foundation Council at the Committee's request and adopts the provisions on the renewal of the Foundation Council;
- i. establishes the Research Council Electoral Committee, elects the members of the Research Council at the Committee's request and adopts the provisions on elections to the Research Council;
- j. elects the President of the Research Council;
- k. elects, at the proposal of the Research Council, the members of the Academic Board of the Research Council;
- l. elects, jointly with the President of the Research Council, the Director of the Executive Management and approves the appointment of the other members of the Executive Management as proposed by the Director;
- m. sets up a Compliance Committee for the SNSF's scientific activities, as well as an internal audit unit, and specifies their duties;
- n. may set up an Advisory Board to advise the Foundation Council and the Research Council;
- o. sets up committees and bodies, when necessary, for the performance of tasks in its area of responsibility;
- p. resolves, subject to approval by the Federal Council and to a three-quarters majority of the votes, on amendments to the Statutes;
- q. issues the Funding Regulations and the Overhead Regulations, at the request of the Research Council and subject to approval by the Federal Council;
- r. approves the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council issued by the Research Council;
- s. approves the Staff Regulations of the Administrative Offices issued by the Executive Management;
- t. regulates the compensation of members of the bodies and of external experts;
- u. regulates the powers of representation and signatory powers of members of the bodies under these Statutes;
- v. makes decisions with regard to increases in the foundation capital;
- w. issues the provisions and decides on the strategy for the investment and use of private donations;
- x. elects the auditors;
- y. specifies its organisation and responsibilities in respect of other matters in the Foundation Regulations.

³ The Foundation Council may task its members, committees, commissions or other bodies and panels with carrying out particular items of business independently.

Article 7 Foundation Council: Working methods

¹ At the invitation of the President, the Foundation Council holds meetings as often as business requires, but at least twice a year.

² The Vice President represents the President if the latter is unable to attend. In other respects, the Foundation Council specifies responsibilities and determines working methods itself.

³ The Foundation Council is quorate if at least half the members are present. It makes decisions by simple majority, with the President having the casting vote in the event of a tie. The Foundation Council may increase the number of members required for a quorum and may stipulate a qualified majority.

⁴ In other respects, the Foundation Council specifies the details of its organisation and decision-making in the Foundation Regulations.

Article 8 Research Council: Composition, election, term of office

¹ The Research Council comprises 30-80 members and is composed of:

- a. a President, elected by the Foundation Council;
- b. the Academic Board of the Research Council, elected by the Foundation Council (Article 10);
- c. the other members, elected by the Foundation Council at the request of the Research Council Electoral Committee.

² The Foundation Council shall establish a Nomination Committee, which makes proposals to it regarding the appointment of the President and ensures that the Research Council is consulted.

³ The Research Council Electoral Committee is composed of members of the Foundation Council, the Research Council and the Delegates Assembly, and at least one external expert. Attention must be paid to ensuring that international members are adequately represented.

⁴ Persons eligible for election to the Research Council shall have excellent scientific qualifications and experience as well as specific expertise in the Research Council's area of responsibility. When electing members of the Research Council, attention must be paid to ensuring that:

- a. the science areas, disciplinary cultures and scientific themes are represented in their diversity;
- b. strategic expertise in research funding is present;
- c. there is appropriate representation of younger scientists and those who can demonstrate experience of both research and the professional world or experience of use-inspired research;
- d. there is appropriate gender diversity.

⁵ The term of office of Research Council members is four years. They may be re-elected once. In the case of the President, the term of office as a member pursuant to paragraph 1 letter b does not count.

⁶ The President may be employed either full- or part-time at the SNSF. The Research Council shall specify the details in its Organisational Regulations.

⁷ The Foundation Council may remove members of the Research Council for good cause at any time by a two-thirds majority of its members. The Research Council may submit an application to this effect to the Foundation Council. The details regarding removal are set out in the Foundation Regulations.

⁸ In the Foundation Regulations, the Foundation Council specifies the funding schemes to which members of the Research Council may apply during their term of office. In the provisions relating to compensation it may specify measures to compensate for the lack of opportunity to submit funding applications.

Article 9 Research Council: Tasks

¹ The Research Council is the SNSF's scientific body.

² The Research Council:

- a. is responsible for the scientific evaluation of funding applications and makes funding decisions;
- b. is responsible for and makes decisions on funding policy and funding guidelines. Where the funding policy is included in the multi-year programme and the service level agreement with the SERI or the overarching strategy on partnerships and cooperations, the Research Council shall submit a request to the Foundation Council;
- c. makes decisions for the attention of the Confederation regarding the periodic plans for the use of the federal funds (funding plan);
- d. decides on the strategy for implementing the plans approved by the Confederation (action plan);
- e. decides, jointly with the Foundation Council, on position statements and consultations with particularly far-reaching implications for research funding;
- f. decides whether to accept evaluation mandates for third parties and to conduct evaluations of funding schemes and promotional measures. It decides, jointly with the Foundation Council, on position statements regarding evaluations of the SNSF by third parties;
- g. makes decisions for the attention of the Confederation regarding funding schemes and programmes it is commissioned to implement;
- h. determines the funding schemes and issues the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations;
- i. allocates funding within the framework of the proposals approved by the Confederation;
- j. ensures the quality of the funding process, the funding decisions and the valorisation of grants;
- k. sets up bodies and working groups and monitors them, in particular by selecting evaluation panels;
- l. may transfer rights to these panels, especially the right to make proposals and funding decisions;
- m. requests the Foundation Council to issue fundamental provisions relating to funding activities using federal funds, in particular the Funding Regulations and the Overhead Regulations;
- n. reports to the Foundation Council on its activities at least once a year;
- o. represents the SNSF externally in the area of funding policy, funding guidelines and science-related topics;
- p. maintains partnerships and cooperations in the areas of research funding and scientific topics, taking account of the overarching strategy of the Foundation Council;
- q. specifies the details of its organisation, responsibilities and decision-making process in its own Organisational Regulations, which it submits to the Foundation Council for approval.

Article 10 Academic Board of the Research Council: Composition, election, term of office

¹ The Academic Board is the managing body of the Research Council. It comprises 6-7 members and is composed of:

- a. the President, elected by the Foundation Council (Article 8);

- b. two Vice Presidents, elected by the Foundation Council at the proposal of the Academic Board of the Research Council;
- c. two to three further members, elected by the Foundation Council at the proposal of the Academic Board of the Research Council;
- d. the Director of the Executive Management, as a non-voting consultative member.

² The Academic Board of the Research Council shall ensure that the members of the Research Council are consulted on the proposals pursuant to paragraph 1 letters b and c. Differing proposals from the President must be presented separately. Proposals for Vice Presidents require the agreement of the President.

³ The term of office of members of the Academic Board of the Research Council is four years. They may be re-elected once. In this context, the term of office referred to in Article 8 paragraph 1 letter c is not counted.

⁴ Article 8 paragraphs 6-8 also apply to the Academic Board of the Research Council.

Article 11 Academic Board of the Research Council: Tasks

¹ The Academic Board of the Research Council manages the business of the Research Council. It attends to the tasks assigned to the Research Council (Article 9) and exercises its rights to make decisions, requests and proposals unless the Statutes, the Foundation Regulations or the Organisational Regulations specify otherwise.

² It organises the Research Council, decides on the allocation of tasks between it and the members of the Research Council and the bodies of the Research Council, and monitors the quality and fairness of the funding process. It may entrust the independent management of specific items of business to the Executive Management and the bodies it has set up.

³ The Academic Board of the Research Council ensures cooperation with the other bodies as follows:

- a. It reports to the Foundation Council on the activities of the Research Council.
- b. It is the main contact partner for the Delegates Assembly and ensures cooperation with the latter. In particular, it receives advice from the Delegates Assembly regarding its decisions on funding policy.
- c. It ensures cooperation with the Executive Management, particularly by means of the Director's membership of the Academic Board of the Research Council.

⁴ It strives to reach consensual solutions with the other bodies on matters relating to funding policy.

⁵ The members of the Academic Board of the Research Council represent the Research Council externally within its area of competence.

Article 12 Research Council and Academic Board of the Research Council: Working methods

¹ The Research Council and the Academic Board of the Research Council hold regular meetings at the invitation of the President of the Research Council. In addition, meetings may be convened in both bodies for urgent matters or at the justified request of members of the Research Council.

² A Vice President represents the President if the latter is unable to attend.

³ The Research Council and its bodies are quorate if at least half the members are present. The bodies of the Research Council make decisions by simple majority, with the person presiding having the casting vote in the event of a tie. The Research Council may increase the number required for a quorum and may stipulate a qualified majority.

Article 13 Delegates Assembly: Composition, election and term of office

¹ The Delegates Assembly comprises a maximum of 40 members.

² The following scientific organisations are represented in the Delegates Assembly, with the number of seats indicated:

- a. the cantonal universities with one seat each;
- b. the Federal Institutes of Technology with one seat each;
- c. the publicly funded universities of applied sciences with one seat each;
- d. the research institutes of the ETH Domain with one seat collectively;
- e. the universities of teacher education with two seats collectively;
- f. the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences with four seats collectively;
- g. associations of early-career researchers with three seats collectively;
- h. other scientific organisations, particularly non-commercial research institutes outside the higher education system and other accredited research institutions and research facilities with a maximum of five seats collectively.

³ The scientific organisations mentioned in paragraph 2 letters a-f shall designate their delegates themselves.

⁴ The Delegates Assembly elects the representatives mentioned in paragraph 2 letters g and h.

⁵ When electing representatives, it shall pay attention to ensuring appropriate gender diversity.

⁶ New higher education institutions covered by paragraph 2 letters a-c delegate one member each. Until the highest permissible number of members has been reached as specified in paragraph 1, the Foundation Council may allow other delegates from the scientific organisations mentioned in paragraph 2 letters d-f to join the Delegates Assembly in order to reflect any significant changes in these organisations' interests in relation to the activities of the SNSF.

⁷ The Delegates Assembly elects the President and Vice President from among its members. Together with two other members, these form the Bureau of the Delegates Assembly.

⁸ The term of office of members of the Delegates Assembly is four years. They may be re-elected once.

⁹ The Foundation Council may remove members of the Delegates Assembly for good cause at any time by a two-thirds majority of its members. The Delegates Assembly shall submit a request to this effect to the Foundation Council by a majority vote. The details regarding removal are set out in the Foundation Regulations.

Article 14 Delegates Assembly: Tasks

¹ The Delegates Assembly has an advisory role, enjoys participation rights and communicates in particular with the Academic Board of the Research Council.

² The members of the Delegates Assembly represent the interests of the recipients of SNSF grants and of the institutions and organisations concerned with the SNSF's area of activity. The Delegates Assembly helps to align the SNSF's focus and services with the needs of the scientific community.

³ The Delegates Assembly:

- a. is entitled to state its position on the SNSF's multi-year programme and may make recommendations in this regard. It may for good cause, refer the programme back to the Research Council for revision;
- b. may be represented in the working groups that prepare the multi-year programmes;
- c. may express its opinion on significant amendments, focus areas and changes in the SNSF's funding schemes;
- d. may make proposals regarding the SNSF's strategic orientation (right of initiative);
- e. delegates members to the Foundation Council Electoral Committee and to the Research Council Electoral Committee;
- f. delegates members to other bodies and working groups;
- g. is periodically informed of important matters and developments in the SNSF and forwards this information to the organisations represented.

⁴ The SNSF takes the consultations and proposals referred to in paragraph 3 letters c and d into account in relation to its strategic direction.

⁵ The Foundation Council specifies the details of how the Delegates Assembly performs its tasks in the Foundation Regulations.

Article 15 Delegates Assembly: Working methods

¹ The Delegates Assembly holds two ordinary meetings per year at the invitation of the President. Further meetings may be convened if necessary. Written consultations may take place involving the members of the Delegates Assembly between meetings.

² The Vice President represents the President if the latter is unable to attend.

³ The Delegates Assembly is quorate if at least half the members are present. It makes decisions by simple majority, with the President of the Delegates Assembly having the casting vote in the event of a tie. The details of its organisation and decision-making process are laid down in the Foundation Regulations.

Article 16 Executive Management: Election and composition

¹ The Executive Management comprises at least three members and is composed of:

- a. a Director, elected by the Foundation Council and the President of the Research Council;
- b. at least two further members, nominated by the Director and approved by the Foundation Council.

² The Foundation Council shall establish a Nomination Committee, which submits proposals to it regarding the appointment of the Director. The Foundation Council determines the Director's conditions of employment.

³ When nominating members of the Executive Management, the Director shall pay attention to ensuring appropriate gender diversity.

⁴ She or he presides over the Executive Management.

⁵ She or he reports to the President of the Foundation Council.

⁶ She or he is a member of the Academic Board of the Research Council in an advisory capacity.

⁷ The Foundation Council may remove members of the Executive Management for good cause at any time by a two-thirds majority of its members. The Executive Management shall submit a request to this effect to the Foundation Council. The details regarding removal are set out in the Foundation Regulations.

Article 17 Executive Management: Tasks

¹ The Executive Management is the executive body of the SNSF and ensures the administrative activities of the SNSF are carried out. It directs the Administrative Offices.

² The Executive Management:

- a. is responsible for the procedures of the funding process and the entire administration of the funding activity;
- b. runs the secretariat for the Foundation Council, Research Council and Delegates Assembly, prepares their business and implements their decisions under its own responsibility;
- c. assists the Research Council and the Foundation Council with preparing the multi-year programme, designs measures relating to quality assurance and the further development of organisation and submits corresponding proposals to the relevant bodies;
- d. organises and carries out effective external communications;
- e. plans and implements measures for the dissemination, utilisation and exploitation of research results;
- f. implements networking measures at national and international level and is responsible for representing the SNSF in organisations of which it is a member;
- g. carries out the business delegated to it by the Foundation Council or Research Council;
- h. ensures the existence of internal control and compliance measures;
- i. manages private donations;
- j. organises the Administrative Offices and ensures that the necessary resources are provided within the approved budget;
- k. recruits the staff and is responsible for their management;
- l. lays down the principles for running the Administrative Offices.

³ The Executive Management carries out tasks that are not allocated to any other body.

Article 18 Executive Management: Working methods

¹ The Executive Management ensures effective management and organisation. In doing so, it is guided by the overarching tasks and strategies of the SNSF.

² In organising the Administrative Offices, the Executive Management shall cover all the areas required for implementing the tasks of the Foundation.

Article 19 Auditor

¹ The Foundation Council appoints an auditor.

² The auditor examines the accounts and annual financial statement of the SNSF to check that they comply with the legal requirements and the Statutes.

Section III – Finances**Article 20 Finances**

¹ When the Foundation was established, the founders endowed it with a capital of 330,000 Swiss francs. This foundation capital may only be used with the consent of the Federal Council. Further donations may be allocated to the foundation capital.

² The operating resources consist of the annual federal contributions, donations from third parties and investment income. They are used in accordance with the financial plan.

³ Federal contributions not assigned a particular purpose are transferred to the free reserves if they are not used within a year. Compliance with the federal regulations on reserves is required.

⁴ As part of its activities, the SNSF may use its operating resources to make investments in tangible assets and intangible assets.

Section IV – Final provisions**Article 21 Repeal of existing regulations**

¹ These Statutes replace the Statutes of the Swiss National Science Foundation of 27 March 2015.

² The deed of foundation of 26 April 2002 is repealed.

Article 22-23²**Article 24 Entry into force**

¹ These Statutes require the approval of the Federal Council.

² The approved Statutes come into force on 1 January 2024.

³ ...³

² Repealed by decision of the Foundation Council of 27 May 2025, approved by the Federal Council on 25 June 2025, entering into force on 27 May 2025.

³ Repealed by decision of the Foundation Council of 27 May 2025, approved by the Federal Council on 25 June 2025, entering into force on 27 May 2025.

Article 25 Publication

The Statutes are published on the SNSF website and are incorporated by reference in the Official Compilation of Federal Legislation.

Bern, 10 May 2023

The Foundation Council:

sign. Jürg Stahl
President of the Foundation Council

sign. Maria Schönbächler
Vice President of the Foundation Council

The fully revised Statutes were approved by the Federal Council on 16 June 2023.