**SNSF
Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowships (SPF) 2024**

**Research plan**

**The text and structure below are based on the MSCA template for the research plan. Slight modifications were made for the SNSF Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowships in accordance with SNSF rules and evaluation practices.**

Instructions, please remove

**August 2024**

**Instructions for drafting of the research plan**

Instructions, please remove

This part of the proposal contains the details of the proposed SNSF Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowship (SPF). It will be used by the independent experts to undertake their assessment of the proposal. We therefore advise applicants to address each of the award criteria as outlined in the relevant sections, using both descriptive text and the tables provided. Please note that the explanatory notes included in the research plan template serve to **explain the award criteria without being exhaustive**. To draft a proposal, applicants should also consult the current version of the [Call document](https://www.snf.ch/media/en/1JaseDUMfNixyypD/Call_Document_Swiss_Postdoctoral_Fellowships_2024.pdf).

Applicants **must** structure their SPF proposal according to the headings indicated in the research plan template.

Please note that this call will be a single-stage proposal submission and evaluation procedure. At the end of this document you can see the structure of the actual proposal that you need to submit, please remove all instruction pages that are watermarked. Applicants must ensure that their **proposals conform to this layout** and to the instructions given.

Please be aware that proposals will be evaluated as they were submitted, i.e. **no changes are possible after the submission deadline**. This means that only proposals that successfully address all the required aspects will have a chance of being funded.

Instructions, please remove

**Page limit**: **The entire research plan (including references) must not be longer than** **10 pages.** All tables, figures, references, and any other element pertaining to these sections **must be included** as an integral part of these sections and are thus counted towards this page limit. The page limit for this part of the proposal will be applied automatically; therefore, **you must remove these instruction pages before submitting.** Do not add a cover page or a table of contents.

If you upload a research plan longer than the specified page limit, **excess pages will be made invisible**, and therefore will not be taken into consideration by the experts. Note that experts will be instructed to ignore hyperlinks to information that is specifically designed to expand the proposal, thus circumventing the page limit. **The research plan must not contain any annexed documents.**

The following **formatting conditions** apply:

* The **page size is A4**, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers).
* The reference font for the body text of proposals is **Times New Roman** (Windows platforms), **Times/Times New Roman** (Apple platforms) or **Nimbus Roman No. 9 L** (Linux distributions).

The use of a different font for the body text is not advised and is subject to the cumulative conditions that the font is legible and that its use does not significantly shorten the representation of the proposal in number of pages compared to using the reference font (for example with a view to bypassing the page limit).

* The **minimum font size allowed is 11 points**. Standard character spacing and a minimum of single line spacing is to be used. This applies to the body text, including text in tables.
* Text elements other than the body text, such as headers, foot/end notes, captions, formulas, etc. may deviate, but must be legible and **not be less than 8 points**.
* It is permissible to indicate references and footnotes in a condensed format, as long as they are uniquely identifiable. References in the footnotes should be placed on the same page where the citations are made.
* Tables and figures are only to be used for *illustrating* the core text of the proposal; they cannot be used to contain the core text itself.

**Applications must meet all formal requirements (number of pages, format, etc.). The SNSF does not consider applications that do not meet all of the requirements and/or are manifestly inadequate.**

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------------------------------------- Start of page count (max 10 pages) --------------------------------

**Research plan**

## 1. Excellence

***1.1*** ***Quality and pertinence of the project’s research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art)***

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Describe the quality and pertinence of the R&I objectives. Are the objectives measurable and verifiable? Are they realistically achievable?

Describe how your project goes beyond the state-of-the-art, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious.

***1.2***  ***Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices)***

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At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Overall methodology: Describe and explain the overall methodology, including the concepts, models and assumptions that underpin your work. Explain how this will enable you to deliver your project’s objectives. Refer to any important challenges you may have identified in the chosen methodology and how you intend to overcome them.
* Integration of methods and disciplines to pursue the objectives: Explain how expertise and methods from different disciplines will be brought together and integrated in pursuit of your objectives. If you consider that an interdisciplinary approach is unnecessary in the context of the proposed work, please provide a justification.

*Interdisciplinarity means the integration of information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, or theories from two or more scientific disciplines.*

* Gender dimension and other diversity aspects: Describe how the gender dimension and other diversity aspects are taken into account in the project’s research and innovation content. If you do not consider such a gender dimension to be relevant in your project, please provide a justification.
* Remember that this question relates to the content of the planned research and innovation activities, and not to gender balance in the teams in charge of carrying out the project.
* Sex, gender, and diversity analysis refers to biological characteristics and social/cultural factors, respectively.
* Artificial intelligence (AI): If you plan to use, develop and/or deploy AI-based systems and/or techniques you must demonstrate their technical robustness. AI-based systems or techniques should be, or be developed to become:
* Technically robust, accurate and reproducible, and able to deal with and inform about possible failures, inaccuracies and errors, proportionate to the assessed risk they pose.
* Socially robust, in that they duly consider the context and environment in which they operate.
* Reliable and function as intended, minimizing unintentional and unexpected harm, preventing unacceptable harm, and safeguarding the physical and mental integrity of humans.
* Able to provide a suitable explanation of their decision-making processes, whenever they can have a significant impact on people’s lives.
* Open science practices:Describe how appropriate open science practices are implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology. Show how the choice of practices and their implementation is adapted to the nature of your work in a way that will increase the chances of the project delivering on its objectives [e.g., up to 1/2 page, including research data management]. If you believe that none of these practices are appropriate for your project, please provide a justification here.

*Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Open science practices include early and open sharing of research (for example through pre-registration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing); research output management; measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs; providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows); participation in open peer-review; and involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).*

* Please note that this does not refer to outreach actions that may be planned as part of the communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities. These aspects should instead be described below under ‘Impact’.

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* Research data management and management of other research outputs: Applicants generating/collecting data and/or other research outputs (except for publications) during the project must explain how the data will be managed in line with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

*For guidance on open science practices, please visit the SNSF website on* [*Open science*](https://www.snf.ch/en/dah3uC2QX95tfPNd/topic/open-science) *and* [*Open research data*](https://www.snf.ch/en/dMILj9t4LNk8NwyR/topic/open-research-data)*. Note that a Data Management Plan (DMP) is only requested for approved grants according to the requirements issued by the SNSF.*

***1.3*** ***Quality of the supervision, training, and the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host***

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Describe the qualifications and experience of the supervisor(s). Provide information regarding the supervisors’ level of experience on the research topic proposed and their track record of work, including main international collaborations, as well as the level of experience in supervising/training, especially at advanced level (i.e., PhD and postdoctoral researchers).
* Planned training activities for the researcher (scientific aspects, management/organisation, horizontal and key transferrable skills, etc.).
* Two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and host organisation.
* Rationale and added-value of the non-academic placement (if applicable).

**Supervision:** Employers and/or funders should ensure that a person is clearly identified to whom researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties and should inform the researchers accordingly.
Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisors are sufficiently expert in supervising research, have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise, and commitment to be able to offer the postdoctoral researcher appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms.

*Supervision is one of the crucial elements of successful research. Guiding, supporting, directing, advising, and mentoring are key factors for a researcher to pursue their career path.*

***1.4*** ***Quality and appropriateness of the researcher’s professional experience, competences, and skills***

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Discuss the quality and appropriateness of the researcher’s **existing** professional experience in relation to the proposed research project.

## 2. Impact

***2.1*** ***Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to their skills development***

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Specific measures to enhance career perspectives and employability of the researcher inside and/or outside academia.
* **Expected** contribution of proposed skills development to the future career of the researcher.

***2.2*** ***Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities***

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Plan for the dissemination and exploitation activities, including communication activities: Describe the planned measures to maximize the impact of your project by providing a first version of your ‘plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities’. Describe the dissemination, exploitation measures that are planned, and the target group(s) addressed (e.g., scientific community, end users, financial actors, public at large). Regarding communication measures and public engagement strategy, the aim is to inform and reach out to society and show the activities performed, and the use and the benefits the project will have for citizens. Activities must be strategically planned, with clear objectives, start at the outset and continue through the lifetime of the project. The description of the communication activities needs to state the main messages as well as the tools and channels that will be used to reach out to each of the chosen target groups.
* Strategy for the management of intellectual property, foreseen protection measures: if relevant, discuss the strategy for the management of intellectual property, foreseen protection measures, such as patents, design rights, copyright, trade secrets, etc., and how these would be used to support exploitation.
* All measures should be proportionate to the scale of the project and should contain concrete actions to be implemented both during and after the end of the project.

***2.3. The magnitude and importance of the project’s contribution to the expected scientific, societal, and economic impacts***

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Provide a narrative explaining how the project’s results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the immediate scope and duration of the project. The narrative should include the components below, tailored to your project.

* Be specific, referring to the effects of your project, and not R&I in general in this field. State the target groups that would benefit.
* The impacts of your project may be:
* Scientific: e.g., contributing to specific scientific advances, across and within disciplines, creating new knowledge, reinforcing scientific equipment and instruments, computing systems (i.e., research infrastructures).
* Economic/technological: e.g., bringing new products, services, business processes to the market, increasing efficiency, decreasing costs, increasing profits, contributing to standards’ setting, etc.
* Societal: e.g., decreasing CO2 emissions, decreasing avoidable mortality, improving policies and decision-making, raising consumer awareness.
* Only include such outcomes and impacts where your project would make a significant and direct contribution. Avoid describing very tenuous links to wider impacts.
* Give an indication of the magnitude and importance of the project’s contribution to the expected outcomes and impacts, should the project be successful. Provide quantified estimates where possible and meaningful.

*‘Magnitude’ refers to how widespread the outcomes and impacts are likely to be. For example, in terms of the size of the target group, or the proportion of that group, that should benefit over time.*

*‘Importance’ refers to the value of those benefits. For example, number of additional healthy life years, efficiency savings in energy supply.*

## 3. Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation

***3.1*** ***Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages***

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Brief presentation of the overall structure of the work plan, including deliverables and milestones.
* Timing of the different work packages and their components.
* Mechanisms in place to assess and mitigate risks (of research and/or administrative nature).

A Gantt chart must be included and should indicate the proposed Work Packages (WP), major deliverables, milestones, secondments, placements, if applicable. This Gantt chart counts towards the 10-page limit.

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* The schedule in the Gantt chart should indicate the number of months elapsed from the start of the action (Month 1).

***3.2*** ***Quality and capacity of the host institutions and participating organisations, including hosting arrangements***

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

* Hosting arrangements, including integration in the team/institution and support services available to the researcher.
* Quality and capacity of the participating organisations, including infrastructure, logistics and facilities should be outlined.

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**PART B TEMPLATE**

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**Research plan**

## 1. Excellence

* 1. ***Quality and pertinence of the project’s research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art)***

Insert here text for your proposal

* 1. ***Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices)***

Insert here text for your proposal

* 1. ***Quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host***

Insert here text for your proposal

***1.4*** ***Quality and appropriateness of the researcher’s professional experience, competences, and skills***

Insert here text for your proposal

## 2. Impact

***2.1 Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to their skills development***

Insert here text for your proposal

***2.2*** ***Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities***

Insert here text for your proposal

***2.3. The magnitude and importance of the project’s contribution to the expected scientific, societal, and economic impacts***

Insert here text for your proposal

## 3. Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation

***3.1*** ***Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages***

Insert here text for your proposal

***3.2*** ***Quality and capacity of the host institutions and participating organisations, including hosting arrangements***

Insert here text for your proposal

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