

SCOPES 2013-2016

Scientific Co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland

General Information and Call for Proposals

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are launching a new phase of the programme “SCOPES - Scientific co-operation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland”.

In the framework of SCOPES 2013–2016, there will be

- **a first call for proposals for Joint Research Projects** (= JRP, open from 20 March to 20 September 2013) and
- **a second call for proposals for Institutional Partnerships** (= IP, open from spring to autumn 2014).

Preparatory Grants (PG) can only be submitted during an open call in order to prepare a JRP / IP. Applications for **Valorisation Grants** (VG) are usually submitted towards the end of a JRP / IP. Applications for **Conference Grants** (CG) can be submitted throughout the entire duration of the programme.

1. Background

Together with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the SNSF has been promoting co-operation with scientists from Eastern European countries and from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union (NIS) since 1990 by implementing a scientific co-operation programme in six consecutive phases. The commitment, which is part of a wider effort to strengthen economic, scientific and cultural ties between Switzerland and Eastern Europe and NIS is now being renewed.

Compared with the former phases of SCOPES, the same funding instruments are offered in SCOPES 2013-2016. An overall budget of 16 million CHF will be available and a major emphasis has again been put on capacity development (young and female researchers).

2. Objectives

The pursuit of knowledge is an important feature of human societies as well as a prerequisite for their continued development. The numerous challenges that transition countries in Eastern European, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union are confronted with, concern also the research and educational systems to a considerable degree.

The difficult situation of the individual and the institutional level endangers the achievements of the most important tasks of any science system: the production and exchange of knowledge for the benefit of today's societies and the training of the next generation of qualified researchers. Therefore, the programme aims at improving the quality and increasing the networking level of scientific research.

SCOPES 2013-2016 must be seen in view of this general background. The programme aims at supporting individual researchers, research teams and research institutions from the target countries in their endeavour to overcome the difficulties of the transition period. From a Swiss perspective, the programme offers the possibility to fund scientific collaborations and promote synergies with the target countries.

The programme focuses on the funding of research projects of high quality, on the improvement of institutional framework conditions that enable a further increase of the research performance, and on improved integration of individuals and institutions into the international and especially in the European scientific community.

3. Programme philosophy

3.1 Thematic issues

SCOPES is open for activities within all scientific disciplines ranging from humanities and social sciences to natural, technological science and engineering sciences, biology and medicine. As SCOPES does not provide thematic priorities, scientists are free to submit in a bottom-up way any thematic proposal that may contribute to the objectives of the programme. Projects are evaluated according to their scientific merit. However, to further stimulate the achievement of the programme's objectives, other important aspects must be taken into account:

- Relevance for transition (see 3.2)
- Capacity building (see 3.3)
- Partnership approach (see 3.4)

Taking these principles into account will considerably enhance the chances for a proposal to be accepted for funding.

3.2 Relevance for transition

The selected projects should not only be of academic interest, but rather be thematically oriented on important issues of the transition process and its consequences. Therefore, the significance of the planned research for the sustainable development of the partner country must be demonstrated in the application.

3.3 Capacity building

Transition countries partially lack the resources and infrastructure required to carry out **independent, effective, problem-oriented research** which generates the necessary knowledge to solve existing development issues. Research co-operation is not only designed to produce research findings but also to help strengthen individual and institutional research capacities.

Therefore, younger scientists should be involved and promoted in Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships and teams should be a good mixture regarding age and gender.

3.4 Partnership approach

Research partnerships between teams and institutions in Switzerland and transition countries are an important instrument for both knowledge development and capacity building at institutional and individual level. Jointly established objectives and shared responsibility as well as accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, participation and efficiency are important principles in establishing partnerships (see also KFPE's New Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships -> <http://www.kfpe.ch/11-Principles>).

4. Funding instruments

The following types of funding instruments are offered:

- Conference Grants (see 7.1)
- Joint Research Projects (see 7.2)
- Institutional Partnerships (see 7.3)
- Preparatory Grants (see 7.4)
- Valorisation Grants (see 7.5)

More details about these funding instruments can be found in chapter 7.

5. Submission

5.1 Eligibility

Researchers working at research institutions in Switzerland and in countries of Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union are eligible for participation in the programme.

The main applicant must be employed at a Swiss research institution.

The scientific personnel in Switzerland and Eastern Europe/NIS must be employed at an institution that does not conduct research for commercial purposes. Subcontracting to commercial service providers is permissible, provided they are not co-applicants.

Eligible research institutions in Switzerland and Eastern Europe/NIS

	Switzerland	Eastern Europe/NIS
Research partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities • ETH & associated institutions • Universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education • Swiss federal research institutions • Others research institutions which do not conduct research for commercial purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions of higher education, universities • Institutes of the Academies of Sciences • Public research institutions • Others research institutions which do not conduct research for commercial purposes

5.2 Partner countries

There are two categories of partner countries:

Category A

The first category comprises the countries on the OECD-DAC list of ODA (Official Development Assistance) recipients (see

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/DAC%20List%20used%20for%202012%20and%202013%20flows.pdf>):

- Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia
- South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia
- Central Asia: Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- Moldova, Ukraine

Category B

- EU-Member States: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania
- Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,
- Croatia
- Russia, Kazakhstan

Category B countries have generally progressed further in the transition phase and may serve as an intermediate partner between the Swiss partner(s) and the partner countries from category A.

5.3 Eligible project consortia

For funding instruments that require the building of **consortia** (Joint Research Projects and Institutional Partnerships), the following collaborations are eligible for funding:

a) Bilateral projects

(e.g. one partner from Switzerland and one partner from a partner country)

These are only possible with countries of the category A.

b) Multilateral projects

(e.g. one partner from Switzerland and two or more partners from partner countries)

These are possible with countries of the category A and with a combination of countries category A + B. In the case of a collaboration involving partners from the category A and B, at least 50% of the funding must go to the partner(s) from category A.

All partner teams must have a substantial role in the partnership and complement each other in order to have a reasonable and balanced consortium. Therefore, all the Eastern European partner teams should claim for more or less equal budget amounts.

5.4 Technical submission & information

For the first call, the call information will be available from 20 March 2013 on the SNSF website, for the second call in spring 2014.

Proposals must be prepared jointly by the Swiss and Eastern European and NIS applicants. **The application must be submitted by the Swiss main applicant (= future co-ordinator of the project) through the SNSF web platform www.mysnf.ch. The online submission facility will be activated from 2 April 2013 onwards.**

An user account is needed in order to gain access to the web platform and to submit the proposal. To open an account, new applicants must register with SNSF as a new user. Once registered, the person will receive a username and password by regular mail (generally within five working days).

General questions concerning the application procedure may be directed to the SCOPES Programme Office (SNSF, International Co-operation, international@snf.ch). For questions related to www.mysnf.ch, the technical support hotline at 031 308 22 00 can be contacted.

The deadlines for application are given below. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Please note that there will be a second call for proposals for **Institutional Partnerships** (= IP, launched in spring 2014) but not for Joint Research Projects.

5.5 Deadlines for the first call for proposals (only JRPs)

Conference Grants

Applications can be submitted continuously.

Joint Research Projects

Applications must be submitted to SNSF by 20 September 2013.

Preparatory Grants

Applications must be submitted to SNSF by 31 August 2013.

Valorisation Grants

Applications for Valorisation Grants can only be requested as a follow-up of an accepted Joint Research Project at the latest until 31.12.2015.

6. Evaluation and selection

Applications for **Conference Grants, Preparatory Grants and Valorisation Grants** will be evaluated by the administrative offices of SNSF.

Applications for **Joint Research Projects** will be evaluated by an evaluation panel. The decision of panel members will be based on external reviews. Following the panel recommendation, the Research Council of SNSF will decide upon the proposals to be funded.

The **evaluation criteria** specific to each funding instrument can be found in chapter 7.

7. Funding instruments

7.1 Conference Grants (CG)

7.1.1 Description

For good quality scientific conferences with international participation taking place in Switzerland funds can be made available to finance conference participation of Eastern European and NIS researchers. Pure training courses will not be supported.

7.1.2 Goals

Conference grants aim to strengthen the international networks of scientists from Eastern Europe/NIS and open new perspectives for their international co-operation as well as for the development of their scientific curricula.

7.1.3 Project duration

Maximum 7 days

7.1.4 Project consortia

The Swiss conference organiser must submit the proposal.

7.1.5 Eligible costs

Contribution to travel and accommodation costs for conference participants from partner countries (flat rate per person, see below). The maximum contribution per CG is CHF 10'000.

7.1.6 Submission

Applications may be submitted to SNSF during the whole period of the programme, but at least 3 months before the conference takes place.

7.1.7 Evaluation and selection

The quality of the conference and the candidates will be checked. Young scientists (<45) and active conference participants will be given preference. A gender balance is aimed at.

7.1.8 Financial issues

Region	Countries	Flat rate per person*
Western Balkan countries:	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	CHF 1500
South Caucasus:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	CHF 2000
Central Asia:	Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	CHF 2500
Other countries:	Moldova, Ukraine	CHF 2000
EU-Member States:	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	CHF 1000
Other countries:	Croatia, Kazakhstan, Russia	CHF 1000

* All amounts shown are the maximum flat rate per person. Smaller amounts are also possible in order to support more participants if requested.

7.2 Joint Research Projects (JRP)

7.2.1 Description

At least one research team from Switzerland and one from Eastern Europe/NIS (composition of project consortia see chapter 5) undertake in close co-operation a specific research project. Research work is carried out at the participating research institutions. The co-operation offers opportunity for exchange.

The main responsibility for the project is taken by the Swiss partner (= co-ordinator). It is possible to include one or more research partners from Eastern Europe/NIS. Partners from the country category B – if existing – could be involved by the Swiss co-ordinator for the support and possibly capacity development activities for the research teams from the country category A.

7.2.2 Goals

The achievement of qualitatively good and preferably transition relevant research results within the framework of an international co-operation associated with knowledge transfer, from which the expertise, the profile as well as the European and international integration of the Eastern partners can be supported.

7.2.3 Project duration

24-36 months

7.2.4 Project consortia

See chapter 5.3

7.2.5 Eligible costs

Equipment will be paid only for Eastern European/NIS partners (maximum 30% of the total amount per partner).

Among research funds the following costs will be accepted:

- Travel and accommodation costs for exchange visits and short stays (up to three months per person and year)
- Participation at international conferences
- Individual grants (for Eastern European/NIS partners)
- Consumables

Salaries and social security contributions (only for Swiss partners)

7.2.6 Submission

Applications must be submitted to SNSF not later than 20 September 2013 (mid-night). Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

No further call is foreseen for Joint Research Projects.

7.2.7 Evaluation and selection

The external experts, members of the evaluation panel and the research council will evaluate the following aspects:

Scientific quality

- Current scientific interest and impact of the project (scientific significance)
- Novelty of the proposed research approach and research questions
- Suitability and originality of the methods to be used
- Experience and past performance of the applicants
- Specific abilities of the applicants for the proposed project

Relevance

- Significance for the sustainable development of the partner country
- Strengthening of capacities for researchers and research institutions of partner countries (promotion of young scientists and women)
- Communication strategy for research results to potential users (dissemination/exploitation)
- Balanced distribution of duties, competences and responsibilities between the partners
- Contribution to (inter)national embedding and networking

Management/Budget

- A reasonable relationship between goals, inputs, outcomes and milestones/indicators
- An efficient management scheme
- A favourable cost/benefit ratio
- Feasibility of project

7.2.8 Financial issues (please note that these are maximum amounts)

Maximum amount per JRP with one Eastern European/NIS partner

	Total
Swiss partner(s)	30'000
EE/NIS partners (only category A)	75'000
Total	105'000

Maximum amount per JRP with two Eastern European/NIS partners

	Total
Swiss partner(s)	45'000
First EE/NIS partner (category A)	75'000
Second EE/NIS partner (category A or B)*	75'000
Total	195'000

Maximum amount per JRP with three Eastern European/NIS partners

	Total
Swiss partner(s)	60'000
First EE/NIS partner (category A)	60'000
Second EE/NIS partner (category A)*	60'000
Third EE/NIS partner (category A or B)*	60'000
Total	240'000

Maximum amount per JRP with four Eastern European/NIS partners

	total
Swiss partner(s)	60'000
First EE/NIS partner (category A)	60'000
Second EE/NIS partner (category A)*	60'000
Third EE/NIS partner (category A or B)*	60'000
Forth EE/NIS partner (category A or B)*	60'000
Total	300'000

7.3 Institutional Partnerships (IP) – call will be launched only in spring 2014

This call do not integrate IPs. This information is provided here as a basis for potential applicants wanting to choose between the two instruments.

Description

Swiss partners support research institutions (University departments, institutes of the Academies, laboratories, etc.) in the partner countries in their efforts of restructuring and modernisation at institutional level. A partnership will comprise at least one researcher from Switzerland and one from Eastern Europe (composition of project consortia see chapter 5). The Swiss side is responsible for the project co-ordination. It is possible to include one or more research partners from Eastern Europe/NIS; at least half of the teams must come from the country category A.

Partners from the country category B could be involved by the Swiss co-ordinator for the restructuring and modernisation of the research institutions as well as capacity development from the country category A.

Goals

Institutional Partnerships must contribute to the development and modernisation of institutional aspects of research and teaching institutions in Eastern Europe/NIS. They should also increase the attractiveness and international competitiveness of these institutions by improving basic overall conditions. They do not directly fund research projects.

7.4 Preparatory Grants (PG)

7.4.1 Objectives

PG should improve the quality of the submitted JRP proposals.

7.4.2 Description

Researchers who intend to submit a proposal have the opportunity to request funds for travel and subsistence costs in order to meet future partners. This meeting should allow partners to discuss and work on the application. The meeting must take place before the deadline of submission of the JRP application.

7.4.3 Allowable costs

- Contribution to travel and subsistence costs
- Maximum amount per PG: CHF 10'000 (flat rate per person)

Travel from/to Switzerland

Region	Country	Flat rate
Western Balkan countries:	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	CHF 1500
South Caucasus:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	CHF 2000
Central Asia:	Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	CHF 2500
EU-Member States:	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,	CHF 1000
Other countries:	Croatia, Russia Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine	CHF 1000 CHF 2000

7.4.4 Submission

Applications must be submitted to SNSF before 31 August 2013. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

7.4.5 Eligibility

The eligibility of a Preparatory Grant is dependent upon the submission of a full proposal. Funds will only be granted upon reception of a main proposal which meets the eligibility criteria for a JRP.

7.5 Valorisation Grants

7.5.1 Objective

Valorisation Grants aim to increase the effects and sustainability of the supported activities and the results achieved in the framework of JRP (e.g. elaboration of publications, websites, organisation of conferences with stakeholders or the general public). Besides this, VG are possible for running JRP which intend common activities with other JRP in order to improve the effects of the outcomes.

7.5.2 Description

For JRP which have generated transition relevant results, funds can be assigned to support their implementation or dissemination. Further measures benefiting a strengthened impact orientation such as extra financial support of co-operation between different JRP will be considered, if the according synergy develops during the programme.

7.5.3 Eligible costs

Allowable costs are not defined. The financed activities must relate to the goals of SCOPES.

7.5.4 Submission

Applications may be submitted to SNSF during the whole programme period, but at least 3 months before the activities take place.

7.5.5 Evaluation and selection

The activities must contribute to an improved distribution / implementation of the results achieved in the JRP.

8. Examples of budgets

Example of JRP budget*

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	total
<u>Main Swiss applicant</u>				
Research funds	6,400	6,400	6,400	19,200
Salaries	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
Social security contributions	600	600	600	1,800
Total costs	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
<u>Co-applicant 1 from EE</u>				
Equipment	10,000	0	0	10,000
Research funds	25,000	23,000	16,000	64,000
Total costs	35,000	23,000	16,000	74,000
<u>Co-applicant 2 from EE</u>				
Equipment	5,000	0	0	5,000
Research funds	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000
Total costs	31,000	25,000	17,000	73,000
<u>Total budget</u>				
Main Swiss applicant	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
Co-applicant 1	35,000	23,000	16,000	74,000
Co-applicant 2	31,000	25,000	17,000	73,000
Total	76,000	58,000	43,000	177,000

* Divided into amounts per year as required for the electronic submission

Research costs: Here all funds needed to carry out the project, such as travel costs, room and board costs, field expenses, expendable items and unavoidable sundry expenses can be listed. Generally, the SNSF does not finance the acquisition or maintenance of expendable items that are part of the infrastructure of an institution (books, PCs, rental costs etc.).

9. Other Funding Opportunities

The following on-going initiatives also fund research collaborations in Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia. The main differences are outlined below. For more details on their funding conditions and deadlines, please refer to the respective websites.

Swiss Bilateral Science and Technology co-operation programme with Russia

Aim

The Federal Council approved a bilateral science and technology co-operation programme with different priority countries, among others Russia. During the 2013-2016 period, the SNSF will therefore launch one or two calls for JRPs with Russia. JRPs allow researchers from Switzerland and Russia to jointly investigate a specific question. These projects typically last three years and the corresponding grants cover, in Switzerland, similar costs as SNSF national projects (equipment, research funds, and salaries).

Contact info

SNSF, International Cooperation

E-mail: international@snf.ch

Phone: +41 31 308 22 22

Website:

<http://www.snf.ch/E/international/worldwide/bilateral-programmes-brics-countries/Pages/default.asp>

Scientific Exchange Programme between Switzerland and the New Member States of the European Union 2009 – 2016 (SCIEX-NMS^{CH})

Aim

The main goal of the programme is to establish scientific collaborations, which will 1) develop individual researchers' capacities (human capital); 2) foster scientific progress and innovation (scientific prospects); 3) establish or enhance networks between re-searchers (networking).

Budget

CHF 45 million for Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

Funding instruments

- Research fellowships
- Short term research visits

Contact info

Bundesprogramm Sciex-NMS^{ch}

Aude Pacton

Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities

Tel: +41 (0)31 306 60 58

E-mail: sciex@crus.ch

<http://www.crus.ch/information-programme/sciex-nms-ch.html>

Research cooperation as part of the Swiss EU-Enlargement contribution

Aim

Support research cooperation and enhance the knowledge base in selected research topics as well as know-how and technology transfer.

Budget

CHF 60 million (Bulgaria: CHF 4,0 million, Hungary: CHF 6,783 million, Lithuania: CHF 9,052 million, Poland: CHF 30,2 million, Romania: CHF 9.75 million)

Funding instruments

- Joint research projects with Swiss research institution
- Institutional partnerships

Contact info

<http://www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch>

Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP)

Aim

The Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP) aims at establishing and strengthening transition-relevant social research capacities that contribute to social, economic and institutional reforms in the individual countries as well as to their regional integration.

Annual budget

Expected as of the end of 2013 till 2016, 1,5 million for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Funding instruments

- Financing of social research projects
- Capacity building
- Regional cooperation and networking
- National Policy Dialogues

Contact info

www.rrpp-westernbalkans.net

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Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Scholars and Artists

The Swiss Government, through the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS), awards various postgraduate scholarships to foreign scholars and researchers:

- University scholarships (Swiss universities, Federal Institutes of Technology as well as Universities of Applied Sciences)
- Arts scholarships (schools of music and fine arts, only for a limited number of countries).

These scholarships provide graduates from all fields with the opportunity to pursue doctoral or postdoctoral research in Switzerland at one of the public funded university or recognized institution.

Contact info

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

Federal Commission for Scholarships

E-mail: sgs@sbfi.admin.ch

Website: <http://www.sbfi.admin.ch/themen/01366/01380/01715/index.html?lang=en>

20 March 2013