

Rules of Procedure for the Bodies of the Research Council (GeoFR) of 19.03.2025

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Rules of Procedure for the Bodies of the Research Council

Chapter I Introductory Provisions

Article 1 Subject matter and scope

¹The Rules of Procedure for the Bodies of the Research Council set out the detailed principles governing organisation, functioning and collaboration within these bodies.

²The provisions of the relevant legislation and the SNSF regulations with their implementing provisions, in particular the Foundation Regulations, the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council and the NRP Regulations, shall take precedence over these Rules of Procedure.

Article 2 Approval of the Academic Board

¹The responsible body shall submit amendments to the provisions on the bodies in accordance with Chapter III to the Academic Board for approval.

²In all other respects, the bodies themselves determine how they are organised and their working methods within the framework of the law, the SNSF regulations, these Rules of Procedure and any applicable directives.

³Guidelines and other implementing provisions¹ shall respect the provisions of these Rules of Procedure.

Chapter II Common Provisions

Section 1 Organisation

1.1 Election process for Research Council members and additional committee members

1.1.1 General

Article 3 Member renewal and succession planning

¹The chairs shall conduct regular evaluations of their bodies and check at an early stage whether the members of the body provide the required competences to carry out their mission.

²If there is a need for renewed or additional competences, they shall report this to the responsible body as soon as possible.

Article 4 Confidentiality

Election preparations are confidential. The persons involved shall maintain confidentiality with regard to the information that comes to their knowledge in this context and shall protect the relevant documents from unauthorised access by third parties.

¹ Cf. SNSF systematic collection.

Article 5 Incompatibilities and recusal obligations

¹ The incompatibilities pursuant to Article 28 paragraph 5 of the Foundation Regulations apply, whereby:

- a. Article 28 paragraph 5 letter a of the Foundation Regulations only covers the direct overall management and supervision of research institutions in the narrow sense (main purpose).
- b. Article 28 paragraph 5 letter c of the Foundation Regulations concerns the management and supervision of institutions which, according to their purpose in terms of their statutes or their actual activities, represent the interests of a specialist field and in doing so have an impact throughout Switzerland.

² When dealing with items of business, members shall inform the body as early as possible and in advance of any potential personal involvement or any conflicts of interest.

³ The SNSF must be informed as early as possible of any new vested interests and board mandates, details of which shall be published on the SNSF website (Article 4 of the Foundation Regulations).

Article 6 Diversity

¹ In accordance with Article 4 paragraph 1 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council, the various aspects of diversity must be taken into account in the bodies of the Research Council.

² In the bodies of the Research Council, the representation of women and men must target at least 40%. In the bodies consisting of between 5 and 9 members, this representation must be at least 30%.

³ If the members of the Research Council bodies are appointed both by the SNSF and by partner organisations, the SNSF ensures that quotas are respected for its own representatives. The SNSF strives to ensure that partner organisations also respect diversity, including gender balance, in the appointment of their delegations.

⁴ In the event of a vacancy, quota requirements must be considered as an essential electoral requirement, and the under-represented sex must be taken into account if there is a comparable quality of valid candidates.

1.1.2 Election process for Research Council members

Article 7 Preparation and profile description

¹ One year before the election or re-election of members of the Research Council, the bodies shall inform the Academic Board which members are due to reach the end of their eight-year term of office and which are standing for re-election for a further four-year term of office.

² Based on this, the bodies shall submit a recommendation to the Academic Board on the profiles required for the persons replacing the outgoing members. They shall bring their concerns regarding personnel changes in their bodies to the attention of the Academic Board.

³ Based on the recommendations of the committees responsible, the Academic Board shall assess the requested profiles, taking particular account of the overall composition of the Research Council and including considerations regarding possible dual memberships. It shall ensure that each body has the

required expertise to enable the Research Council to fulfil its tasks effectively.

⁴ The Academic Board shall propose adjustments to the profile of the Research Council (composition, expertise, number of members) to the Foundation Council. The Foundation Council shall examine the the Research Council's profile annually and confirm its validity. It shall be informed of any vacancies defined by the Academic Board and publicly advertised by the Electoral Committee.

⁵ The Electoral Committee shall receive the sought profile advertisements and ensure that they are published for at least 30 days as a rule.

⁶ The total term of office as a member of the Research Council and as an additional committee member may not exceed a maximum of 12 years².

Article 8 Evaluation of suitable candidates and election

¹ The Administrative Offices shall verify the eligibility of candidates.

² The Electoral Committee is responsible for selecting the candidates for the interviews on the basis of the profiles sought. If necessary, the Electoral Committee may consult the Research Council and the committee concerned to clarify certain issues.

³ The Electoral Committee shall interview suitable candidates to assess their motivation and ensure that their professional expertise and experience match the qualification criteria and the required profile.

⁴ The Electoral Committee shall draw up an election proposal in which the procedure carried out and the candidates evaluated are documented. Where possible, a list of several candidates in order of preference is drawn up.

⁵ The Electoral Committee may submit a draft of its election proposal to the Academic Board for consultation in order to determine the relevant requirements in accordance with Article 28 paragraph 6 of the Foundation Regulations.

⁶ The Electoral Committee shall submit the election proposal to the Foundation Council, which shall elect the new members of the Research Council.

Article 9 Re-election of Research Council members

¹ The chair of the relevant committee shall contact the member concerned before the end of their first term of office, assess whether the profile requirements are met and whether there is interest in a second term of office.

² The Academic Board shall submit a corresponding proposal to the Foundation Council for the re-election of the current members of the Research Council for their second term of office.

² See also Art. 8 para. 5 of the Statutes (maximum term of office of eight years as a member of the Research Council) and Art. 9 para. 5 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council (maximum term of office of eight years as an additional committee member).

Article 10 Temporary filling of vacant Research Council seats

If members of the Research Council resign before the end of their term of office or if the Foundation Council rejects the election of proposed candidates, the vacant seat on the relevant committee may be temporarily filled by electing additional committee members (Article 9 paragraph 5 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council).

Article 11 Support from the Administrative Offices

The Administrative Offices shall support the entire process and are responsible in particular for

- a. maintaining an up-to-date overview of the term of office of all Research Council members and their mandates in committees;
- b. monitoring the annual timetable for the election process, which begins in January and ends in December, and documenting the entire election process;
- c. ensuring the coordination of elections among the various committees;
- d. informing the Electoral Committee of matters relevant to its area of responsibility;
- e. organising the meetings of the Electoral Committee, including the dates and times of interviews with the candidates;
- f. advertising the vacant profiles;
- g. keeping minutes;
- h. preparing the election proposal for the Electoral Committee;
- i. preparing the documents confirming election or non-election.

1.1.3 Election process for additional committee members

Article 12 Preparation and profile description

¹ The election procedure for additional committee members is based on the election procedure for members of the Research Council, but in a simplified form.

² In the event of an extraordinary need for additional longer-term expertise or due to a shortage of members, the responsible committee may submit a request to the Academic Board for the recruitment of an additional committee member. The extraordinary need and the duration of the mandate must be clearly justified in the application. The new profile shall take into account the expertise required in the committee and the overall profile for the Research Council.

³ The Academic Board shall assess the request and examine in particular whether the required profile can be covered by a member of the Research Council, in particular in the event of a shortage of members.

⁴ In the event of a shortage of members, the additional member's term of office shall not exceed two years. A person may hold several separate mandates as an additional committee member, provided their total term of office does not exceed eight years.

⁵ Once the profile has been approved, the responsible committee shall organise the procedure for selecting suitable candidates. It may set up a preparatory committee, if possible comprising the chair of the respective committee and their deputy and the member of the Administrative Offices responsible for

the committee. The responsible Vice President of the Academic Board may be consulted. As a rule, the profile is published publicly for at least 30 days.

Article 13 Evaluation of suitable candidates and election

¹ Articles 7 and 8 apply to the evaluation and terms of office.

² The Academic Board shall elect the additional committee members at the request of the committee and inform the Foundation Council of the new composition of the committee concerned in its annual report.

1.2 Further organisational provisions

Article 14 Integrity and dismissal

¹ Members of the Research Council and the committees shall safeguard the SNSF's good reputation by acting with integrity both in their internal and external dealings.

² They may be dismissed for good cause (Article 12 of the Foundation Regulations).

³ The member concerned shall report the following matters to the President of the Research Council at an early stage:

- a. an accusation of violating scientific integrity;
- b. a breach of official or professional secrecy;
- c. personal, time-related or organisational inability to properly perform the duties of the office;
- d. criminal proceedings or preliminary investigations initiated against them.

⁴ The competent body shall hear the member concerned in person or in writing and consider appropriate measures during (e.g. suspension from office) and after the conclusion of the procedure in order to take account of the relevant interests.

Article 15 Meetings

¹ The meetings of the Research Council committees shall normally be held in English.

² The recommendations and principles of good conduct for meetings apply to the Research Council bodies.

Article 16 Information and reporting

¹ The chairs shall ensure that the other committees receive the appropriate information. They shall ensure that business is planned in a coordinated manner as part of the Chair and Board Assembly, that the SNSF is kept generally informed thereafter and that the chair of the bodies concerned or the Academic Board is immediately involved in the event of extraordinary occurrences.

² Ordinary annual reporting by the Research Council's bodies is governed by the relevant provisions in Chapter III. It is limited to significant occurrences and information on the proper and qualitatively irreplicable fulfilment of tasks and the implementation of tasks including the action plan. The

Academic Board shall ensure that the committees are informed about the reports. It shall support the communication and further development of funding practices among the bodies.

Section 2 Transversal funding provisions

Article 17 Unified evaluation procedure

¹ The scientific evaluation of applications is carried out according to a uniform evaluation procedure standard (see Article 19 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council).

² This procedure guarantees a clear separation between the scientific evaluation and the decision to fund applications.

³ The application of criteria that are not expressly mentioned in the funding provisions is not permitted.

Article 18 Supplementary measures

¹ The Research Council may decide on supplementary measures to support SNSF research funding in general or for a specific scheme.

² The relevant programme committee shall decide on the award of grants for specific schemes or for fulfilling its mandate. Other grants are decided by the Academic Board.

³ The criteria for grants must be defined in advance clearly and transparently. In the case of regular measures in favour of a specific target group, an express provision in the regulations is required.

⁴ The Executive Management may decide on supplementary measures taken from the budget for service provision. A report on such supplementary measures must be submitted to the Academic Board each year.

⁵ The Academic Board shall include supplementary measures in its analysis and monitoring of the funding portfolio's direction.

Chapter III Bodies of the Research Council

Section 1 Academic Board

Article 19 Function and composition

¹ The Academic Board manages, organises and supervises the activities of the Research Council. It determines the funding policy and is responsible for the organisation and procedures for research funding. It works closely with the various bodies and maintains a regular dialogue with them.

² As a rule, the members of the Academic Board are not members of committees. They attend committee meetings as guests when required.

³ The President may delegate the external representation of the SNSF for individual items of business to other persons, namely the vice presidents, other members of the Academic Board, the chairs of the committees or the Director of the SNSF.

Article 20 Responsibilities on the Academic Board

¹ The members of the Academic Board are jointly responsible for the fulfilment of tasks. Committees and working groups may be set up as required.

² The President of the Research Council coordinates the activities of the Academic Board and ensures the effective fulfilment of its tasks. He or she is specifically responsible for

- a. planning the activities of the Academic Board and organising and chairing its meetings;
- b. regularly review, together with the vice presidents, the direction of the funding portfolio through the various funding schemes;
- c. coordinating reporting to the Foundation Council and representing the concerns of the Research Council on the Foundation Council;
- d. representing the SNSF in its external dealings.

³ The Vice President for Research Funding supports the President and is responsible for the preparation of Academic Board business relating to research funding, such as the adaptation of regulations, the monitoring of quality and fairness in the funding process and reporting to the Academic Board. He or she maintains regular contact with the programme committees and represents business in his or her area at the Delegates Assembly and in the plenary meeting of the Research Council.

⁴ The Vice President for Funding Policy supports the President and is responsible for the preparation of Academic Board business relating to transversal funding policy, such as the proposal for the multi-year programme, the action plan and the funding plan and the other principles of a coherent funding policy. He or she maintains regular contact with the Policy Committee and represents business in his or her area at the Delegates Assembly and in the plenary meeting of the Research Council.

⁵ The Director of the SNSF coordinates the activities of the Administrative Offices and supports and advises the Academic Board on the basis of the information and strategic expertise of the Administrative Offices.

Article 21 Cooperation with the Delegates Assembly

¹ The Academic Board shall consult with the Delegates Assembly on funding policy at least once a year, normally through the President of the Research Council in consultation with the Bureau of the Delegates Assembly.

² The President of the Research Council, together with the Administrative Offices, shall plan the annual consultations with the Delegates Assembly and invite members of the Bureau to the meetings of the Academic Board.

Article 22 Meetings

The Academic Board shall hold regular meetings convened by the President of the Research Council, normally ten times a year.

Article 23 Information and reporting

¹ The Academic Board shall report annually to the Foundation Council. It shall report on the progress with and any deviations in the implementation of the action plan and provide an outlook for the coming year.

² In the event of any extraordinary occurrences and developments that are of considerable importance to the SNSF, the President of the Foundation Council must be informed immediately.

³ The Academic Board shall ensure that the Research Council and its bodies are provided with the information that they require in a timely manner.

Section 2 Plenary**Article 24 Function and composition**

The Plenary is a meeting of all the members of the Research Council and brings together the expertise available in the Research Council. It expresses its views on overarching topics of funding strategy and quality assurance, in particular on funding excellent research in all its diversity, and serves as a forum for mutual exchange.

Article 25 Responsibilities

¹ The Academic Board shall submit matters pursuant to Article 16 paragraph 1 letters a-d of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council to the Plenary for comment or consultation. Any consultative vote at the meeting shall be open.

² In cases of urgency, the Academic Board may request opinions in writing.

³ The members of the Research Council may submit proposals to the President of the Research Council at least 15 working days before the meeting. The Plenary shall decide on the proposal and whether it should be forwarded to the Academic Board.

⁴ On the recommendation of the Academic Board, the Plenary shall decide on the formation of standing forums. The Plenary shall regularly review existing forums and their mandates, at the latest after four years.

Section 3 Policy Committee**Article 26 Function**

¹ The Policy Committee shall draw up the principles for the strategy and orientation of SNSF research funding for the attention of the Academic Board.

² It shall recognise developments in research and research funding at an early stage and ensure the coherence of the SNSF's transversal funding policy. To this end, the Policy Committee shall identify, analyse and develop topics such as the evaluation of research and its impact, equality, diversity and inclusion, Open Science, research ethics, and the positioning of the SNSF in the national and international research landscape.

Article 27 Composition

¹ The Chair of the Policy Committee and his or her deputy shall be elected for four years if possible, but for at least two years. At the request of the Policy Committee, the Academic Board may decide on an extension in exceptional cases.

² As a rule, at least one Research Council member from each programme committee sits on the Policy Committee.

³ One member of the Research Council shall chair the Policy Committee. The chair and deputy chair may not be members of the Academic Board. Members of the Policy Committee may not chair a programme committee.

Article 28 Responsibilities

¹ The Policy Committee is responsible for the following tasks in particular:

- a. continuously examining national and international developments in funding policy, the sciences and society and their impact on the SNSF;
- b. assessing the effectiveness of research funding across all schemes;
- c. drawing up plans such as the multi-year programme and the action plan;
- d. submitting an annual report to the Academic Board with an assessment of the achievement of objectives in accordance with the action plan and the recommendation of any measures;
- e. establishing and supervising the specialist groups; defining and periodically reviewing their mandate and submitting the same to the Academic Board for approval;
- f. examining the concerns of the programme committees at the request of the chair and informing him or her as to their handling.

² The Academic Board may assign further tasks to the Policy Committee.

³ The Policy Committee may propose adjustments and measures to the Academic Board on its own initiative, in particular to ensure the necessary quality and coherence in transversal research funding.

Article 29 Multi-year programme and action plan

¹ The multi-year programme defines the priority funding policy objectives for the next strategy period and formulates targeted measures. It takes into account the mandate from SERI, the funding, social and political environment and the SNSF's long-term strategic objectives.

² The Academic Board shall determine the procedure for drawing up the multi-year programme. It shall decide on the appointment of cross-body working groups, in particular with the participation of staff from the Administrative Offices, the involvement of the committees, the Delegates Assembly and of

representatives of external interest groups. It may issue content requirements. As a rule, the Academic Board shall consult the Policy Committee in advance and may instruct it to submit a proposal on how to proceed.

³ The Policy Committee shall draw up the multi-year programme.

⁴ At the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Academic Board shall adopt the multi-year programme for the attention to the Foundation Council.

⁵ The Academic Board may instruct the Policy Committee to draw up the action plan or parts thereof. The action plan specifies and prioritises the measures for the next strategy period, based on the multi-year programme and taking into account the requirements of the federal government.

Article 30 Meetings

The Policy Committee holds regular meetings at the invitation of the chair, normally ten times a year.

Article 31 Information and reporting

¹ The Policy Committee maintains a regular dialogue with the Academic Board, in particular via the Vice President for Funding Policy.

² The Chair of the Policy Committee shall ensure that the programme committees are informed by means of:

- a. the Chair and Board Assembly in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Organisational Regulations for the Research Council;
- b. the members of its body who also sit on the programme committees;
- c. immediate notification of the chairs of the bodies of urgent matters.

³ The Policy Committee shall report annually to the Academic Board. It shall indicate any deviations in the implementation of plans and provide an outlook for the coming year. It shall report separately on activities in the Policy Committee in accordance with Article 16. Specific reports from the specialist groups are reserved.

⁴ The President of the Research Council must be informed immediately of any extraordinary occurrences and developments that are of considerable importance for research funding and the SNSF, such as serious violations of research ethics or scientific integrity.

Section 4 Specialist groups

Article 32 General provisions: Types

¹ Subject to the approval of the Academic Board, the Policy Committee shall establish specialist groups. The Academic Board may also request the Policy Committee to establish new specialist groups. The Policy Committee shall consult the Administrative Offices in advance with regard to the required resources.

² The mandate of the specialist groups may be of indeterminate duration ("standing specialist groups") or of fixed duration ("ad hoc specialist groups").

³ The Policy Committee shall set up the following two standing specialist groups:

- a. the Policy Group on Research Ethics and Integrity REI.
- b. the Policy Group on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion EDI.

⁴ Subject to the approval of the Academic Board, the Policy Committee shall define the mandate of the specialist groups. The specialist groups may submit proposals and recommendations to the Policy Committee.

⁵ The Policy Committee shall delimit the mandates of the specialist groups and of the working groups of the programme committees. The committees concerned shall coordinate their work

Article 33 General provisions: Election

¹ The Policy Committee shall define the general requirements with regard to the profile and the terms of the mandate of the members of the specialist groups.

² The chair of the Policy Committee is responsible for succession planning and for recruiting suitable candidates for the specialist groups in accordance with the requirements of the profile.

³ The chair of the Policy Committee shall submit an election proposal to the Policy Committee. He or she may propose one or more persons for the seat on the specialist group and rank the candidates in order of priority. He or she may also take into account candidates proposed by the Academic Board.

⁴ The chair of the Policy Committee may delegate certain tasks referred to in paragraphs 1 to 3, in particular to the Administrative Offices.

⁵ The Policy Committee shall elect the members of the specialist group on the recommendation of the chair of the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee shall appoint the chair of the specialist group. Specialist groups shall include at least one member of the Research Council.

Article 34 General provisions: Meetings

The specialist groups hold regular meetings convened by the chair, as required, but in principle at least twice a year.

Article 35 General provisions: Mandate, information, reporting and results

¹ The mandate of the specialist groups is defined by the Policy Committee.

² The chair of the specialist group shall inform the chair of the Policy Committee on a regular basis. The chair of the Policy Committee shall ensure that the programme committees are kept informed and, where necessary, shall give them instructions to ensure a coherent and uniform transversal funding policy.

³ The chair of the specialist group shall represent the group. He or she shall discuss matters regularly with the chair of the Policy Committee and submit a report to the Policy Committee at least once a year.

⁴ If necessary, especially if developments of importance for SNSF transversal policy justify it, the chairs of the specialist groups may request the Policy Committee to adapt their mandate.

Article 36 Policy Group on Research Ethics and Integrity (REI): Function and composition

¹ The REI Policy Group is a standing specialist group. It advises all the bodies of the SNSF and its committees on matters of ethics and scientific integrity. It is also responsible for ensuring consistent procedures and practices for sanctioning breaches of scientific integrity (RI Regulations).

² The REI Policy Group comprises at least one member of the Policy Committee, one member of the Research Council each from the Social Sciences and Humanities SSH; Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Engineering MINT; and Life Sciences LS, taking into account the cultures and domains of research funding, and an external expert with expertise in the field of scientific integrity.

Article 37 Policy Group on Research Ethics and Integrity (REI): Responsibilities

The REI Policy Group:

- a. carries out the tasks assigned to it under the mandate issued by the Policy Committee;
- b. may, at the request of the programme committees, give its opinion on the ethics of specific research projects;
- c. carries out the tasks assigned to it by the RI Regulations and submits any amendments to the RI Regulations to the Policy Committee;
- d. regularly reviews the fulfilment of its tasks.

Article 38 Policy Group on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): Function and composition

¹ The EDI Policy Group is a standing specialist group. It advises the SNSF on matters of equality, in particular gender, diversity and inclusion in the funding of research in accordance with the SNSF's EDI vision and mission.

² The EDI Policy Group comprises in principle at least one member of the Policy Committee and one external expert.

Article 39 Policy Group on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): Responsibilities

The EDI Policy Group:

- a. carries out the tasks assigned to it under the mandate issued by the Policy Committee;
- b. advises and supports the SNSF's bodies and committees on EDI matters;
- c. regularly reviews the fulfilment of its tasks.

Section 5 Programme Committees

Article 40 Function and composition

¹ The programme committees define the modalities of their funding schemes within the limits of the higher-level provisions and decisions of the SNSF, in particular with regard to funding strategy and policy, and ensure the funding of research of the highest quality.

² The chair and deputy chair of the programme committees are generally elected for at least two to four years. The Academic Board may decide on an extension in exceptional cases.

Article 41 Responsibilities

¹ The programme committees fulfil the tasks set out in Article 10 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council.

² When drawing up their regulations and guidelines for the funding schemes, the programme committees shall take into account the provisions of these Rules of Procedure. Any derogations must be justified.

³ The programme committees determine the available budget for the applications dealt with in the individual panels within the budget framework for the relevant funding scheme. They take into account the specifications in the service level agreement and the Academic Board's funding plans.

Article 42 Meetings

The programme committees hold regular meetings convened by the chair, normally ten times a year.

Article 43 Information and reporting

¹ The programme committees consult regularly with the Academic Board, in particular via the Vice President for Research Funding.

² The chair of the programme committee shall ensure that his or her committee is kept informed. He or she shall also inform the other bodies, including the Policy Committee, as follows:

- a. the Chair and Board Assembly;
- b. immediate notification of the chairs of the bodies of urgent matters.

³ The programme committees shall report annually to the Academic Board, in particular on:

- a. adherence to the budget for its funding schemes;
- b. the composition and functioning of the committee and its panels (panel lists);
- c. the funded research, including supplementary measures, and the funding procedures;
- d. the progress with and any deviations in the implementation of measures and of the action plan;
- e. significant developments in the funding policy for its schemes;
- f. the outlook for the year ahead.

⁴ The Vice President of the Research Council shall be informed immediately of any extraordinary occurrences and developments that are of considerable importance for research funding and the SNSF.

⁵ The Academic Board shall supervise the committees. It may review their decisions at any time and request additional information.

Section 6 Specialised Committees

Article 44 Responsibilities

¹ The Academic Board is responsible for

- a. appointing new specialised committees, and defining their focus and budget for funding;
- b. issuing the required provisions on organisation and funding, paying particular attention to clear responsibilities in relation to cooperation with third parties;
- c. appointing members to the specialised committees or their bodies.

² The Academic Board may delegate individual tasks, in particular the administration and monitoring of funding, to a Programme Committee.

Article 45 BRIDGE

¹ The BRIDGE Steering Committee, set up jointly by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse) to implement the BRIDGE strategic programme, is a specialised committee.

² Within the SNSF, the BRIDGE programme is part of the portfolio of funding schemes of the Committee for the Thematic and Solution-Orientated Research Programme (TSOR Committee)³.

³ The TSOR Committee examines the reports of the specialised committee, reviews the implementation of the BRIDGE programme for the attention of the Academic Board and submits to it proposals for possible amendments. All amendments to the BRIDGE programme are the joint responsibility of the SNSF and Innosuisse in accordance with their joint cooperation agreement.

⁴ The Academic Board shall consult the TSOR Committee in the event of a change in the direction of collaboration under the BRIDGE programme. It may delegate certain matters to the TSOR Committee in connection with the implementation of the BRIDGE programme.

⁵ The BRIDGE programme shall otherwise be governed by the special provisions applicable to it⁴.

Section 7 Evaluation panels

Article 46 Responsibilities

The evaluation panels carry out an evaluation of the applications according to a fair procedure that complies with the SNSF requirements for evaluation procedures and the principles of excellence, independence, integrity and transparency.

³ See Art. 10 para. 2 let. c Organisational Regulations of the SNSF Research Council.

⁴ See Terms of Reference for the BRIDGE programme and Funding Regulations for BRIDGE Proof of Concept and BRIDGE Discovery.

Article 47 Structure and composition of the panel

¹ The relevant programme committee determines the structure and composition of the evaluation panels on the basis of the applications submitted.

² Each evaluation panel is composed of permanent members and, if necessary, of ad hoc members.

³ The number of applications to be evaluated depends on the funding scheme, the length of the applications to be evaluated and the expertise required. If the number of applications to be evaluated is too large for a single evaluation panel, the applications are evaluated by several evaluation panels, which shall each issue their own separate ranking.

⁴ An evaluation panel may, for just cause, in particular if the evaluation requires particularly detailed expertise, comprise more than twenty members. The panel chair shall submit his or her request to the competent committee.

⁵ The list of members of the evaluation panels is made public.

Article 48 Profile of the members

¹ The Academic Board shall define the general requirements in terms of profile for the members of the evaluation panels.

² The relevant programme committee shall decide for each evaluation panel on the number of members and their specific requirements, in particular the necessary scientific qualifications.

³ Each evaluation panel member shall be assigned to a programme committee or a special committee.

Article 49 Election: Procedure for electing permanent members

¹ The panel chair shall recruit appropriate new candidates as permanent members of the evaluation panel. He or she may delegate certain tasks related to this to the Administrative Offices.

² The election procedure shall normally be conducted in writing.

³ The panel chair shall submit an election proposal to the committee concerned. One or more persons may be proposed for the seat concerned on the evaluation panel and the candidates selected may be ranked in order of priority. The selection procedure and the candidates considered shall be documented.

⁴ The committee concerned shall elect the members of the evaluation panels on the recommendation of the panel chair.

⁵ The calculation of the maximum term of office of permanent members of an evaluation panel shall take into account their previous term of office as ad hoc member on the same committee. Any previous term of office on another committee is not considered.

Article 50 Election: Procedure for electing ad hoc members

¹ Ad hoc members of the evaluation panels are appointed in accordance with Article 13 paragraph 4 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council. The procedure set out in Article 49 paragraphs 1-3 above applies by analogy.

² The term of office of the ad hoc members of an evaluation panel is limited to one round of evaluation. Their mandate is renewable, but it may not normally exceed two successive rounds of evaluation. Where an ad hoc member has completed two successive mandates, the procedure for election as a permanent member must be initiated.

³ The ad hoc members of the evaluation panels are subject to the same obligations as the ordinary members.

Article 51 Responsibilities: Chair

¹ The panel chair ensures that the evaluation of applications is of high quality. The chair is normally one of the members of the relevant committee.

² The relevant committee may appoint a scientific co-chair of the evaluation panel. The scientific co-chair is responsible, together with the panel chair, for preparing and running the evaluation panel meetings, and consults with the panel chair to this end. The relevant committee may assign other tasks to the co-chair.

³ If the panel chair is not a member of the relevant committee, the scientific co-chair is normally a member from its ranks or a member of the Research Council.

⁴ The panel chair and the scientific co-chair do not participate in the scientific evaluation. They ensure that the evaluation procedure is conducted properly. To this end, they are responsible for, in particular:

- a. ensuring the proper composition of the evaluation panel and an appropriate workload for its members in order to enable an evaluation that complies with the applicable standards;
- b. preparing for the evaluation meetings, in particular by studying all application documents submitted to the evaluation panel: reviews from the referees, the overview tabs and the summary available on the SNSF Portal, as well as the preselection notes. By doing so, the panel chair shall ensure that the evaluation carried out by the evaluation panel complies with the applicable rules;
- c. chairing the meetings of the evaluation panel and ensuring their proper conduct, in particular by enabling a satisfactory discussion of the contentious points of the reviews from the referees and by encouraging the active participation of the members of the evaluation panel and an efficient chairing of the meetings.

⁵ The chair of the relevant programme committee or the evaluation panel may appoint a deputy for the panel chair or scientific co-chair in case of an impediment.

⁶ A procedural co-chair from the Administrative Offices shall assist the panel chair in preparing for, organising and managing the meetings. The procedural co-chair may intervene if he or she considers

that the SNSF's procedural and evaluation rules are not being complied with. In the event of procedural or regulatory disagreements, the opinion of the procedural co-chair shall be taken into account.

Article 52 Responsibilities: Referees

¹ The referees are in particular responsible for:

- a. guaranteeing a quality of external reviews that meets the general requirements; this task may be delegated to the Administrative Offices;
- b. critically assessing the applications according to the evaluation criteria, taking into account the external reviews, and submitting the recommendation by the deadline set;
- c. taking a position on the requests of the Administrative Offices relating to the scientific evaluation of applications, in particular in the event of requests for re-consideration⁵.

² The assignment of applications to the referees depends on the funding scheme concerned and the length and complexity of the application, as well as the required expertise and workload. Members of the evaluation panel shall act as referee for at least one application.

Article 53 Other obligations of the members of the evaluation panels

¹ The members of the evaluation panels shall at all times comply with their obligations, as set out in particular in the declaration of acceptance of their mandate.

² The members of the evaluation panels shall prepare carefully for the evaluation meetings by reviewing in advance the applications to be evaluated and the preselected projects.

³ The members of the evaluation panels are normally required to participate in the evaluation meeting in its entirety, subject in particular to the rules on recusal.

⁴ The members of the evaluation panels are normally required to rate each application, subject to the rules on recusal. By way of exception, they may abstain from voting.

⁵ The members of the evaluation panels shall be required to participate in continuing education and training sessions at the request of the panel chair, who shall determine the requirements. In particular, the panel chair shall endeavour to ensure that the following matters are addressed: good practices and standards in the general and specific evaluation of the schemes concerned and the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

⁶ At the end of the meetings, the members of the evaluation panels shall be required to verify the evaluation documentation, in particular the minutes, at the request of the Administrative Offices.

Article 54 Responsibilities: Administrative Offices

¹ The Administrative Offices are responsible in particular for:

- a. assisting in appointing the members of the evaluation panel under the responsibility and guidelines of the panel chair and the relevant committee;
- b. verifying the quality of the external reviews and recommendations from the referees;

⁵ See Article 24 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council.

- c. providing the procedural co-chair for evaluation meetings in accordance with Article 51 paragraph 6 above;
- d. taking the minutes of the evaluation meetings, under the responsibility of the panel chair;
- e. forwarding the proposals of the evaluation panel to the relevant committee, after approval by the panel chair;
- f. drafting the decisions containing the essential elements of the reasoning.

² The Administrative Offices shall also carry out the tasks assigned to them by the evaluation panels, the panel chair and the referees within the meaning of Article 19 paragraph 3 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council.

Article 55 Evaluation of applications

¹ The scientific evaluation of applications by the evaluation panels shall comply with the applicable regulations⁶ and guidelines and recommendations⁷ of the SNSF.

² In the case of a preselection in terms of Article 19 paragraph 4 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council, the evaluation panel may refrain from discussing the projects unless a member requests otherwise. The preselection shall be based on at least two written and independent recommendations.

³ In the event of disagreement on the scientific evaluation, the required decisions, in particular concerning the budget for the project, shall be taken by simple majority vote.

Article 56 Evaluation meetings

¹ The evaluation panels shall meet as often as business requires. The meetings shall generally be held online or in person. In the latter case, participation online is only possible in exceptional cases due to unforeseen events.

² In the case of an evaluation procedure comprising an interview with the applicant or a presentation of the project, the applicant may participate in the interview by video-conference or in person.

³ The evaluation panel is not quorate unless a majority of the voting members is present. Normally, at least four voting members must be present. The programme committee may set a higher quorum in the regulations or in the call concerned.

⁴ The participation of third parties in the meetings of the evaluation panel, in particular representatives of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, is reserved.

Article 57 Minutes of the evaluation meeting

¹ The minutes of the evaluation meetings serve in particular as a basis for the evaluation of the applications and include a summary record of the members' deliberations at the meeting. Normally the minutes include the following:

⁶ See Articles 24 et seq. of the Funding Regulations and Article 19 of the Organisational Regulations of the Research Council.

⁷ See Guidelines for reviewers and referees.

- a. the date, the location, the members present or excused, and any potential conflicts of interest;
- b. the application reference, the name of the applicant(s) and of the institution;
- c. a summary of the deliberations of the evaluation panel, in particular amendments to the recommendations of the referees;
- d. any fact or intervention of essential relevance to the evaluation procedure;
- e. the individual ranking of applications by the members of the evaluation panel;
- f. the signature of the panel chair and the procedural co-chair.

² The minutes shall be submitted to the members of the evaluation panel for approval.

³ Otherwise, and subject to the any divergent provisions, Article 9 of the Foundation Regulations applies.

Article 58 Report

¹ Notification of any extraordinary occurrences, in particular procedural irregularities affecting the entire evaluation or ethically or institutionally sensitive applications, must be given systematically and without delay to the chair of the relevant committee.

² The panel chair is responsible for the preparation of the regular reports on the processing of applications (in particular the number of applications processed, including decisions not to consider applications⁸, and the processing of reconsideration requests), on personnel changes and on other significant events that occurred during the period in question.

Article 59 Derogations from the provisions on the evaluation procedure

¹ The provisions of this Section apply to all evaluation panels appointed by the SNSF.

² Exceptions and provisions specific to each evaluation panel shall be issued by the relevant committee in separate regulations or in the relevant call.⁹

Section 8 Review Panels

Article 60 Function and responsibilities

In justified cases, review panels may be set up to provide scientific support for the projects, monitor progress and review the interim and final reports. They shall report to the responsible programme committee and may make recommendations, in particular on measures and the revocation or adjustment of allocated grants.

Article 61 Term of office and other provisions

¹ The members of the review panels shall be elected for the duration of the grant or funding scheme to be supported, but for a maximum duration of four years. An extension is possible up to a total term of office of twelve years.

⁸ See e.g. Article 18 paragraph 2 Organisational Regulations of the Research Council.

⁹ See e.g. Article 49 paragraph 2 of these Regulations.

² In all other respects, the higher-level provisions apply to the organisation and responsibilities of review panels. If these do not contain any provisions, the provisions on evaluation panels apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Section 9 Administrative Offices

Article 62 Support for the bodies

¹ Under the leadership of the Executive Management, the employees of the Administrative Offices support the bodies of the Research Council pursuant to Article 17 of the Statutes.

² The employees of the Administrative Offices provide support in the preparation of business and contribute their expertise to the bodies.

³ The employees of the Administrative Offices attend the meetings as required, in particular when business handled by them is being discussed.

⁴ The decision-making powers of the Administrative Offices in the funding procedure are determined by the Organisational Regulations for the Research Council and the Funding Regulations with the Implementation Regulations, as well as based on the provisions on individual funding schemes¹⁰.

Article 63 Delegation in relation to supplementary grants

The competent committees may delegate to the Administrative Offices the power to take final decisions on grants for measures to promote career development and gender equality in accordance with the SNSF's General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations.¹¹

Chapter IV Final Provisions

Article 65 Entry into force

These Regulations come into force on 1 April 2025.

¹⁰ See Scientific Exchange Regulations: grants for scientific exchanges

¹¹ See No 2.18 Flexibility grants; No 2.19 Mobility grants; No 2.20: Research time for clinicians; No 2.21 Equality grants; No 2.23 Reduction of teaching commitments.