

Swiss Natural History Collections Network (SwissCollNet)

Guidelines for the Lifetime Management of SwissCollNet Projects

1. Ruling

SwissCollNet communicates the decisions on applications to the main-applicants in the form of a ruling (in accordance with the Federal Act on Administrative Procedure). If a project was awarded, the decision letter will contain the following information:

- Amount of the funds awarded;
- Duration of the grant;
- Any conditions that need to be met before the funds are transferred;
- If applicable, any further comments/conditions;
- Information on the right of appeal;

The ruling comes into effect, as soon as all conditions listed in the ruling are met and an application for release of funds has been submitted.

2. Responsibilities

When approval is given, applications become projects or grants (in financial terms) and applicants become grantees. One person (main-applicant) is responsible towards SwissCollNet for each application or grant (hereafter named 'main-grantee').

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. Such representation is legally binding. He or she becomes the responsible main-grantee for SwissCollNet. SwissCollNet addresses all communications concerning the grant to this person and as a general rule, all the awarded funds are transferred to this person's institution. 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 SwissCollNet for using the funds received appropriately.

Should the above-described procedure contravene local regulations, SwissCollNet can transfer awarded funds directly to institutions of co-grantees. This has to be clearly declared in the request for release of funds document while releasing the funds.

The consortium defines the cooperation and legal relationships between its members. If a new main-grantee is chosen within a consortium, the new and the current responsible person must jointly file a corresponding application with SwissCollNet.

The main-grantee is responsible for the following tasks towards SwissCollNet:

- Requesting the release of the allocated funds;
- Submitting the annual and final activity reports;
- Submitting the annual and final financial reports;

- Informing SwissCollNet 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 activity and financial reports;
- If applicable, transferring funds to the other grantees who are part of the consortium.

3. Getting started (grant opening procedure)

3.1 Opening of the grant, release of funds and project start

All conditions that were communicated with the approval letter (ruling) have to be met and requested documents have to be submitted to SwissCollNet within 30 days after the date of the approval letter. Furthermore, the project must start no later than 4 months after the date of the approval letter. The starting date must fall on the first day of a month.

The main-grantee is responsible for the opening of the grant and the release of funds. The opening of the grant and release of funds must be requested electronically (https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/swisscollnet_application).

The funds are paid in instalments (for details see Appendix). For the first instalment a maximal amount corresponding to 50% of the total amount granted by SwissCollNet can be requested for grants lasting more than 12 months. As a rule, the payment of further instalments can be requested after approval of the annual reports. Grants lasting up to 12 months may release the total granted funds in the first instalment.

A lay summary needs to be submitted in English and one of the national languages of Switzerland prior to the release of funds. The lay summary will be published on the SwissCollNet website.

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 main-grantee or by another office that assumes this fiduciary role. SwissCollNet confirms the release of the grant ahead of the transfer of the first instalment of funds.

3.2 Transferring funds to other grantees / project partners

Funds may only be transferred to persons who are listed as co-applicants or associated applicants 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).

Transfers of funds to all involved grantees are exempt from value-added tax. If payments are not made by SwissCollNet to co- and associated grantees, the main-grantee needs to make the payments.

4. Own contributions and overhead

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

5. Reports

5.1 Activity reports

(to be submitted in English at https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/swisscollnet_application)

For projects lasting up to 12 months, a final activity report needs to be submitted no later than two months after the end of the approved running time of the project. It covers its entire duration (final report). However, the duty to inform SwissCollNet 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 the 15th of February 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 not later than 2 months after the approved running time of the project. It covers its entire duration (final report). However, the duty to inform SwissCollNet 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 of the activities undertaken in the reporting year;
- 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 SwissCollNet;
- next steps.

5.2 Financial reports

For projects lasting up to 12 months, a final financial report needs to be submitted no later than two months after the end of the approved running time of the project.

All grantees who have received funds in instalments must annually submit a financial report.

The main-grantee is responsible for the electronic submission to https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/swisscollnet_application. 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.

In the case of consortia, the other grantees are responsible for the compilation of a financial report at their institution on the funds allocated to them and for the transmission of this report along with all receipts to the main-grantee or to the latter's grant administration office. The main-grantee or the grant administration office compiles a consolidated financial report for the whole consortium using the Excel sheet provided by the Scientific Unit of SwissCollNet, reviews it, and submits it along with all receipts to SwissCollNet electronically. For this reason, the other grantees should make their reports available in due time to the main grantee in electronic form.

The financial report must include the following information:

- the costs of the endeavours undertaken by the consortia;
- the use of SwissCollNet funds;
- own contributions 'in cash' and 'in kind' (Matching Funds);
- the use of third party (institution from the public or private sector) funds.

6. Total budget / eligible costs

The budget categories mentioned in the submitted budget and the corresponding amounts are regarded as approximations. However, the total budget must be used in accordance with the approved project plan.

Significant deviations in the implementation of the project and in the use of the awarded grant as well as the matching funds declared in the commitment letter of the contributing institutions must be approved by SwissCollNet.

As regards the costs covered by the grant (eligible costs), please refer to the 'SwissCollNet-Call for proposals' document.

In no circumstances does SwissCollNet 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 collection facility. Expenses for postage, phone calls, photocopies, translations, etc. are also not eligible. In addition, outlays for rent, electricity, water, insurances, maintenance and service and repairs are not regarded as eligible costs.

The SwissCollNet grants are not subject to value-added Tax (VAT) or other taxes and charges. However, research expenses are not excluded from VAT. Therefore, all costs budgeted (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) will be charged to the project, VAT included, unless the research institution is able to recover the VAT.

For individual purchases in another currency than CHF, the effective currency rate (date of payment) is to be used and a proof of this exchange rate is to be provided.

SwissCollNet shall retain the right to decide whether or not to accept certain costs. Costs deemed ineligible by SwissCollNet shall be reimbursed to the grant account by the host institution.

7. Repayment of remaining amounts

Upon expiry of the grant, grantees need to repay any unused funds no later than 30 days after approval of the final financial report, unless the funds in question amount to less than CHF 100.-. The amount is to be repaid to SwissCollNet; the corresponding grant number must be mentioned.

8. Additional costs

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

9. 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.

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

This project was supported by the Swiss Natural History Collections Network (SwissCollNet) initiative.

As SwissCollNet projects are funded with public money, the resulting data and 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 Scientific Unit of SwissCollNet should be informed prior to any press releases related to SwissCollNet project activities (swisscollnet@scnat.ch).

Appendix

The purpose of the appendix is to help you to administrate your grant. It contains a timetable and details about the opening of the grant and the release of funds. Indications on how to prepare activity and financial reports will follow in an additional document.

1. Timetable for grant opening, release of funds and reporting

The SwissCollNet reporting periods are as follows:

Grant opening and request for release of first instalment of funds	One month after receipt of the ruling letter at latest
Release of first instalment	After approval of the grant opening application
Release of second instalment	In April, after approval of the intermediary activity and financial report
Release of third instalment	In April, after approval of the intermediary activity and financial report
Annual intermediate activity report	15 th of February at latest
Annual intermediate financial report	15 th of February at latest
Final activity and financial report	2 months after the end of the project

2. Grant opening step by step

- Main grantee login to https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/swisscollnet_application;
- Fill in the online form, upload the requested documents and accept fund release agreements;
- Submit your grant opening application. You will get a confirmation e-mail, when successfully submitted.
- The submitted documents will be checked by SwissCollNet within 14 days.
- Funds will be transferred as requested after the approval of all conditions.

3. Compilation of requested documents

Lay summary

Download the template 'Lay summary SwissCollNet' from

https://swisscollnet.scnat.ch/en/implementation/grant_documents

Fill in the template. The lay summary has to be submitted in English and in one of the national languages of Switzerland.

Revised project description

If requested, revise your project description according to the specific conditions communicated in the ruling. You may modify the project description directly in your original document or download a new template form for project descriptions from

https://swisscollnet.scnat.ch/en/implementation/grant_documents

Submit the revised project description in a single pdf-file.

Revised budget

If requested, revise your budget according to the specific conditions communicated in the ruling. You may download the 'SwissCollNet final budget' template from https://swisscollnet.scnat.ch/en/implementation/grant_documents or directly modify your original budget file.

Fill in the budget template or revise your budget as follows:

- Use a separate worksheet for every institution involved in the project. If the project will be carried out only by a single institution, fill in only the worksheet main applicant. If several institutions are involved in the project, fill in a separate worksheet for every additional institution (co-applicant 1, co-applicant 2 etc.). Do not use separate worksheets for collaborations in one single institution.
- Fill in the name and institution of the applicant (main-, co-) in the respective worksheet as well as the title of the project.
- Fill in requested funds from SwissCollNet in the different cost categories (blue part) as indicated in the excel sheet.
- Fill in contributions by the institutions (matching funds in-kind or in cash or third-party funds) in the corresponding categories (green part) as indicated in the excel sheet.

Note: For salary costs covered by SwissCollNet or in-kind contributions, the maximal costs set by SwissCollNet must be respected (Table 1). In case the effective salary is higher than the maximal applicable costs, the difference has to be paid by the institution and cannot be considered as own contribution.

Table 1: maximum eligible salary rates for personnel (cost covered by SwissCollNet or in-kind contribution)

Function	Max costs applicable* [kCHF/y]
Leading position (professor, director, head, ...)	270
Senior collaborator with leading function (assistant professor, curator, collection manager, ...)	200
Scientific collaborator (researcher fellow, postdoc, curator, collection manager, ...)	170
Junior collaborator (research fellow, assistant collection manager, assistant curator, ...)	150
Senior technician (IT, taxidermist, collection technician, ...)	130
Junior technician (IT, taxidermist, collection technician, ...)	100
Doctoral student	60
Internship/temporary staff (IT, collection, civil service ...)	Effective costs only

* including effective salary + 20% social charges + 15% overhead services, infrastructures. To be calculated pro rata.

Release of funds SwissCollNet

Download the template 'Release of funds SwissCollNet' from https://swisscollnet.scnat.ch/en/implementation/grant_documents and fill in all necessary information as follows:

- Check with your partners of the project consortium (co- and associated grantees) whether you will administrate the project funds in your institution or whether some funds have to directly be transmitted by SwissCollNet to additional institutions of the consortium.
- Fill in the 'request for release of funds' for every institution, which is meant to receive funds directly from SwissCollNet (page 1 for institution of main-grantee; page 2 for institution of co-grantee, to be multiplied, if transfer of funds is requested for more than 1 co-institutions).
- Upload the compiled 'request for release of funds' in a single pdf-file.

Confirmation of fund release agreements

Check with your partners of the project consortium if all conditions listed in the ruling are met.

Confirm the conditions set by SwissCollNet to release the funds attributed to your project.

Submit your application for release of funds. As soon as the application has been approved, the first instalment will be transferred.