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# **Guidelines for the lifetime management of research projects (grants)**

**PROMYS**

May 2016

# Preamble

## The Swiss National Science Foundation

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is Switzerland's foremost institution in the promotion of scientific research. Established as a foundation under private law, it has funded research work in all scientific fields on behalf of the Swiss Confederation since 1952. The focus is on basic research, part of which may be geared to practical application.

In fulfilling its mandate to promote scientific research, the SNSF has devised a variety of funding schemes under which researchers can submit applications and request financial support. The funding schemes are organised as follows:

- Projects
- Careers
- Programmes
- Infrastructures
- Science communication

## Project funding documentation

The documentation is available on the SNSF's website ([www.snsf.ch](http://www.snsf.ch)). These guidelines are based primarily on the [Funding Regulations](#), the [General Implementation Regulations](#) for the Funding Regulations and the [Organisational Regulations of the National Research Council](#) and are not legally binding. Their sole purpose is explanatory and they do not in any circumstances substitute the mentioned formal legal documents or any other provisions applicable to procedures and grants. Depending on the funding scheme, there may be slight deviations from the evaluation procedure as described in the guidelines.

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# 1. The ruling

The SNSF forwards the final decisions on applications to the applicants in the form of a ruling (in accordance with the Federal Act on Administrative Procedure). If your project has been approved, the letter you receive will contain the following information:

- Amount of the funds awarded, split into annual instalments
- Duration of the grant
- If applicable, any conditions that need to be met before the funds are transferred
- Due date of the first scientific report
- If applicable, any further comments/conditions
- Information on the right of appeal

# 2. Responsibilities

When approval is given, applications become projects or grants (in financial terms) and applicants become grantees. One person is responsible vis-à-vis the SNSF for each application or grant.

A responsible grantee is responsible for the following tasks vis-à-vis the SNSF:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds
- Requesting personnel, changes of personnel and salary adjustments
- Submitting scientific reports and entering output data
- Submitting financial reports
- Informing the SNSF about any changes affecting the grantees (e.g. moves, changes to employment terms)

Responsible grantees can delegate some of these tasks to project partners or secretariats in *mySNF* in order to reduce their administration workload (see chapter 8).

# 3. Getting started

## 3.1 Start of funding

The project must start no later than 12 months after the date of the approval letter. The project can only start when a signed agreement between the grantee, the host institution and the SNSF has been submitted. The starting date must fall on the first day of a month and must not be earlier than the date stated in the ruling. The responsible grantee informs the SNSF about the starting date when requesting the release of funds via [mySNF](#). The SNSF confirms the release of the grant when the first instalment is transferred.

## 3.2 Release of funds

The responsible grantee requests the release of the approved funds and the payment of every annual instalment via [mySNF](#). The funds are paid in annual instalments in accordance with the ruling. Prior to the release of funds, you must submit a lay summary. The lay summary will be published in the SNSF's [Research database](#).

Furthermore, all necessary authorisations (for animal testing, tests on humans, etc.) and additional documents must have been submitted via [mySNF](#). These documents can be uploaded under "Request for release of funds" under "Other annexes". In addition, any conditions stated in the ruling must be met.

For the following years, you must request the payment of instalments via [mySNF](#). As a rule, the payment can be requested no earlier than 1 month before the start of the next funding year. The yearly instalment can be requested in more than one tranche. Exchange rate fluctuations are not covered by the grant. The last instalment of CHF 30'000 will be paid after the approval of the final scientific and financial report. The funds will be paid in Swiss Francs (CHF).

### **3.3 Employment of staff**

Any new appointments, staff turnover or salary adjustments are subject to approval by the SNSF. A corresponding request must be placed with the SNSF in advance in the form of a "change of personnel" notification via [mySNF](#). You will find the web-based forms on mySNF if you select the relevant project and click on the corresponding section. Notifications of personnel changes are the responsibility of the responsible applicant. However, in order to reduce his/her administration workload, they may be delegated to third parties (see chapter 8). For approved projects, employees can be registered online prior to the release of funds. This process can be simplified by adopting data directly from the application or from any previous projects.

Employment relationships must be regulated by the grantees' institution by means of a written contract. The salary rules of the host institutions have to be applied. The institutions are responsible for compliance with the statutory labour and social insurance provisions. In particular, the provisions concerning doctoral students pursuant to Clause 6.4.5 of the [General Implementation Regulations](#) for the Funding Regulations must be complied with (employment for a maximum period of four years as of the date of matriculation etc.). The SNSF does not cover additional personnel costs, e. g. salary increases.

## **4. Reports**

### **4.1 Scientific reports**

The responsible grantee must annually submit a scientific report. You will receive the corresponding requests automatically in the form of e-mails sent via *mySNF*.

Grantees have entered output data on SNSF projects (scientific publications, scientific events, knowledge transfer events, collaborations, etc.) in addition to sending the scientific reports. You can update and complete these data at any time via *mySNF*, i.e. even after the conclusion of the project, but no later than the due date of a scientific report. Please bear in mind that the SNSF is only interested in data that are directly linked to the funded project. The SNSF uses these data for the following purposes:

1. The data are entered in the web-based research database p<sup>3</sup> (p3.snf.ch), where researchers and the general public can gain information on the research work funded by the SNSF.

2. The data serve as a basis for aggregated and anonymised quantitative analyses, e.g. with regard to the number of publications and patents produced in connection with SNSF projects in the course of a year.

## 4.2 Financial reports

All grantees who have received funds must annually submit a financial report. If possible, the financial report and the corresponding receipts should be submitted exclusively in electronic form via [mySNF](#).

The grant administration office compiles a [financial report, \(using the template\)](#) reviews it and transmit it to the grantee for examination. The grantee is responsible for the submission and submits the reports and receipts directly to the SNSF. The grant office certifies the validity of the receipts. This financial overview also serves as the basis for the figures to be entered in *mySNF*. If possible, the financial reports and receipts should be submitted exclusively in electronic form via *mySNF*. The report has to be submitted in CHF.

Receipts which are not written in English, German or French should be complemented with a short explanation in one of these languages, either on the official account forms or on the receipts themselves. All receipts for foreign currency transactions should also state the equivalent amount in Swiss Francs.

For all money transfers from the SNSF to the host institution, the rate of the day - corresponding to the bank receipt - is applicable. For all other expenses carried out in local currency, the exchange rate valid on the last day of the reporting period, is applicable.

The SNSF reserves the right to audit the financial report at the host institution.

## 5. Budget items

The main budget items listed in SNSF rulings and letters of approval or in subsequently approved budgets and the corresponding amounts are binding on grantees. In principle, transfers of amounts from one budget item to another must be approved in writing by the SNSF in advance. However, across the entire running time of the project, you may transfer amounts up to a **total of CHF 20,000** without approval if the budget transfers do not violate or circumvent any requirements or conditions set by the SNSF.

## 6. Extensions and mobility grants

### 6.1 Extensions

You can place a request with the SNSF for the cost-neutral extension of a grant or project. This may be necessary if the project has been delayed for unforeseeable reasons and money could therefore not be spent. Such a cost-neutral extension must be applied for in writing.

## 6.2 Mobility grants for doctoral students

Doctoral students employed in a project funded by the SNSF are able to apply for a supplementary grant for the ongoing project to conduct a research stay abroad of six to twelve months. Requests can be submitted at any time via mySNF under "Supplementary grants". All information relevant to this funding scheme and to the procedure for submitting applications can be found in the [Regulations on the funding of doctoral mobility in research projects supported by the SNSF](#) and the [Guidelines for requesting a mobility grant](#).

## 7. Repayment of remaining amounts

Upon expiry of the grant, you need to repay any unused funds no later than 30 days after compiling the final financial report, unless the funds in question amount to less than CHF 50. The amount is to be repaid to the following account of the SNSF: PC 30-3767-5 Schweizerischer Nationalfonds, 3012 Bern; the corresponding grant number must be mentioned.

## 8. Working with mySNF - especially for project partners (other applicants) and secretariats

Almost all of the mentioned processes can be carried out electronically in mySNF without physical signature. The responsibility for this lies with the grantees. You may, however, authorise third parties (e.g. project partners, secretariats) to assist you in managing the projects. This is only possible if these persons are registered mySNF users and hence have their own access to mySNF. The authorised persons may fill in the online forms for the following processes, whereby the responsible grantees must, in a final step, transmit the data to the SNSF from their own user account:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds
- Submitting scientific reports
- Submitting financial reports

The following processes can be delegated entirely to third parties, who can fill in the online forms and transmit them to the SNSF - the responsible grantee always receives an e-mail confirmation of the transmission:

- Requesting personnel, changes of personnel and salary adjustments
- Entering output data
- Entering the lay summary
- Request for payment of an installment

Furthermore, the grantees can specify in mySNF that copies of all automated correspondence (e.g. the request to compile a scientific report) be sent to the authorized persons by e-mail.

You will find all settings with regard to the authorization of third parties in your mySNF account in the main navigation bar on the left under "Manage authorizations".