

Ambizione

Guidelines for submitting a proposal via mySNF

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1. Submission of proposal

1.1 Contact of the SNSF Administrative Offices

For questions please contact: **ambizione@snf.ch**

1.2 Regulations and relevant documents

The Ambizione regulations and relevant documents are available on our website in [German](#), [French](#) and [English](#) (see section "Documents"). Alternatively, the documents are also accessible in your Ambizione application on mySNF under "Information/Documents".

1.3 Eligibility of the applicant

The eligibility windows are governed by article 5 of the Ambizione regulations (see paragraph 1.2). For any questions regarding your eligibility, do not hesitate to contact us: **ambizione@snf.ch**

1.4 Next deadlines and parallel submissions

Proposals have to be submitted electronically via the web platform mySNF (www.mysnf.ch). The application must be submitted **no later than 17:00 Swiss local time (i.e. UTC + 1)** on the day of the submission deadline.

Next submission deadline: **1st November 2018**

Following submission deadline: **1st November 2019**

Please note that an Ambizione application may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no other project grants have been requested or approved or are ongoing under the project funding scheme, Sinergia grants or programmes of the SNSF. For career funding schemes, parallel applications may only be submitted for Postdoc.Mobility return grant. **For more details see article 13 of the Ambizione regulations.**

1.5 Access to mySNF

All new users have to register first on mySNF (www.mysnf.ch). In the corresponding step during the registration, please make sure to select the correct division and funding instrument (**Careers/Ambizione**). Please note that it may take several days to process your request for a mySNF account. If you already have a mySNF account, please check that the role "grant applicant" is present.

1.6 Create a new application on mySNF

Please select the correct division and funding instrument when creating a new application on mySNF: **Careers/Ambizione**

Before making any entries or uploading files, make sure to read all information in this document as well as in the header of every container carefully.

1.7 Difference between Ambizione grant and Ambizione project grant

The SNSF awards the following kinds of grants (see paragraph 1.12 below):

Ambizione grant: The grant covers project funds and the full salary of the grantee. An Ambizione grant is not intended to cover just a share of the salary of the applicant.

Ambizione project grant: The grant comprises project funds only. The salary of the grantee is fully covered by the research institution.

1.8 Duration of the grant

Ambizione grants are awarded for a maximum of four years. The minimum duration of funding is two years. If the maximum duration of the grant is not requested, the applicant should give an explanation for the shorter duration (e.g. in the cover letter).

Please note that projects with a shorter duration than the maximum possible duration of four years do not have a higher chance of being granted.

1.9 Eligible research institutions

All publicly funded research institutions in Switzerland are eligible, i.e. universities, university hospitals, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education, research centres (e.g. PSI, EMPA, EAWAG) or institutes of postgraduate education (e.g. IDIAP, IHEID).

1.10 Earliest and latest possible starting date for the grant

For a submission on 1 November 2018, the earliest possible starting date is 1 September 2019. The start of the grant can be postponed by no more than 12 months after the earliest possible starting date, i.e. 1 September 2020.

1.11 Revised application/Resubmission

Pursuant to article 14 of the Ambizione regulations, applicants whose application was rejected **may apply at the most a second time** for an Ambizione grant regardless of the subject matter of the project as long as the applicant still fulfils all personal requirements.

In case of a resubmission, please upload in the container "Research plan" **a separate document** providing a point-for-point response to the critique raised in the rejection letter and a comment on significant changes or additions in the research plan, if applicable. This statement must **not be longer than 2 pages**.

1.12 Gross salary of the applicant

Ambizione grant: An Ambizione grant is not intended to cover just a share of the salary of the applicant. The salary of the applicant will be determined by the SNSF in agreement with the research institution. The **average gross salary will be around CHF 105'000 per annum** for a work time percentage of 100% (e.g. research associate level, junior group leader, scientific collaborator, etc.). The social security contributions of the employer will be covered as well. If the

applicant would like to insert more accurate figures for the salary, please contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution.

Please first select the correct research institution in the container "University or research institution". Afterwards, mySNF will add the correct value in all fields labelled "Social security contributions (%)" and calculate the corresponding values for the social security contributions of the employer where required.

Regarding family/child allowance ("Further social security contributions"), they are different in every canton. Therefore, for more details please contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution.

For researchers doing clinical work (Ambizione-PROSPER/SCORE): If the research institution will cover the salary for the work-time percentage dedicated to clinical work (up to 20%), a corresponding statement should be present in the confirmation of the research institution or in a support letter.

Ambizione project grant: The salary of the grantee is fully covered by the research institution and may be stated in the field "Salary covered by other funds".

Pursuant to article 1 paragraph 4 of the Ambizione regulations, grantees must devote their entire work time (100%) to the planned research. A lower work time percentage of at least 80% is permissible (see article 6 paragraph 2 of the Ambizione regulations) and should be explained (e.g. in the cover letter).

1.13 Budget limit for project funds and what may be requested

The budget limit for project funds is **CHF 400'000 for 4 years**, i.e. an average of CHF 100'000 per annum (see article 10 and 11 in the Ambizione regulations). For an Ambizione grant, the salary of the applicant is not included in this maximum amount. The budget should be as detailed as possible (e.g. separate entries are required for equipment, access costs to infrastructure, consumables, travel, personnel, etc.). Costs for open access publications are not eligible costs under Ambizione grants and must be applied for separately via mySNF (www.snf.ch/oa). Changes in the budget after the submission of the application are not possible. For more details see articles 9, 10 and 11 in the Ambizione regulations.

Pursuant to article 9 of the Ambizione regulations, a research stay of no more than 12 months at an institution of the practical realm (intersectoral mobility) can be envisaged as part of the Ambizione grant.

Research funds may be used to employ personnel (e.g. technician, laboratory assistant, supporting assistant, postdoctoral researcher, etc.). There is no restriction on the work-time percentage of personnel as long as the employment is justified in the application.

Candidates may apply to appoint a **PhD student**. The salary scales for doctoral candidates are fixed by the SNSF. In such cases, the research institution must confirm the supervisor of the doctoral thesis in writing. Furthermore, the supervisor of the doctoral thesis and the research institution must guarantee the due completion of the doctoral thesis on expiry of the grant or in the event of the project being abandoned prematurely (see paragraph 1.18 below and article 12 of the Ambizione regulations).

If engagement of a **postdoctoral researcher** is envisaged for the project, the confirmation of the research institution must include a commitment to contribute to at least half of the said researcher's salary (see paragraph 1.18 below and article 12 of the Ambizione regulations).

Personnel salaries may be different for every institution. The applicant should therefore contact in advance the HR department or the personnel office of the research institution for the corresponding salary standards. For more details on salary scales for doctoral candidates and salary ranges in general see:

[Annex 12 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#)

1.14 Data Management Plan

The proposal must include a [Data Management Plan](#) (DMP) set up according to the requirements issued by the SNSF. The aim of a DMP is to plan the lifecycle of data. It offers a long-term perspective by outlining how data will be generated, collected, documented, shared and preserved. The DMP is an integral part of the grant proposal. **The proposal can only be submitted once the DMP has been completed.** The [content of the DMP](#) is directly entered in the mySNF submission form. It is not possible to upload a DMP as a separate PDF file. Applicants must enter a DMP that is understandable, suits their project and meets the standards set by their research community. Please keep in mind the time needed to complete the DMP during the submission procedure.

At this stage, the DMP is considered a draft and excluded from the evaluation process. It is not part of the scientific evaluation process and is not shared with external reviewers. However, the definitive DMP must be provided by the end of the project at the latest.

1.15 External peer-reviewing

A list of potential external reviewers is not required. Applicants are entitled to submit together with their funding proposal a list with the names and addresses of **persons who are not to be asked** for an external review (exclusion list). The SNSF may abide by this list if the applicants provide a valid reason for the requested exclusion and if a sufficient number of other experts are available. For additional information on the evaluation procedure see paragraph 1.21.

1.16 Relevant date of PhD/completion of medical exam for fulfilling personal requirements

For applicants with PhD, the date of the examination or viva voce/defence of the thesis is the decisive date. For applicants who have completed their medical exam, the date of the medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) is relevant. Please make sure NOT to mention/use the date the certificate was issued in your CV and in the corresponding data container on mySNF.

1.17 Career plan

No form or template is provided by the SNSF. The career plan must **not exceed one page (a minimum of point 10 font size)**. The past career achievements should be described briefly, while more emphasis should be put on the medium and long-term career goals.

1.18 Choice of research institution

Mobility is an important evaluation criterion (see article 15 of the Ambizione regulations). In general, it is advisable to justify the choice of the research institution. In particular for the following

cases, the choice should be carefully motivated (e.g. in the cover letter) and will be assessed based on the rationale:

- At the time of the submission deadline the applicant has already spent more than one year at his/her present Swiss research institution.
- The applicant has already spent more than one year as postdoctoral researcher in the past at the selected research institution.
- The applicant would like to return to the research institution where he/she received his/her PhD or completed his/her medical exam.
- The applicant would like to join the research institution of his/her PhD advisor.

1.19 Written confirmation of the research institution

Applicants must contact as soon as possible the research institution to ask for the written confirmation of the research institution. The written confirmation of the research institution consists of two separate letters:

1. Detailed confirmation of the research institution signed by the contact person (leader of the research group) mentioned in the application and the head of the institute/department. This letter refers to the obligations which are stated in the Ambizione regulations, in particular article 8 and article 12.
2. General confirmation of the vice rectorate for research (or equivalent).

The directorate of the institute/department should forward the detailed confirmation of the research institution (point 1) to the vice-rectorate for research in order to receive the general confirmation (point 2). Then, the contact person at the research institution should send both confirmations to the applicant for a timely submission of the application.

Both confirmations must follow the text template provided by the SNSF and be written on paper using the official letterhead of the research institution. They must be added to the application and will only be regarded as complete if all the points relevant to the application are addressed. The text template is available in [German](#), [French](#) and [English](#).

Additional support letters are not compulsory and may be uploaded in the container "Other annexes" (see paragraph 1.20).

1.20 Support letters

The submission of support letters is not required. However, applicants are free to include support letters to their application (e.g. from the contact person, collaborators, etc.). The documents should be uploaded in the container "Other annexes". **Support letters forwarded to the SNSF by mail or by e-mail will not be considered.**

1.21 Evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases. In phase 1, the National Research Council of the SNSF makes an initial selection based on the documents submitted. Only applications selected for phase 2 are peer-reviewed. All candidates selected for phase 2 are invited to an interview to present their research project and career plan.

Applicants not considered for phase 2 will receive the decision around the end of April. Candidates invited to phase 2 will be informed about the outcome around mid-April. The interviews are held in June. These candidates will be informed about the final decision around mid-August.

1.22 Submission for other career funding schemes

Parallel applications may be submitted for Postdoc.Mobility if the parallel application is for a return grant.

Ambizione grantees may not apply for any further career grants of the SNSF. As an exception, grantees may apply for PRIMA and Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships 18 months after starting their Ambizione grant at the earliest.

2. Follow-up proposal

2.1 Transitional provisions and submission

Ambizione grants that have been approved or are ongoing on the entry into force of the Ambizione Regulations of 14 June 2016 may be extended by the SNSF, generally by a maximum of 12 months. A follow-up proposal is only considered in the following exceptional cases (see article 22 of the Ambizione Regulations):

- In the event of clinical activities (Ambizione-PROSPER/SCORE)
- In the case of an interruption or reduction of the employment level due to maternity or family care duties during the grant period;

Prior to the submission of a follow-up proposal, grantees should contact the Administrative Offices of the SNSF. Follow-up proposals have to be submitted electronically via the web platform mySNF (www.mysnf.ch) by simply creating a new application (see paragraph 1.5). In the container "Follow-up proposal of" just add an entry and select from the drop-down list the number of your running grant. Follow-up proposals must be submitted at least six months prior to expiry of the running grant.

Ambizione grants that have been approved pursuant to the Ambizione Regulations of 9 June 2016 cannot be extended. However, the funding period may be extended in cases governed by the Funding Regulations and their Implementation Regulations (see article 4 of the Ambizione Regulations).

2.2 Budget limit and what may be requested

Follow-up proposals must include a detailed budget. The budget should be independent from the total balance expected at the end of the ongoing grant period. It is not possible to ask for new equipment or to appoint a new PhD student. The budget limit for project funds is CHF 100'000 for 12 months.

2.3 External peer-reviewing

Follow-up grants are not peer-reviewed (simplified evaluation procedure). Hence, a list with the names and addresses of persons who are not to be asked for an external review (exclusion list) is not required.

2.4 Research plan

The general requirements for the research plan should be observed for follow-up proposals (see paragraph 4).

2.5 Career plan

A new/updated career plan is required for follow-up proposals. It must include details of the expected career situation at the end of the follow-up proposal.

2.6 Written confirmation of the research institution

A new/updated written confirmation of the research institution is required for follow-up proposals.

3. Instructions for CV, major scientific achievements and research output list

3.1 General remarks

The SNSF has signed the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), which recommends funders to be explicit about the criteria used in evaluating the scientific productivity of applicants.

The scientific quality, value and impact of the **entire research output** is taken into consideration (including datasets, software, prototypes) in addition to research publications. In this context, the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the name of the journal in which it was published. Furthermore, during its evaluation procedure, the SNSF takes into account the scientific discipline, academic age and personal situation (e.g. career breaks, child care duties).

In order to comply with the DORA, the SNSF requests a standardised set of information from all applicants, i.e. the "**CV and major scientific achievements**" and the "**Research output list**".

These two documents must be written in the same language as the research plan, and must be structured as specified below. The documents are sent out for peer-reviewing. **Proposals that lack the relevant information will not be considered for evaluation.**

3.2 Instructions for the CV and major scientific achievements

The **CV (maximum 3 pages)** and a **short statement of major scientific achievements (maximum 1 page)** should be **assembled in one document** and be written in the same language as the research plan. The document is used to assess the following criteria:

- eligibility of the applicant for Ambizione;
- scientific qualifications of the applicant, based on past achievements;
- ability of the applicant to conduct original research of high scientific quality and impact under his/her own responsibility.

The **CV must not exceed 3 pages** (minimum font size 10 points) and must be structured as follows. It is important that **all dates at least include month and year**. Additional points can be added, if relevant to the proposal:

1. Personal information, including the researcher ID (e.g. OrcID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID) and photo
2. Education: Please mention the **day of your PhD viva voce/defence and the name of the PhD advisor/s**. For applicants who have **completed their medical studies the date of the medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) and the date of the MD thesis** should be mentioned. If applicable, please add separate sections on clinical education and scientific education and quantify the corresponding periods in years.
3. Employment history including current position/s **with the name/s of the advisor/s**
4. Institutional responsibilities
5. Approved research projects
6. Supervision of junior researchers at graduate and postgraduate level (summary information, the names of the junior researchers should be indicated)
7. Teaching activities (summary information)
8. Memberships in panels, boards, etc., and individual scientific reviewing activities
9. Active memberships in scientific societies, fellowships in renowned academies
10. Organisation of conferences
11. Prizes, awards, fellowships
12. Career breaks (provide justification)

In the section "**Major scientific achievements**" (**maximum 1 page to be attached to the CV**) the applicant describes his/her most important scientific achievements. Please describe for each achievement the applicant's specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

3.3 Instructions for the research output list

The research output list is used in the evaluation process to assess the scientific productivity and qualification of an applicant with regard to the proposed project and his/her ability to successfully conduct and document a research project. Both aspects are also taken into account in the evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed research project.

Depending on the research field, the applicant's position in the list of authors may give an indication on his/her contribution to the scientific work (see also: Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: [Integrity in scientific research, Principles and procedures](#)).

The research output of an applicant is used, among others, as a measure of his/her scientific independence. The total number of publications or the number of publications per year is not considered to be the only indicator of performance.

Please separate your publications **resulting from your PhD/medical exam (or prior) and from your postdoctoral time** and highlight the 5 most important. For all publications listed from your postdoctoral time, please give a very short comment on your contribution; in particular for publications with several authors, where the applicant is not first or last author, or for disciplines where the authors are in alphabetical order.

The applicant's name in the list of authors and the publication year must be clearly visible (e.g. boldfaced or underlined). Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. **Do not use "et al." to shorten the list of authors**, unless the research project was conducted by a large international collaboration with more than 50 authors and a direct link to the full publication is given.

All these items are intended for evaluators to specifically assess the scientific quality and relevance of the research output. In order to support the principle of open electronic access to scientific

knowledge nationally and internationally, please **provide a direct internet link for each publication**, if applicable. **All publications attached in the container "Other annexes" will not be taken into account and will be deleted.**

Candidates in **Humanities and Social Sciences** must expose the status of their PhD thesis publication. They have to state whether their PhD thesis is published or submitted; if not, they have to specify when the publication is expected.

The research output list should be **structured as follows** (if applicable). Under points 1 - 4 only "published", "in press" or "accepted" publications can be listed ("submitted" or "forthcoming" publications cannot be included). All entries in every section should be numbered:

1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals
2. Peer-reviewed books/monographs
3. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings
4. Contributions to books
5. Patents and licenses
6. Oral contributions to conferences (talk or poster)
7. Outreach activities (e.g. public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, scientific art performances, etc.)
8. General contributions to science (e.g. spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes, etc.)
9. Other artefacts with documented use (e.g. maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, arXiv-articles (only "published", "in press" or "accepted" articles), contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)

4. Instructions for the research plan

4.1 General remarks

The research plan provides the basis for scientific evaluation, particularly of the quality of the proposed research project, i.e. its scientific relevance, topicality, originality, feasibility and the suitability of its methods. Together with the CV and the applicant's track record, the research plan also serves as a basis for assessing the researcher's scientific qualifications, particularly his/her expertise with regard to the project.

The SNSF's requirements with regard to the form and content of the research plan help to ensure the comparability of applications. This is an important prerequisite for a comparative evaluation based on the principle of competition and for the equal treatment of all applicants.

The research plan must consist of original text that has been written by the applicant himself/herself. A limited amount of text (or other material, graphs, etc.) by third parties or text published by the applicant himself/herself is permissible in the sections concerning the state of research (2.1) and the state of his/her personal research (2.2) as well as when describing standard methods. The quoted texts must be clearly designated as such (quotation marks or appropriate wording) and a verifiable source must be mentioned nearby and in the bibliography. The SNSF uses a special software to compare texts and analyse suspected cases of plagiarism. A number of universities have made such programs available to their students and employees. We recommend that you contact your institution for further information. For more details see the SNSF dossier on scientific integrity:

www.snsf.ch > The SNSF > Research policies > Scientific integrity

In **mathematics, natural and engineering sciences, biology, medicine, psychology, economics and political sciences**, applications have to be submitted **in English**. In all other research areas, applications can be submitted in one of the official Swiss languages (preferably in German or French; for Italian please contact the administrative office of SNSF first). An English translation must be enclosed if requested by the SNSF.

Special rules apply for political sciences. Researchers will still be able to submit proposals in an official Swiss language should this be justified for scientific reasons, particularly if working in a specific language is appropriate to the nature of the research topic.

The SNSF does not consider applications that **do not meet the requirements for the research plan**, the **formal requirements for applications** (article 14 of the [Funding Regulations](#)) and the **requirements for research integrity and good scientific practice** (article 15 of the [Funding Regulations](#)).

4.2 Structure of the research plan

The research plan must **not exceed 15 pages (including cover/title page and if applicable a table of contents, A4 paper size) and 60'000 characters (with spaces)**; this includes the title or title page, possible table of contents, **summary, footnotes** (explanatory notes or comments at the bottom of a page), **illustrations, formulae, tables**, but not the bibliography (list of sources/references at the end of the document). A minimum of **point 10 font size** (e.g. Times New Roman; condensed fonts not allowed) and **1.5 line spacing** must be used. The research plan should not contain any annexed documents and must be uploaded as a single file. **The research plan needs to be structured as follows:**

1. Summary	In the summary (maximum 1 page), please present the background and rationale of the project, list its overall objectives and specific aims , mention the methods to be used , and briefly discuss the expected results and their impact for the field.
2. Research Plan	
2.1 Current state of research in the field	Describe your project in the context of the current state of knowledge in your field. Make reference to the most important publications, particularly by other authors. Please describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies; - in which areas research is needed, and why; - which important, relevant research projects are currently underway in Switzerland and abroad.
2.2 Current state of personal research	For a new application , please present the research work you have already undertaken in the relevant field or in related fields, describe the results obtained so far as well as the relevance of these preliminary undertakings for your project. For a follow-up proposal , please report on the work conducted within the scope of the previous project and the results obtained.

2.3 Detailed research plan	<p>Based on the information provided under 2.1 and 2.2, please specify the approach you are taking and the concrete objectives that you aim to achieve in the period of funding. The following points should be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describe the studies or experiments needed and/or envisaged to reach the set goals. Assess the risks involved and propose alternatives if necessary; - characterise existing sources and datasets and describe the data collection strategy and possible alternative strategies; - methods by which the research goals are to be reached (applicant and collaborations) and methods that first have to be developed; - explain the role and the planned work of each member of the research team (incl. applicant, personnel and collaborations). <p>Your description should be as detailed as necessary to enable an expert to assess whether your methodology is appropriate and your project feasible. Please refer to the work described here in the budget you submit via mySNF.</p>
2.4 Schedule and milestones	<p>Please compile a schedule that includes the most important milestones (e.g. table, Gantt chart, etc.). This plan should also indicate the main tasks with which the persons funded by the SNSF/involved in the project are to be entrusted.</p>
2.5 Relevance and impact	<p>Please describe the scientific relevance and expected impacts of your project for the discipline and for science as a whole (research and education/teaching). Please mention the form in which you wish to publish your research results (articles in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceedings, etc.) If applicable, please indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be.</p>
3. Bibliography	<p>List the sources of all concluded and/or ongoing work referred to in the research plan. Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. Do not use "et al." to shorten the author list. (Exception: the author list can be shortened if a publication involves large international consortia with over 50 authors. In this case, a link to the complete reference has to be included). The bibliography is not included in the maximum number of pages (15) and characters (60'000) count.</p>

18.07.2018