



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft

Confédération suisse

Confederazione Svizzera

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Swiss Confederation

Innosuisse – Swiss Innovation Agency

The Swiss Innovation Agency's implementing provisions for funding innovation projects (Implementing provisions for innovation projects)

of 16 November 2017 (status as of 1 January 2021)

The Innovation Council of the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse),

based on Article 10 Section 1 letter f of the Federal Act of 17 June 2016¹ on the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse Act; SIAA),
sets out the following:

Chapter 1: Subject matter

Art. 1

These implementing provisions govern the funding of innovation projects in relation to:

- a. the requirements for submitting an application;
- b. the eligible costs;
- c. the procedure;
- d. derogations for projects carried out as part of the Federal Council's mandates for the execution of topic-specific funding programmes.

Chapter 2: Contributions to innovation projects

Art. 2 Independence of research and implementation partners

¹ The independence of the research and implementation partners in terms of finance and personnel within the meaning of Article 3 Section 4 of the Ordinance of the Swiss Innovation Agency of 20 September 2017² on its funding and other support measures (Innosuisse Funding Ordinance) is ensured if the natural persons involved in the project on the part of a research partner:

- a. do not simultaneously work for an implementation partner. A consulting activity in the strictest sense of the term, agreed in writing and with a time limitation, is an exception;
- b. have no financial interests in the commercial activity of an implementation partner and do not financially support an implementation partner for other reasons.

² Holding equity securities, granting loans and making donations are also considered interests within the meaning of Section 1 letter b. However, holding equity securities or financial investments in companies without the possibility of significantly influencing their commercial activity is an exception.

Art. 3 Non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector

Non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector within the meaning of Article 5 of the Federal Act of 14 December 2012³ on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA) are allowed to submit applications as research partners if:

- a. it is clear from their statutes that their aim is to conduct research activities;
- b. their statutes prohibit funding bodies or owners from gaining pecuniary advantages from the research activities;
- c. they can demonstrate through their research services already provided that they compete with higher education research centres in terms of level and quality of the research and they have research staff with the requirements needed to lead and implement science-based innovation projects.

¹ SR 420.2

² SR 420.231

³ SR 420.1

Art. 4 Form and content of the application

¹ The application must be submitted to Innosuisse via the online application using the form provided. Upon request, Innosuisse provides applicants with a form that they can send by post or e-mail if there is a plausible explanation as to why a submission via the online application is not possible.

² The application must contain all information necessary for technical, scientific and economic assessment of the right to and amount of funding. The application must in particular contain the following:

- a. the information necessary to assess the conditions that applicants must meet in accordance with Article 3 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance⁴ and Articles 2 and 3 of these implementing provisions;
- b. a description of the project containing information on the conditions for funding according to Article 19 RIPA; Article 29 f. of the Research and Innovation Promotion Ordinance of 29 November 2013⁵ (RIPO) and the criteria according to Article 4 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance;
- c. a project budget containing the project contribution requested from Innosuisse and the contribution of the implementation partners;
- d. the name of the research partner, who fulfils the obligations set out in Article 9 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance, provided that several research partners are involved in the project.

³ The application can be submitted in German, French, Italian or English.

⁴ Applications can be submitted at any time. This does not normally apply to applications within the framework of thematic programmes. Applications within the framework of the Flagship Initiative can only be submitted in response to calls for proposals and after the prior submission of a project proposal within the deadlines specified in the call.⁶

Art. 4a⁷ Specification of the entry criteria for applications within the framework of the Flagship Initiative

When applying for contributions to projects within the framework of the Flagship Initiative, Innosuisse may specify the entry criteria in the tender documents, particularly with regard to the following aspects:

- a. composition of the parties involved in the project;
- b. amount of the financial support requested;
- c. minimum project duration requested;
- d. deadline for the submission of project proposals and applications.

Art. 5 Maximum amount for eligible gross salaries⁸

¹ For the staff functions below, the following maximum amount applies for eligible gross annual salaries:

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|--|--------------|
| a. project manager and their deputy; experienced scientist: | CHF 220 500; |
| b. scientific officer: | CHF 126 000; |
| c. specialist assistant: | CHF 113 400; |
| d. doctoral student and auxiliary: | CHF 85 100. |

² For the functions below, the maximum amounts according to the hourly rate specified in Section 1 correspond to a 2100th of the gross annual salary and a supplement of 13.5 percent for holiday pay and public holidays, amounting to:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| a. project manager and their deputy; experienced scientist: | CHF 119; |
| b. scientific officer: | CHF 68; |
| c. specialist assistant: | CHF 61; |
| d. doctoral student and auxiliary: | CHF 46. |

Art. 6⁹ Declaration and calculation of eligible personnel costs

¹ Research centres submitting applications for contributions to innovation projects must provide Innosuisse with their average notional hourly rates for the staff functions listed in Article 5 no later than when they submit their first application after these implementing provisions come into force. This information must be confirmed by the research centre's finance department and the calculation method must be clear to Innosuisse. Research centres which still need to be reviewed to determine whether they may be considered non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector, under Article 5 RIPA¹⁰, are exempt from this obligation until an affirmative decision concerning an application has been made. They are to base their application on the maximum rates in accordance with Article 5 Section 2.

⁴ SR 420.231

⁵ SR 420.11

⁶ Inserted by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

⁷ Inserted by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

⁸ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

⁹ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, in force since 1 July 2011.

¹⁰ SR 420.1

² If a research centre which submits applications for contributions to innovation projects shows the gross salaries actually paid for at least one project when invoicing in accordance with paragraph 4 letter b, it must present the imputed hourly rates of the personnel categories defined by it, including their calculation method, to Innosuisse in a comprehensible and updated form every four years. It may submit an update before the end of 4 years should it wish to do so. This information must be attested by an external body in possession of a valid certificate, or by the auditing body of the research centre's managing authority, if Innosuisse approved contributions to the research centre amounting to more than CHF 300,000 in the previous year. Otherwise, providing confirmation from the research centre's finance department is sufficient.¹¹

³ The notional hourly rates provided as per Sections 1 and 2 above may be higher than the hourly rates calculated according to Article 5 Section 2, provided that the standard calculation method used by the applicants' research centre to calculate gross annual salaries does not result in a figure which exceeds the maximum amount identified in Article 5 Section 1. Each staff category defined by the research centres must be clearly assigned to a staff function under Article 5.

⁴ After an application has been approved, the research partners which submitted the application shall specify which one of the following methods they will use to provide evidence of the gross salaries actually paid on invoicing:

- a. based on payroll statements relating to the project team members, evidence of their hours worked and their level of employment in the innovation project;
- b. based on a list of the hours worked by the project team members multiplied by the applicable notional hourly rates for each project team member specified in accordance with Section 2.

⁵ Invoicing and settlement evidence of the contributions actually paid by the employer shall be based on the disclosure of either:

- a. evidence of the contributions actually paid; or
- b. a list of the hours worked multiplied by the applicable contribution rates for the project team members.

Art. 7 Eligible material costs

¹ Only costs that are actually incurred and are absolutely necessary for the proper execution of the innovation project are taken into account. Costs deemed necessary are only those that are reasonable in relation to the personnel costs incurred and the result of the innovation project.

² The costs of acquiring or using research infrastructure that is not part of the basic equipment may in particular be taken into account, subject to Section 4, letter b. Basic equipment includes apparatus, materials and other fittings that are part of the standard equipment of a research centre with a comparable research purpose.

³ The costs of using research infrastructure that is not exclusively used for implementing the innovation project may be charged to the project in accordance with the applicable degree of use. The degree of use must be clearly stated.

⁴ The costs of the following in particular are not taken into account:

- a. publications of research results;
- b. the use of research infrastructure acquired by third-party funds explicitly provided for this purpose;
- c. travels within Switzerland.

⁵ For absolutely necessary travels abroad, the provisions of the Ordinance of the FDF of 6 December 2001¹² on the Personnel of the Swiss Confederation shall apply correspondingly.

Art. 7a¹³ Contribution of the implementation partners to the project costs

¹ The notional hourly rates of a research partner which meets the obligations set out in Article 9 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance¹⁴ shall apply to the calculation of the implementation partners' personnel expenses which may count as an in-kind contribution.

² The contribution of the implementation partners to the project costs shall be calculated based on Innosuisse's expected contribution as specified in the Funding Agreement (Art. 9 Section 3 Letter a^{bis}).

Art. 8 Innosuisse's assessment of and decision on the application

¹ If an assessment of an application reveals that the approval conditions for an assessment of the contents of the application, particularly with regard to the submitting person or to formalities, have not been met, Innosuisse shall issue a contestable non-consideration decision.

^{1bis}¹⁵ Project proposals within the framework of the Flagship Initiative are subject to a summary formal and material review. Based on the result of the summary review, Innosuisse will inform the responsible consortium in writing whether the submission of an application is recommended. The consortium is not bound by the recommendation.

² Innosuisse assesses applications that fulfil the approval conditions for an assessment of the contents of the application on the basis of the criteria of Article 19 RIPA¹⁶, Article 29 f. RIPO¹⁷ and Article 4 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance¹⁸ and quantifies its assessment by awarding points. For applications within the framework of the Flagship Initiative, Innosuisse may specify these criteria in the tender documents and give them a different weighting.¹⁹

¹¹ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

¹² SR 172.220.111.31

¹³ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, in force since 1 July 2011.

¹⁵ Inserted by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

¹⁶ SR 420.1

¹⁷ SR 420.11

¹⁸ SR 420.231

¹⁹ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

⁴ It shall approve the applications that fulfil the funding requirements, that receive the best assessment in comparison to the other applications pending decision and that can be funded within the available budget.²¹

⁵ Innosuisse rejects applications that are not approved with a contestable decision.

Art. 9 Funding Agreement and start of implementation

¹ If Innosuisse approves a funding application in whole or in part, it concludes a Funding Agreement with research partners and implementation partners.

² Innosuisse shall inform applicants of any preparatory work required before the conclusion of the Funding Agreement. Innosuisse shall set the term for this preparatory work as up to a maximum of three months. This term may be extended for a reasonable period of time in justified cases. A Funding Agreement shall not be concluded if the preparatory work is not done in time.²²

³ The Funding Agreement governs the following in particular:

- a. the subject of the project funding;²³
- a^{bis} the expected contribution amount, made up of the gross salary calculated on the basis of the notional hourly rates and the estimated number of hours of work, the employer contributions, the material costs and the overhead contribution;²⁴
- a^{ter} the cost ceiling, made up of the maximum gross salary as calculated on the basis of the maximum amounts identified in Article 5 Section 2 and the estimated number of hours of work, the employer contributions, the material costs and the overhead contribution;²⁵
- b. the conditions, the amount and the deadlines for the partial payments;
- c. the project implementation and duration;
- d. the reports to be submitted to Innosuisse;
- e. the participation of the implementation partner in the project;
- f. any other conditions and requirements;
- g. other rights and obligations of the contracting parties;
- h. the termination of the contractual relationship.

⁴ The implementation of the project may only begin when the agreement enters into force and must have started within three months of this agreement taking legal effect. A deferred start is possible in justified cases and with the approval of Innosuisse.

Art. 10 Payment of the contributions

¹ Innosuisse's contributions shall be paid directly to the research partners. If several research partners are involved in the project, the payment shall be made to the grand administration office in accordance with Article 9 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance²⁶.

² The contributions will normally be made in instalments, whereby no more than 80 percent of the maximum amount is paid before the definitive amount is determined.

Art. 11 Project changes, additional costs and cost deferrals²⁷

¹ Significant project changes, in particular changes to project partners, the project plan, the aims of the project and project team members who cannot be replaced at short notice due to their knowledge (key people) may only be made with the prior consent of Innosuisse.²⁸

² Innosuisse may terminate the contractual relationship if significant changes are implemented without Innosuisse's consent and mean that the conditions for funding are no longer fulfilled.

^{2bis} Innosuisse may compensate for additional project costs compared to the anticipated contribution specified in the Funding Agreement within the framework of the review of the final financial report, without a prior additional application and without amending the Funding Agreement, if this does not involve a significant change to the project within the meaning of paragraph 1, if the specified cost ceiling is not exceeded and if the higher costs are incurred due to:²⁹

- a. measures to adjust for inflation;
- b. reasonable salary increases;
- c. changes to personnel with the same staff function;
- d. increases in the estimated hours worked or adjustments to their distribution between the various staff functions, provided that the resulting additional personnel costs do not exceed 5 per cent of the total contractually agreed estimated personnel costs;³⁰
- e. necessary increases in employer contribution; or

²⁰ Repealed by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, with effect from 1 July 2018.

²¹ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, in force since 1 July 2011.

²² Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, in force since 1 July 2011.

²³ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, in force since 1 July 2011.

²⁴ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

²⁵ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

²⁶ SR 420.231

²⁷ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

²⁸ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 June 2018, in force since 1 July 2011.

²⁹ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

³⁰ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

- f. additional expenses for material costs in the amount of no more than 5 per cent of the total contractually agreed material costs.³¹

³ In exceptional cases, Innosuisse may allow additional costs that do not fall under paragraph 2bis and which exceed the expected contribution specified in the Funding Agreement as part of an additional application, provided they are incurred due to approved project changes or were unforeseeable costs for which the project partners were not responsible. The Funding Agreement shall then be amended accordingly.³²

⁴ Shifts between personnel and material costs, which do not lead to an increase in the total contractually stipulated, anticipated contribution, may be made without Innosuisse's consent, if the amount shifted from personnel costs to material costs does not exceed 5 per cent of the total personnel costs stipulated in the Funding Agreement, or in the opposite case, if it does not exceed 10 per cent of the total material costs stipulated in the Funding Agreement.³³

Art. 12 Interim reports and progress monitoring

¹ The research partner receiving the contributions submits to Innosuisse progress reports for the project in accordance with its guidelines. The research partner will ensure that the reports are agreed with the other project partners.

² Innosuisse can schedule regular project progress evaluations and can terminate the grant relationship if it seems unlikely that the objectives of the project can be achieved.

Art. 13 Final report and contribution payments

¹ A final report describing the content and finances of the project with supporting documents is to be submitted to Innosuisse in accordance with its guidelines no later than two months after the end of the project.

² Innosuisse assesses the report and uses it as a basis for determining the definitive contribution amount and final payment, or, if contributions have already been paid in excess of the definitive amount, the reclamation. The contracting parties shall communicate any objections to the decision to Innosuisse within 30 days. In this case, Innosuisse shall assess the complaint and make amendments to the definitive amount if the complaints are justified.

Art. 14 Funding duration for topic-specific funding programmes

By way of derogation from Article 13 Section 3 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance³⁴, Innosuisse can support projects without implementation partners from action areas from the topic-specific funding programme for energy research for a maximum of 36 months.

Chapter 3: Preliminary Study Vouchers (Innovation Cheques)

Art. 15 Applicant requirements

¹ Businesses with fewer than 250 full-time equivalent employees are considered to be small or medium-sized businesses in the sense of Article 15 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance³⁵. For businesses that form part of a group of businesses, the number of full-time equivalent employees of the whole group is decisive.

² A Swiss company identification number is considered evidence of the company's headquarters in Switzerland.

Art. 16 Form and content of the application

¹ The application must be submitted to Innosuisse via the online application using the form provided. Upon request, Innosuisse provides applicants with a form that they can send by post or e-mail if there is a plausible explanation as to why a submission via the online application is not possible.³⁶

² It must contain all information necessary for technical, scientific and economic assessment of the right to the contribution. The application must in particular contain:

- a. a description of the innovation project with information on the criteria referred to in Article 16 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance³⁷;
- b. the name of the research partner;
- c. the project budget being applied for.³⁸

³ The application can be submitted in German, French, Italian or English.³⁹

Art. 17 Eligible costs

The costs to be taken into account by the research partner, with whom the company redeems the voucher, shall be based on Article 5 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance⁴⁰ and Articles 5-7 of these implementing provisions and must not exceed a maximum of CHF 15 000.

³¹ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

³² Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 november 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

³³ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

³⁴ SR 420.231

³⁵ SR 420.231

³⁶ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 May 2019, in force since 1 June 2019.

³⁷ SR 420.231

³⁸ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 May 2019, in force since 1 June 2019.

³⁹ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 May 2019, in force since 1 June 2019.

⁴⁰ SR 420.231

Art. 18 Procedure

¹ Innosuisse shall decide on the application in the form of contestable decisions.

² If Innosuisse approves the application, its decision shall in particular determine the following:

- a. the subject and maximum amount of the voucher;
- b. the company's rights and obligations;
- c. the deadline for redeeming the credit.

³ The company governs the legal relationship with the research partner.

⁴ After the support service has been provided, the company shall provide a statement on the list of the eligible costs of the research partner and release them for payment. The research partner can then submit the list of eligible costs directly to Innosuisse for payment of the voucher. Innosuisse assesses the submission and pays the research partner on the basis of the eligible costs.

⁵ After the defined service has been provided, the company and the research partner shall submit a joint final report on the preliminary study.⁴¹

Chapter 4: Final provisions⁴²

Art. 18a⁴³ Transitional provision on the amendment of 6 november 2020

Article 11 as amended on 6 november 2020 shall also apply to modifications, additional costs and cost deferrals for innovation projects for which funding has been requested before 1 January 2021.

Art. 19 Entry into force⁴⁴

These provisions enter into force on 1 January 2018.

⁴¹ Amended by No I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 20 May 2019, in force since 1 June 2019.

⁴² Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

⁴³ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

⁴⁴ Amended by No. I of the Implementing provisions for innovation projects of 6 November 2020, in force since 1 January 2021.