

Guidelines for the Lifetime Management of SPHN Projects

Version 22.12.2017. Adapted from the SNSF “Guidelines for the lifetime management of research projects (grants)” from July 2017.

1. Ruling

SPHN communicates the final decisions on applications to the corresponding applicants in the form of a ruling (in accordance with the Federal Act on Administrative Procedure). If a project was approved, the decision letter 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/conditions;
- Information on the right of appeal;
- Evaluation summary of the SPHN International Advisory Board.

2. Responsibilities

When approval is given, applications become projects or grants (in financial terms) and applicants become grantees. One person is responsible towards SPHN for each application or grant (henceforth named ‘corresponding grantee’). In the case of applications with only one applicant, he or she is responsible for the subsequent management of the grant.

In the case of applications with more than one applicant (consortium), each applicant accepts personal responsibility for the success of the project. However, only the person designated as the main applicant represents the consortium before SPHN. Such representation is legally binding. He or she becomes the responsible corresponding grantee for SPHN. SPHN 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 towards SPHN for using the funds received appropriately.

The consortium defines the cooperation and legal relationships between its members, particularly with regard to authorship rights, access to data and research results. If a new corresponding grantee is chosen within a consortium, the new and the current responsible person must jointly file a corresponding application with SPHN.

The corresponding grantee is responsible for the following tasks towards SPHN:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds;
- Submitting activity reports;
- Submitting financial reports;
- Informing SPHN about any changes affecting the grantees (e.g. moves, changes to employment terms, award of additional funds that will be used for the project);

- Coordination between the individual members of the consortium and management of the project, consolidation of scientific and financial reports;
- If applicable, transferring funds to the other grantees who are part of the consortium.

3. Getting started

3.1 Start of funding

The project must start no later than 12 months after the date of the approval letter. The start of the grant can be postponed for a further 12 months in response to a written request giving reasons. 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 corresponding grantee informs SPHN about the starting date when requesting the release of funds. SPHN confirms the release of the grant when the first instalment is transferred.

3.2 Release of funds

The corresponding grantee requests the release of the approved funds and the payment of every annual instalment to the Management Office (info@sphn.ch). The funds are paid in annual instalments in accordance with the ruling. Prior to the release of funds, a lay summary needs to be submitted in English and one of the national languages of Switzerland (see [SNSF example](#)). The lay summary will be published on the SPHN website. Furthermore, all necessary authorizations (for animal testing, research on humans, etc.) and additional documents must have been submitted to the Management Office. In addition, any conditions stated in the ruling must be met. If the grant is not administered by a grant administration office, it should be administered by the corresponding grantee or by another office that assumes this fiduciary role.

For the following years, the payment of instalments to the Management Office must be requested electronically by E-mail to info@sphn.ch. As a rule, the payment can be requested no earlier than 1 month before the start of the next funding year and is subject to approval of the annual reports.

3.3 Transferring funds to other grantees / project partners

Funds may only be transferred to researchers who are listed as grantees or project partners in the proposal that was submitted. Such grantees may open a project-specific account with their institution, if needed (generally with the grant administration office).

Fund transfers to all involved grantees or project partners are exempt from value-added tax. The corresponding grantee needs to make the payment.

4. Own contributions & overhead

As per Article 2.1 of the Funding Regulations, the matching funds principle applies to all financial contributions provided by SPHN. The corresponding applicant is responsible for ensuring that at the end of the project, all funds received from SPHN are matched by own contributions from the institutions involved in the project.

Pursuant to Article 3.3 of the Funding Regulations, no overheads shall be paid for SPHN funded projects.

5. Reports

5.1 Activity reports (to be submitted in English)

For projects lasting up to 12 months, a final activity report needs to be submitted at the end of the approved running time of the project. It covers its entire duration (final report). However, the duty to inform SPHN at any time during the project about any changes affecting the grant remains in place. Consortia have to submit an activity report which covers all sub-projects.

For projects lasting more than 12 months, an annual report needs to be submitted by 31 March of the following year. It must summarize the activities that took place in the previous calendar year. The first report is due in the year following the project start. The final activity report needs to be submitted at the end of the approved running time of the project. It covers its entire duration (final report). However, the duty to inform SPHN at any time during the project about any changes affecting the grant remains in place. Consortia have to submit an activity report which covers all sub-projects.

The activity report shall contain the following sections:

- a summary;
- the main achievements and results, detailing how these achievements and results compare against the milestones set in the proposal;
- the report should outline how the project has contributed towards reaching the overall aims of SPHN, including coordination with other SPHN activities / projects;
- progress towards the implementation of the principles outlined in the Ethical Framework for Responsible Data Processing within SPHN;
- next steps;
- information on published articles, talks at scientific conferences;
- a summary of the foregoing that is understandable to non-experts (lay summary).

5.2 Financial reports

All grantees / project partners who have received funds in instalments must annually submit a financial report. For minor expenses (travel), particularly in the case of project partners, the actual expenses can also be included in the corresponding grantee's report.

The corresponding grantee is responsible for the electronic submission to the Management Office (info@sphn.ch). The report is generally compiled by the grant administration office (financial department, fund administration or similar entity) of the grantee's institution and transmitted to the grantee for examination. The specific processes, e.g. for the transmission of receipts, are defined by the grant administration offices of the individual institutions.

In the case of consortia, the other grantees / project partners 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 corresponding grantee or to the latter's grant administration office. Hence, the corresponding grantee solely enters his/her project costs in his/her financial report along with the instalments transferred to the project partners. The corresponding grantee or the grant administration office compiles a financial overview of all sub-projects, reviews it and submits it along with all reports and receipts to SPHN electronically. For this reason, the other grantees / project partners should make their reports available in due time to the responsible grantee in electronic form.

Projects with a total budget of CHF 1 million and above shall have their final financial report audited by a third-party company before submission to SPHN.

The financial report must include the following information:

- the costs of the endeavours undertaken by the consortia;
- the use of SPHN funds;
- own contributions “in cash” and “in kind” (“Matching Funds”);
- the use of PHRT funds (if applicable);
- the use of second party (other competitive research grants) and third party (collaborations with industry) funds.

6. Budget items / total budget / eligible costs

The budget items mentioned in the rulings or in approvals issued during the running time of the grant and the corresponding amounts are regarded as approximations. Transfers between budget items are permissible without obtaining prior approval from SPHN, provided the total awarded amount is not exceeded (total budget). The total budget must be used in accordance with the approved project plan.

In exceptional cases SPHN may define binding budget items. In such cases, the amounts allocated to the individual items are binding, and it is not permissible to transfer amounts of money between budget items without prior written approval from SPHN.

Significant deviations in the implementation of the project and in the use of the awarded grant must be approved by SPHN.

As regards the costs covered by the grant (eligible costs), please refer to the SPHN call for proposals document.¹

In no circumstances does SPHN cover the following costs: Standard IT equipment incl. hardware and software, scientific literature, tools and aids, and objects comprising the usual basic equipment of an operational scientific facility. Expenses for postage, phone calls, photocopies, translations, etc., are also not eligible. In addition, outlays for rent, electricity, water, insurances, maintenance and service, service centres and repairs are not regarded as eligible costs.

7. Cost-neutral extensions

A request can be placed with SPHN for the cost-neutral extension of a grant or project. This may be necessary if the project has been delayed for unforeseeable reasons and money could therefore not be spent. For consortia, such extensions are only approved for the entire grant. In order to ensure that the extension will indeed be cost-neutral, the actual envisaged balance on the original end-date of the grant (incl. any additional personnel costs) must be provided.

¹ See Section 7 of the “First call for proposals in coordination with the ETH Strategic Focus Area «Personalized Health and Related Technologies» 15.06.2017; updated 29.06.2017” available on www.sphn.ch.

8. Repayment of remaining amounts

Upon expiry of the grant, grantees 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 SPHN; the corresponding grant number must be mentioned. Regarding consortia, unused funds have to be paid back to the corresponding grantee. Once an overview of all project contributions is available, he or she is responsible for any repayments to SPHN.

9. Additional costs

The costs of approved research work that exceed SPHN grant shall be covered by the grantees.

10. Rights concerning results and their publication

Before starting the project, the consortium is responsible for clarifying the rules of handling intellectual property rights such as inventions, software, and the publication of documents (see Guidelines set in the Ethical Framework for Responsible Data Processing [12.6.2017], p. 10).

Any publication containing results partially or fully financed by SPHN must acknowledge SPHN as the funding source. The following acknowledgement form shows the minimum requirement:

This project was supported by the Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN) initiative.

As SPHN projects are funded with public money, the resulting scientific publications should be publicly accessible and made available through Open Access.

Further, the public should be allowed appropriate access to information concerning the project results and overall scientific benefits. The Management Office should be informed prior to any press releases related to SPHN project activities (info@sphn.ch).