
SNSF's guidelines for the lifetime management of a Joint Research Project

Bulgarian-Swiss Research Programme

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SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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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 received contained the following information:

- Amount of the funds awarded, split into annual instalments
- Duration of the grant
- The conditions that need to be met before the funds are transferred
- 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. The Swiss PI is responsible vis-à-vis the SNSF for the application or grant. Nevertheless, the Bulgarian PI also accepts personal responsibility for the success of the project. However, only the Swiss PI represents the research group before the SNSF. Such representation is legally binding. He or she becomes the responsible grantee for the SNSF. The SNSF addresses all communications concerning the grant to this person and all the awarded funds are transferred to this person's institution (in most cases, the grant administration office). The entire grant is administered at this institution, from where funds can be transferred to the institutions of the other grantees. Each grantee is responsible vis-à-vis the SNSF for using the funds received appropriately.

The research group defines the co-operations and legal relationships between its members in the “Grant Agreement between the Bulgarian and Swiss Beneficiaries”, particularly with regard to authorship rights, access to data and research results. If a new responsible grantee is chosen within a research group, the new and the current responsible person must jointly file a corresponding application with the SNSF.

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)
- Coordination between the individual members and management of the project
- Transferring funds to the other grantees

Responsible grantees can delegate some of these tasks to project partners or secretariats in mySNF in order to reduce their administration workload (see chapter 11).

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 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 via [mySNF](#). The funds are paid in annual instalments in accordance with the ruling. Prior to the first release of funds, you must submit a lay summary in one of the national languages of Switzerland. The lay summary will be published in the SNSF's projects database. Furthermore, all necessary authorisations (for animal testing, tests on humans, etc.) and a signed copy of the "Grant Agreement between the Bulgarian and Swiss Beneficiaries" must have been submitted via [mySNF](#). These documents can be uploaded under "Request for release of funds > Other annexes". In addition, any conditions stated in the ruling must be met.

For the following years, you must use the [Request for payment of instalment](#) form (available in German and French) to request an installment.

3.3 Transferring funds to other grantees

Funds may only be transferred to researchers who are listed as other grantees in the ruling. The funds to the Bulgarian partner must be transferred solely to the account indicated in the "Grant Agreement between the Bulgarian and Swiss Beneficiaries". It is recommended that this account be project-specific.

Funds transfers to the other applicants are exempt from value-added tax. With regard to the value-added tax legislation, it is important that the funds are not requested via an invoice, but exclusively via a payment request.

3.4 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 11). 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 institutions are responsible for compliance with the statutory labour and social insurance provisions. For staff employed in Switzerland, the SNSF specifies binding salary brackets and norms for different staff categories.

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 Bulgarian scientific staff, including the PI, must be paid according to the national provisions and in full compliance with the working contract of Bulgarian staff with its organisation.

4. Overhead

On the Bulgarian side, the overhead costs cannot exceed 5% of the Bulgarian direct costs. The overhead cover the running costs and maintenance for the administration of the Bulgarian institution and can either be transferred to the Bulgarian institution by the Bulgarian PI or can be kept at disposal of the PI (depending on the internal rules of the universities and institutes). If a transfer is done, a receipt from the head of the institution covering the total amount should be included in the financial reports. A [form](#) is available.

Swiss partners are not entitled to overhead costs.

5. Reports

5.1 Scientific reports

The Swiss PI must annually submit a scientific report, which must be compiled in collaboration with the Bulgarian PI. A [template](#) for this report is available. The report must be uploaded on mySNF. You will receive the corresponding requests automatically in the form of e-mails sent via *mySNF*.

Grantees have to enter output data on their 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. Along with the scientific results and the progress made in the preceding project, the data provide a basis for the evaluation of the scientific report.
2. The data are entered in the web-based research database p³ (p3.snf.ch), where researchers and the general public can gain information on the research work funded by the SNSF.
3. 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.

5.2 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 in electronic form via [mySNF](#). The Swiss PI is responsible for the submission. The re-

port is generally compiled by the grant administration office (financial department, fund administration or similar entity) of the Swiss PI's institution and transmitted to the Swiss PI for examination via *mySNF*. The specific processes, e.g. for the transmission of receipts, are defined by the grant administration offices of the individual institutions.

The Bulgarian PI is responsible for the compilation of a financial report at his or her institution on the funds allocated to him or her both by SNSF (indirectly through the Swiss PI) and by SD/MEYS and for the transmission of this report along with all receipts to the Swiss PI or to the latter's grant administration office. He or she should make the report available to the Swiss PI in electronic form.

A [excel list for expenditures](#) (with a sheet for the Swiss PI and a sheet for the Bulgarian PI) is provided. If the Swiss PI is at an institution with a grant administration office, the sheet for the Swiss PI is facultative (it can be replaced by the usual financial report). However, the completion of the sheet for the Bulgarian PI is mandatory.

6. 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, possible savings in one of the budget categories may be transferred to cover higher costs in another category as far as no explicit terms or conditions set by the SNSF and the SD/MEYS may conflict with such transfers. Such transfers shall, however, not exceed 10% of the total allocation to each partner by each funding institution. For transfers above this limit, written permission shall be obtained from the SNSF and/or the SD/MEYS.

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

6.1 Equipment / Apparate, Bestandteile / Matériel de valeur durable

This category comprises all apparatus, appliances and material of permanent value. The maximum percentage for equipment within a JRP is 20% of the total project cost. The equipment may be bought in Switzerland, in Bulgaria or in a third country (taking service and repairs into consideration). Equipment for the Swiss institution should be paid by the Swiss PI and equipment for the Bulgarian institution by the Bulgarian PI.

6.2 Consumables / Verbrauchsmaterial, Unterhalt / Matériel de consommation

They include materials, supplies and consumables used in the framework of the JRP and for the research activities.

6.3 Other costs / Verschiedenes / Divers

They include costs for publication of joint scientific articles, for organising seminars and conferences, dissemination of results, subcontractors, etc., provided they are directly linked to the JRP implementation. The overhead costs for the Bulgarian partner (see § 4) are also to be indicated here.

6.4 Travel costs / Reisen / Déplacements

This budget category includes all travelling for both PIs and the staff taking part in the JRP in order to visit each other, do field work or to participate in international conferences thematically linked to the JRP and that have been foreseen in the research project.

Travel expenses may be debited only provided that approval for the corresponding trip is expressly given or implied in the ruling and the following conditions are met:

1. The purpose, destinations, duration and date of the trip must be indicated.
2. All trips must be by public transport. Expenses incurred by car travel are permissible, provided that the use of private vehicles saves time and costs. A maximum of 0.60 CHF may be claimed per kilometer travelled by car.
3. Flights should be booked according to the best cost/performance ratio and only in Economy Class. As proof that a trip has been undertaken, original receipts (passenger receipts) are to be provided to SNSF with the financial report.
4. The actual costs of overnight stays at hotels with up to three stars may be claimed. The SNSF may not assume the entire cost of stays at hotels with more than three stars.

Alternatively, grantees may claim the following flat rates instead of the actual room and board expenses:

- Daily flat rate for stays in Switzerland or for stays outside of Switzerland in cities with more than 0.5 million inhabitants (incl. accommodation, main meals, breakfast, insurances and local public transport): up to CHF 160.-
- Daily flat rates for other areas (incl. accommodation, main meals, breakfast, insurances and local public transport): up to CHF 120.-
- Monthly flat rate for stays in Switzerland or for stays outside of Switzerland in cities with more than 0.5 million inhabitants (incl. accommodation, main meals, breakfast, insurances and local public transport): up to CHF 3'600.-
- Monthly flat rate for other areas (incl. accommodation, main meals, breakfast, insurances and local public transport): up to CHF 2'700.-
- Flat rates for main meals: up to CHF 25.-
- Flat rate for breakfast: up to CHF 10.-

If you choose to work with flat rates, you need not to provide the individual receipts. You are however requested to use the available [form](#). Naturally, if the flat rates indicated above are too high, you are free to work with lower ones.

6.5 Salaries / Saläre / Salaires

This budget category includes the salaries for researchers, technicians and other supporting staff directly involved in the project and indicated in the research plan. The salaries of the Swiss staff (e.g. Ph.D. students, postdoctoral fellows) must follow the usual SNSF guidelines. The Bulgarian team, including the PI, will be paid ac-

ording to the national provisions and in full compliance with the working contract of Bulgarian staff with its organisation. The employer's social charges for the researchers employed in Bulgaria must be indicated here.

6.6 Employer's social charges / Sozialabgaben / Charges sociales

This category is only for the people employed in Switzerland.

7. Currency exchange rate

For individual purchases in another currency than CHF or BGN, the effective currency rate (date of transfer) is to be used and a proof of this exchange rate is to be provided.

For the Bulgarian budget, by incoming amounts (i.e. transfers from Swiss PI and transfer from SD/MEYS, and even though the latter are actually in BGN) the effective currency rate (date of transfer) is to be used and a proof of this exchange rate is to be provided. The day-to-day expenses can be accounted for in BGN and balance at the end of the reporting period is to be converted into CHF. For this final conversion, a unique CHF / BGN exchange rate is to be the weighted average of the currency rates on the dates money was transferred to him/her by the Swiss PI and SD/MEYS. This unique currency rate is also to be used when calculating the BGN equivalent of the CHF flat rates indicated in paragraph 6.4. For more details, please refer to the example indicated on the corresponding sheet in the [excel list for expenditures](#).

8. Extensions

You can place a request with the SNSF for the cost-neutral extension of a grant or project. This extension can last 6 months at most. 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. Such extensions are only approved if the concern both the Bulgarian and the Swiss research group.

9. 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. If the remaining funds come from the budget of the Swiss PI, 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. If the remaining funds come from the budget of the Bulgarian PI, part of the amount is to be repaid to the SNSF and part to SD/MEYS (proportional to the payments made by both organisations).

10. Additional costs and personnel expenses

If the costs incurred within the scope of an approved project exceed the funds approved, as a rule the difference is debited to the grantee.

11. 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

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 authorised persons by e-mail.

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