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Federal project contributions (PgB) pursuant to the Higher Education Act HEEdA

Guidelines for the 2021–2024 PgB programmes managed by swissuniversities

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Legal notice

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Abbreviations

HEdA	Higher Education Act
O-HEdA	Ordinance on the Higher Education Act
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SHK	Swiss Conference of Higher Education Institutions
SUC	Swiss University Conference (as of 1 January 2015 SHK)
CRUS	Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (as of 1 January 2015 swissuniversities)
KFH	Rectors' Conference of the Universities of Applied Sciences in Switzerland (as of 1 January 2015 swissuniversities)
COHEP	Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (as of 1 January 2015 swissuniversities)

1. Content and purpose

These guidelines have been prepared on the basis of the federal acts and decisions named in section 2. The guidelines provide information on the legal, financial, and organisational requirements for programmes and projects that receive federal funding, as defined in Article 59 HEdA, and that are administered and managed by swissuniversities.

The information is addressed to programme and project leaders as well as to the staff responsible for the annual project reporting at the higher education institutions (HEIs) and other institutions in the higher education sector eligible for federal funding (in the following: eligible institutions). The guidelines are designed to support practical implementation.

2. Federal acts and legal decisions

- Higher Education Act of 30 September 2011 (HEdA)
- Ordinance of 23 November 2016 on the Higher Education Act (O-HEdA)
- Decision of the SHK (Swiss Conference of Higher Education Institutions) of 18 December 2020 on federal project contributions 2021-2024.
- Performance agreements 2021–2024 for the P-1, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-9 and P-11 programmes between SERI and swissuniversities.
- Federal project contributions 2021–2024: SHK award concept of 23 November 2017.
- Federal project contributions under the HEdA: Higher education institutions and other institutions in the higher education sector eligible for contributions, SERI, 10 August 2020.
- Checklist Diversity Mainstreaming PgB 2021–2024, swissuniversities, 20 May 2019.

3. Higher education institutions and institutions in the higher education sector eligible for federal funding

All higher education institutions and other institutions in the higher education sector that are eligible to receive federal funding are listed in the SERI document “Projektgebundene Beiträge nach HFKG: Beitragsberechtigte Hochschulen und andere Institutionen des Hochschulbereichs” dated 10 August 2020.

3.1. Participation of non-eligible institutions

Institutions not eligible to receive federal funding may participate in projects as partners of eligible institutions. However, they must fully finance their activities via their own funds. In addition, their financial contributions must not be counted as institutional contributions in the reporting (see section 7.4.3).

For participation in projects, non-eligible partner institutions are subject to the same programme-specific provisions (deadlines, evaluation criteria for project submissions, and other requirements) as are eligible institutions.

Services provided by non-eligible partner institutions must be specified in the project proposal submitted by the eligible (partner) institution. Funding for services provided by non-eligible partners must be guaranteed at the time a project proposal is submitted. Services provided by non-eligible partners must be identified on the content report form (see section 9). The disclosure of services provided by partners who are not eligible to receive federal funding is optional in the financial report.

4. Outcomes and goals

The programmes pursue the objectives defined in the proposal approved by SHK. In addition, the strategic plan of swissuniversities requires that the issue of diversity be addressed in all programmes and projects. swissuniversities provides its Diversity Checklist as a guideline. The checklist serves as a tool for (self-)assessment and reflection on diversity in the context of the individual subject or theme. Depending on the project, different points of the checklist will have greater relevance. A programme's success is measured not only in relation to the objectives and indicators set out in the annex to the performance agreements between SERI and swissuniversities, but also with regard to diversity objectives and indicators.

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5. Programmes and programme coordinators at swissuniversities

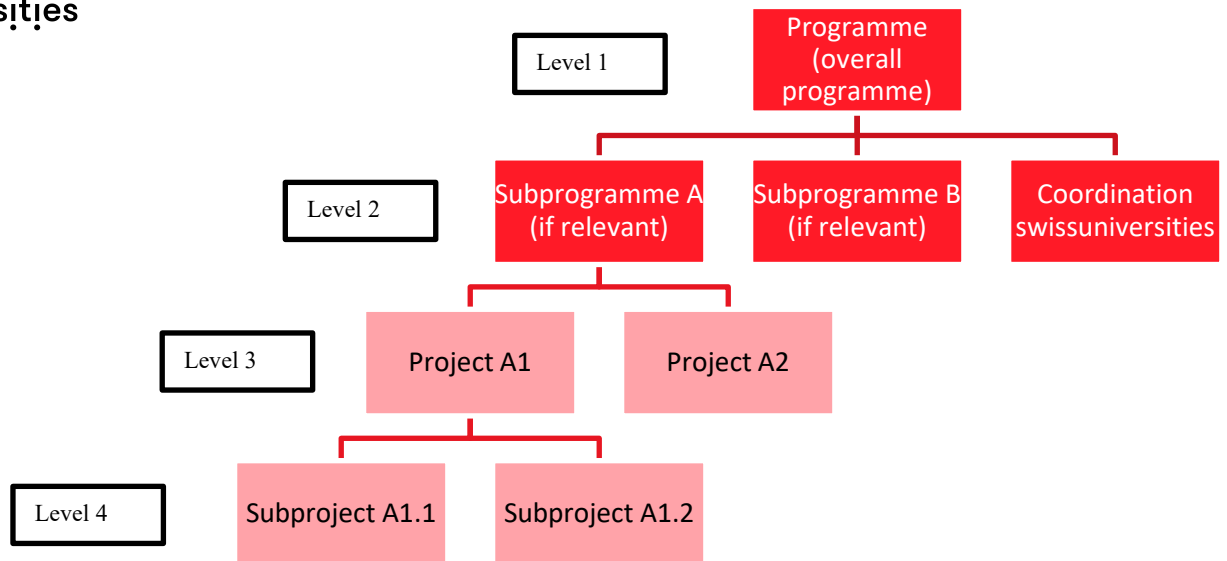
P-1	Promoting the mobility of doctoral students and further development of the 3rd cycle https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/promotion-of-young-talent/p-1-phd-programmes	Tristan Robert
P-5	Open Science https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/digitalisation/open-science-2021-2024	Aude Bax de Keating, Ariane Studer
P-6	SUDAC - swissuniversities development and cooperation network https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/entwicklung-und-zusammenarbeit/p-6-swissuniversities-development-and-cooperation-network-sudac	Clemens Tuor
P-7	Diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity in higher education development https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/equal-opportunities/p-7-equal-opportunity-and-university-development	Patricia Schmidiger, Noëmi Eglin
P-8	Strengthening digital skills in teaching https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/digitalisierung/digital-skills	Antoine Maret
P-9	Subject-specific education: consolidation of networks and development of career paths https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/subject-specific-education/p-9-development-of-the-subject-specific-didactics	Patricia Schmidiger
P-11	Pilot programmes to strengthen the dual competencies profile of young talent at UASAs and UTEs https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/promotion-of-young-talent/p-11-dual-competencies-profile	Stefanie Wyssenbach

6. Structure of the programmes

Because the individual programmes differ in structure, the number of hierarchical levels, roles, designations, and other aspects, an example structure is used in these guidelines. At the top is the programme name (overall programme), which corresponds to one of the programmes listed in section 5. The example structure is to be adapted to accommodate the actual circumstances of the individual programme.

Figure 1: Example programme structure

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7. Financial

7.1. Disbursement of federal grants to eligible institutions via swissuniversities

swissuniversities pays out the annual federal funds to the eligible institutions in two tranches, generally at the beginning and in the middle of the year, after swissuniversities has received the corresponding tranche payment from SERI. The amount of the first payment is generally 50 percent of the specified annual sum. The amount of the second payment depends on the annual report. As a rule, this amount corresponds to the remainder of the annual payment. In the event that the remaining sum is high, SERI reserves the right to reduce the amount of the second tranche.

7.2. Use of federal funding

Use of federal funding is restricted to those activities directly related to meeting the objectives of the programmes and their projects. Eligible institutions must reimburse unused funds to swissuniversities as soon as possible, but no later than 60 days after the end of a project and upon settling accounts.

7.3. Carryover of federal funding

Timeline for carrying over funds

- Federal funds that are not spent may be carried over to the next reporting year.

- As a rule, carryovers beyond the programme duration are not permitted. It is therefore advisable that all funds are used by the end of the programme period. SHK may grant exceptions to this rule in well-founded cases and upon explicit petition during the funding period.

All carryovers must be listed in the annual report, in accordance with section 9.

7.4. Institutional contributions

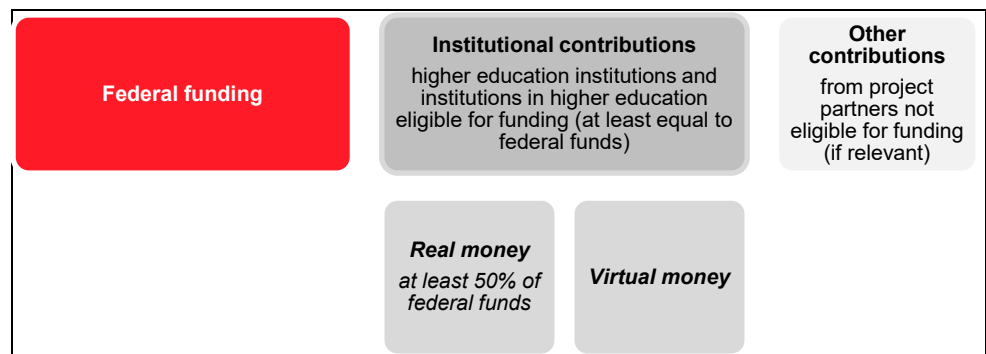
7.4.1. Scope

As a rule, and as stated in Article 49 O-HEdA, the Swiss Confederation pays out federal project contributions only if the eligible HEIs and other institutions in the higher education sector participating in the projects make an overall contribution per project that is at least equal to the federal contribution (matching-funds principle).

7.4.2. Types of institutional contributions

According to Article 49 O-HEdA, contributions from eligible institutions may take the form of cash or in-kind contributions (“real money” or “virtual money”). The amount of real money paid by an institution must be at least equal to 50% of the federal contribution.

Figure 3: Federal funding, institutional contributions, and contributions from project partners not eligible for federal funding



According to Article 50 O-HEdA, real money is the financing of project costs incurred by the project participant as a result of project participation in addition to normal current expenses. These include

- Staff costs, including social benefits;
- Material costs for equipment and facilities, operating materials, costs for the rental of purpose-specific premises, conference and travel expenses.

As stated in Article 49 O-HEdA, in-kind contributions (virtual money) may include expenses for existing staff resources, equipment and facilities, and operating materials if they are necessary for the project and if this is clearly documented.

Staff financed via national funding programmes (e.g. the SNSF) are considered in-kind contributions, as defined in the SHK provisions.

Examples of Real money and Virtual money

Real money	Virtual money
<p>Staff costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditures for project staff¹ 	<p>Staff costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead costs Services provided by project staff funded via national funding programmes (e.g. the SNSF). Expenditures for existing staff
<p>Material costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditures for external services Expenditures for rental of external equipment/facilities Travel costs and other expenses 	<p>Material costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditures for existing resources Expenditures for existing infrastructure

Decisions on what is real money and what is virtual money are made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion and in the responsibility of the funded programmes and projects or their responsible bodies. If necessary, a justification of this assessment of real money and virtual money must be submitted to SERI.

7.4.3. Legitimate expenses

All institutional contributions used to conduct those activities required to achieve the objectives of a programme and its projects are considered as cash or in-kind contributions (cf. section 7.2). However, this applies only to the contributions of the eligible institutions. Any contributions made by project partners who are not eligible for funding must not be included with the institutional contributions.

Expenses for staff may be charged on the basis of the effective cost rates or on the basis of imputed cost rates (according to the cost accounts of the institutions eligible for funding).

7.5. Reimbursing expenses

The relevant federal or cantonal expense regulations apply when the eligible institutions settle accounts.

7.6. Reduction of federal funding

In the event of a reduction in federal funding, the eligible institutions are entitled to reduce their own contribution by the same amount. In such cases, the project goals must be adjusted, upon consultation with swissuniversities and SERI, if required.

8. Communications

8.1. Communication modalities at programme level (overall programme)

8.1.1. Source

For the programmes listed in section 5 (overall programmes), swissuniversities bears sole responsibility for communications.

¹ Project staff are persons recruited or already employed specifically for project, with a role defined in the project function chart.

8.1.2. Corporate design

The programmes listed under section 5 must use the swissuniversities corporate design at the overall programme level, with no exception; institutions participating in these programmes must not use their own logo/corporate design.

8.1.3. Responsibilities

The programme leader is responsible for the content of the information and communication activities, in consultation with the Secretary General of swissuniversities.

Operational support for these communications is offered by the swissuniversities programme coordinators.

If required, the head of communications at swissuniversities provides support in an advisory capacity but must receive advance notice of the activities in all cases.

8.1.4. Media relations

Press releases are prepared by the programme leader in consultation with the relevant steering committee. The Secretary General of swissuniversities submits these proposals to the swissuniversities Executive Board for approval, and the head of communications at swissuniversities publishes the information on the standard communication channels.

8.1.5. Media enquiries

Media enquiries are received and coordinated by the head of communications at swissuniversities; the programme leader is responsible for content. The swissuniversities Secretary General (operational enquiries) or President (strategic enquiries) respond to enquiries.

8.1.6. Website

The programmes listed in section 5 are published on the swissuniversities website.

8.2. Communications at project, individual project, or subproject level

In the case of projects, individual projects, or subprojects within a programme (overall programme), the visual identity of the lead institution is used. In all communication activities, the role of swissuniversities must be communicated in text (descriptor) and, where appropriate, in images (use of the swissuniversities logo), as set out in the swissuniversities CD guidelines.

9. Reporting

9.1. Annual reporting

The annual report must include the following forms, all of which are provided by SERI:

- Content report form for project
- Content report form for programme (overall programme)
- Financial report form for project
- Financial report form for programme (overall programme)

The responsible swissuniversities programme coordinators send the forms to the responsible project leaders at the eligible institutions by the end of the year at the latest. The project leaders must complete the forms for each reporting year and return them to the swissuniversities programme coordinators by the end of February of the following year at the latest.

The reports must be submitted in electronic form (content report format PDF, financial report formats PDF and Excel). The eligible institutions are responsible for the accuracy of the data provided.

On the basis of the reports submitted, the swissuniversities programme coordinators compile the programme reports and sign them. swissuniversities is required to submit the annual reports to SERI at the latest by the end of March of the year following the reporting year.

9.2. Right of information and inspection

SERI is entitled to review the accounts of swissuniversities and the accounts of the institutions participating in the programmes. Upon request, swissuniversities and the eligible institutions must submit the relevant supporting documents for an audit to SERI or a third party commissioned by SERI.

9.3. Amendments and clarifications

The right to make changes and clarifications is reserved. In the event of any changes or clarifications, the swissuniversities programme coordinator must inform the participating institutions in advance.

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