

Guidelines for the lifetime management of SOR4D projects

November 2022

Preamble

SOR4D programme

The Solution-oriented Research for Development (SOR4D) programme is a joint funding instrument between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) that builds on experiences and lessons learnt in previous joint programmes. The SOR4D programme is being implemented in the “Decade of Action” that is accelerating efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

The overarching goal of the SOR4D programme is to produce better knowledge, solutions and innovation by needs-driven, transdisciplinary research that opens up new ways for advancing sustainable development and reducing poverty in the least developed, low and lower middle-income countries.

Project funding documentation

The documentation for the SOR4D programme consists of:

- Call document of respective call
- Guidelines for the lifetime management of SOR4D projects
- Reporting guidelines for SOR4D projects

These documents are available on the SOR4D website (www.sor4d.ch). They can also be downloaded via *mySNF* (www.mysnf.ch). The Guidelines for the lifetime management of SOR4D projects and the Management Principles 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.

1 The ruling

The SNSF forwards the final decisions on applications to the Swiss main applicant 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
- If applicable, any further comments/recommendations
- 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 main applicant is responsible vis-à-vis the SNSF for each application or grant.

All Swiss applicants and applicants from partner countries accept personal responsibility for the success of the project. However, only the Swiss main applicant 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 partners (grantees) define their cooperation and relationship, 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.

The 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 research 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 administrative workload (see chapter 10).

3 Getting started

3.1 Start of funding

The project must start no later than 6 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 Project agreement

The Project agreement regulates the cooperation among the research partners (grantees) of the project. The agreement has to be submitted at the latest with the request for release of the funds.

3.3 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 in one of the national languages of Switzerland. The lay summary will be published in the SNSF's projects database ([SNSF Data Portal \(snf.ch\)](https://www.snf.ch/snf-projects)). Furthermore, all necessary authorisations (e.g. for animal experimentation, ethical approvals for research on humans etc.) and additional documents must have been submitted via mySNF. Additional 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.

3.4 Transferring funds to other grantees

Funds may only be transferred to researchers who are listed as other grantees in the ruling.

Transfer of funds 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. The responsible grantee needs to make the payment.

In principle there are various methods for transactions. If the transfer of funds from the partner institutes to the relevant research teams is reliable, funds may be transferred to the accounts of the institutes. Transfers to partners may also be made to the accounts of individuals participating in a project, provided that the legal requirements of the partner country are taken into consideration. It is not advisable to transfer the whole sum in one go, but rather in (3-monthly or 6-monthly) instalments, especially when no prior transfers have been made to the partner country. Only when the chosen bank and transfer method have proved reliable and when the partnership is going well should larger amounts be transferred. (The procedure is part of the Project agreement.)

3.5 Employment of staff

Any new appointments, staff turnover or salary adjustments in Switzerland 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 administrative workload, they may be delegated to third parties (see chapter 10). 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' institutions by means of a written contract. The institutions are responsible for compliance with the statutory labour and social insurance provisions. The SNSF specifies binding salary brackets and norms for different staff categories in Switzerland.

It is not necessary to notify personnel changes in the partner countries. They have to be mentioned in the progress report.

3.6 Intellectual property rights

Before filing an application for intellectual property rights to a research result (through trademark, design, patent, etc.), prior approval needs to be obtained from the SDC. The SNSF shall be informed accordingly.

4 Reports

4.1 Progress reports

A comprehensive progress report as well as an updated factsheet have to be submitted on a yearly basis and for the first time 12 months after project start. The progress report has to follow the provided reporting guidelines. The progress reports will be made available to SDC and will be treated confidentially.

You will receive the corresponding requests automatically in the form of e-mails sent via mySNF.

Grantees have to enter 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:

- Along with the scientific results and the progress made in the preceding project, the data provide a basis for the evaluation of follow-up projects.
- The data are entered in the SNSF data portal (<https://data.snf.ch/>), where researchers and the general public can gain information on the research work funded by the SNSF.
- 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 Final reports

The final report is needed to assess scientific and practice-oriented output. The procedure for interim progress reports applies also to final reports. Submission deadline: six weeks after the end of the project.

4.3 Financial reports

The financial reports have to cover the project parts in Switzerland and the partner countries. The responsible grantee submits annually (first report due 12 months after project start) an interim financial report and a final financial report after the end of the project.

The responsible grantee must account for the use of the funds transferred to the other grantees. Confirmation that a specific sum has been received is insufficient.

The other grantees are responsible for the compilation of a financial report at their institution on the funds allocated to them and for the transmission of this report along with **all receipts** to the responsible grantee or to the latter's grant administration office. For the compilation of the financial report the other grantees have to complete the respective financial report sheet. If possible, the financial reports and receipts should be submitted exclusively in electronic form via mySNF. For this reason, the other grantees should make their reports available to the responsible grantee in electronic form.

The SNSF provides the responsible grantee or the grant administration office with the online financial monitoring and reporting tool r4dIRA (r4d Information Reporting Application). The responsible grantee/the project coordinator and the grant administration staff get training and support by the SNSF.

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.

All forms are provided on the SOR4D website www.sor4d.ch.

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.

5.1 Equipment and components

This category comprises all apparatus, appliances and material of permanent value and can only be purchased for use in a partner country (Group 1). This may be bought in the partner country, in Switzerland or in a third country (taking service and repairs into consideration). Purchases may be made in the partner country by the leader or a trusted party of the Southern research group to whom the money may be transferred by the main grantee (original receipts must be presented to the SNSF). Material bought in a third country may be paid directly by the main grantee in Switzerland. In this case the Southern partner must confirm that he has received the goods.

5.2 Ownership of equipment and other material investments

Equipment and any other material investments bought by means of the financial contribution of the SOR4D programme shall become the property of the partners who are entitled to accept, possess and use it in accordance with the research plan. The partners being in possession of this equipment and/or material investments shall ensure that it is duly made available for the purposes of the project and remains available for its scientific purposes beyond the duration of the SOR4D project.

5.3 Research funds

Research funds can be spent on consumables and field expenses. Consumables include e.g. chemicals and maintenance or rental for apparatus. Field expenses include all expenses for participation in congresses, workshops, travel and stays in the partner institutions. Original receipts must be provided for all expenditure.

It is possible to charge daily allowances for accommodation and meals on travel and stays in the partner countries.

5.4 Salaries paid in other countries

Payments of salaries in partner countries are to be immediately confirmed with signature by the person(s) receiving salaries. The confirmation should include the project number, the duration of involvement, the percentage of working time allotted to the project. This can be an excerpt from a pay-roll or another format. For your convenience, a template form for confirmation of salaries is available on the SOR4D website.

5.5 Not eligible costs

- Expenditure incurred before the start and after the end of the project
- Interest of debt, purchase of land and buildings
- Fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation, bribes
- Activities supported from other sources
- Pay taxes or duties of any kind, insurance costs of any kind in any of the countries involved
- Administrative costs in Switzerland

5.6 Currency exchange rate

The conversion from local currency to CHF in the financial report must be done using the rate on the final day of the reporting period.

6 Extensions, supplementary grants

6.1 Extensions

You can place a request with the SNSF for the cost-neutral extension of a 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. If you are benefiting from a cost-neutral extension, you may not request grants for covering additional personnel expenses (see chapter 8).

6.2 Supplementary grants

It is possible that, for unforeseeable reasons, the approved funds may not be sufficient to complete the planned research work until the expiry of the grant.

Applications for supplementary grants pursuant to Article 36 of the Funding Regulations may be approved only if the following requirements are met in full:

- The purpose for which the supplementary grant is to be used is explained in detail in the application.
- It is explained in the application why the supplementary grant is necessary for the successful completion of the ongoing research work funded by the SNSF. Supplementary grants may not be used to finance new research projects.
- It is convincingly shown in the application that the need for supplementary funding was unforeseeable and could not be averted by taking appropriate measures.
- It is convincingly shown in the application that the project can be completed with the aid of an additional grant without any need for submission or assessment of a new funding application.
- It is convincingly shown in the application that the necessary supplementary funding could not be covered via other sources of financing.

Extensions of the funding period requested in parallel with a supplementary grant are generally granted for a period of less than one year, provided that sufficient budget is available. Applications for a supplementary grant and requests for payment of an approved supplementary grant have to be made via mySNF.

6.3 Costs of career measures

Flexibility grants cover costs for measures aimed at promoting a balance between scientific activities and academic careers, on the one hand, and childcare duties, on the other. More information can be found in Annex 4 of the general-implementation-regulations-for-the-funding-regulations ([General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations \(snf.ch\)](https://www.snf.ch/en/annex-4-general-implementation-regulations-for-the-funding-regulations))

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, **IBAN CH14 0900 0000 3000 3767 5**. Schweizerischer Nationalfonds, Wildhainweg 3, 3001 Bern; the corresponding grant number must be mentioned. Unused funds have to be paid back to the main grantee. Once an overview of all project contributions is available, he or she is responsible for any repayments to the SNSF.

8 Additional costs and personnel expenses

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

At the main grantees' request (submitted along with the final financial report) the SNSF may compensate additional personnel expenses. Additional personnel expenses comprise additional costs resulting from cost of living allowances, higher job gradings and salary adjustments approved by the SNSF, and higher social security contributions (incl. unforeseeable social benefits) which cannot be covered by means of cost savings on other budget items or third-party funding.

As concerns research groups, main grantees can use the active balances of project partners to cover additional costs. If, after deducting active balances, there are still additional costs (personnel expenses) which cannot be covered by third party funds, the SNSF may approve additional personnel expenses based on a written request from the main grantee.

9 Sanction

In the case of any improper use of the allocation made by the SNSF or of violations of any terms and conditions by the project partners, the SNSF shall be entitled to apply the following sanctions:

- Letter of reprimand
- Letter of warning
- Reduction, suspension or reimbursement of grants
- Non consideration of any further proposal for a limited period

10 Working with *mySNF*

Almost all of the mentioned processes can be carried out electronically in mySNF without physical signature. The responsibility for this lies with the main grantee. You may, however, authorise third parties 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 person may fill in the online forms for the following processes, whereby the main grantee must, in a final step, transmit the data to the SNSF from his/her own user account:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds
- Submitting scientific reports
- Submitting financial reports (only relevant if main grant is not administered by a grant administration office)

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 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 "Manage authorisations".

11 Communication activities

When planning national media activities regarding research projects or results in the context of the SOR4D programme, grantees must contact the responsible coordinator of the SOR4D programme in good time to discuss whether the research institute or the SOR4D programme will be responsible for the activities. Grantees must facilitate the close coordination of the research institutes' Public Relation activities with those of the SNSF and the SOR4D programme and respect branding rules.

Research group members are expected to acknowledge SDC and SNSF and the SOR4D programme and provide the grant number when publishing results from their SOR4D project.

Grantees are responsible:

- to suitably represent the project at official events and make a connection to the r4d programme.
- to inform the programme coordinator of any online and print publication resulting from the project.
- to consult the programme coordinator before engaging in media activities and campaigns.

Grantees respect branding rules

- In oral presentations, research group members are required to acknowledge the r4d programme as well as its funders SDC and SNSF.
- For all written presentations and publications related to SOR4D projects (including results) it is required to acknowledge the SOR4D programme. If possible, the SOR4D programme logo, the logos of the funders SDC and SNSF, and the link to the website www.sor4d.ch have to be included.

Alternatively, the following box can be used as graphic element:



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