



**OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES UNDER
THE POLISH - SWISS RESEARCH PROGRAMME
2009 - 2017**

THE INFORMATION PROCESSING CENTRE IN WARSAW

March 2011

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Introduction

The basis for the Operational Programme on the implementation of the Polish – Swiss Research Programme (the PSRP) has been established by the following documents:

- The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the President of the Council of the European Union and the Swiss Federal Council,
- The Framework Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Swiss Federal Council concerning the Implementation of the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme to Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the Enlarged European Union,
- The Conceptual Elements for the Polish-Swiss Research Programme, accepted as the Project outline,
- The Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme Management and Implementation System in Poland approved on 30 June 2008.

Annex 1 of the bilateral Framework Agreement between Switzerland and Poland words the objective of the Polish-Swiss Research Programme¹ as following: “To contribute to the knowledge based economy through the enhancement of the knowledge base and in particular through applied research as well as know-how and technology transfer”.

The Programme will provide grant assistance for Projects between CHF 300'000 and CHF 1 million (tentatively 60% of the total allocation) and Projects amounting between CHF 1 million and CHF 2 million (tentatively 40% of the total allocation) in order to keep the PSRP accessible for a broad variety of Beneficiaries.

The Joint Selection Committee is entitled to change the above percentage proportion in justified cases. Projects implemented under the PSRP will contribute to strengthening the research cooperation between Poland and Switzerland.

The PSRP will focus on Joint Research Projects (JRP).

JRP shall enable scientists from Poland, jointly with scientists from Switzerland, to undertake research activities on specific problems in 5 thematic areas. Research is carried out at the research facilities involved; however, reciprocal visits and participation in short stays in Switzerland for researchers from Poland are also possible.

This instrument shall contribute at most, towards establishing and deepening existing Polish-Swiss relations in research, strengthen the academic ties between Poland and Switzerland in science, technology and innovation through research collaboration.

Information Processing Centre (IPC) is acting as the Programme's Executing Agency and will be responsible for the proper process of the Programme implementation. The implementation and management of individual Projects under the Operational Programme will lie within the responsibility of the Beneficiaries.

¹ Objective 3 of the Focus Area „Research and Development“ in Annex 1 of the Framework Agreement

1. Thematic Focus²

JRP may be submitted in the following thematic areas:

- ICT,
- Energy – renewable energy sources,
- Nanotechnologies,
- Health,
- Environment.

- **ICT**

ICT theme is meant to share experiences and research results, identify future trends, discuss business and investment prospects and identify opportunities for international research collaboration in scope of the Future Internet Technologies which will be based on mobile, wireless and fixed broadband communications infrastructures, Radio Access and Spectrum, Converged and Optical Networks.

ICT focus area - grouped under priorities of technology pillars, integration of technologies, applications, ICT for content, creativity and personal development, ICT supporting businesses and industry - encompasses in particular research of:

- any medium to record information (magnetic disk/tape, optical disks (CD/DVD), flash memory etc. and arguably also paper records);
- technology for broadcasting information - radio, television;
- technology for communicating through voice and sound or images - microphone, camera, loudspeaker, telephone to cellular phones,
- computing hardware (PCs, servers, mainframes, networked storage),
- personal hardware comprising mobile phones, personal devices, MP3 players,
- the full gamut of application software from the smallest home-developed spreadsheet to the largest enterprise packages and online software services;
- the hardware and software needed to operate networks for transmission of information, again ranging from a home network to the largest global private networks operated by major commercial enterprises and, of course, the Internet.

- **Energy – renewable energy sources**

Renewable Energy Sources theme is meant to share experiences and research results, identify future trends, discuss business and investment prospects and identify opportunities for international research collaboration in scope of adapting the current energy system into a more sustainable one, less dependent on imported fuels and based on a diverse mix of energy sources, in particular renewables, energy carriers and non-polluting sources; enhancing energy efficiency, including by rationalising use and storage of energy; addressing the pressing challenges of security of supply and climate change, whilst increasing the competitiveness of Poland and Switzerland industries.

This focus area encompasses in particular research of:

- renewable electricity generation,
- renewable fuel production,
- renewable for heating and cooling.

² Research areas have been indicated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Detailed description of above research areas has been elaborated on the basis of Decision No 1982/2006/EC of The European Parliament and of The Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)

- **Nanotechnologies**

Nanotechnologies theme is meant to share experiences and research results, identify future trends, discuss business and investment prospects and identify opportunities for international research collaboration in scope of the study of phenomena and fine-tuning of materials at atomic, molecular and macromolecular scales, where properties differ significantly from those at a larger scale.

Nanotechnology focus encompasses in particular research of:

- potential risks to humans and environment, as well as test methods to generate them,
- exposures throughout the life cycle of nanomaterials or products containing them; and exposure assessment methods,
- measurement, characterization methods for nanomaterials, reference materials, and sampling and analytical methods to deal with exposures.

- **Health**

Health theme is meant to share experiences and research results, identify future trends and identify opportunities for international research collaboration in scope of translational research (translation of basic discoveries into clinical applications including scientific validation of experimental results), the development and validation of new therapies, methods for health promotion and prevention, including promotion of child health, healthy ageing, diagnostic tools and medical technologies, as well as sustainable and efficient healthcare systems.

In particular, health focus encompasses research within:

- biotechnology, generic tools and medical technologies for human health,
- translating research for human health,
- optimising the delivery of health care to citizens.

- **Environment**

Environmental theme is meant to share experiences and research results, identify future trends, discuss business and investment prospects and identify opportunities for international research collaboration in the range of research topics grouped particularly under following research priorities: climate change, pollution and risks, natural hazards, environmental technologies, earth observation and assessment tools.

Environment focus encompasses in particular research of:

- the sustainable management of the environment and its resources through increasing knowledge about the interactions between the climate, biosphere, ecosystems and human activities;
- the development of new technologies, tools and services that address global environmental issues.

Emphasis should be placed on prediction tools and technologies for monitoring, prevention, mitigation and adaptation to environmental pressures and risks.

2. Beneficiaries

The Beneficiaries of grant assistance under the PSRP are:

- public and non-public higher education institutions,
- research institutions³,
- non-governmental research organizations conducting scientific activity,
- other entities running activities in the area of research and development.

Art. 5 lit. a and b of the Federal Law on Research of 7 October 1983 defines the eligible institutions on the Swiss side. An applying Swiss institution⁴ needs to provide a validated statement of eligibility, as an attachment to the application form.

Please note that if an applying entity runs above all an economic activity, or if the proposed research Project is connected with an economic activity, aid can only be granted if in conformity with the European Commission (EC) Regulation no 800/2008 of 6 August 2008, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in application of Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty (General block exemption Regulation)⁵.

Polish and Swiss Beneficiaries will submit Projects in partnership.

3. Objective of the Programme

Supporting research and development sector as integral and essential part of human, social and economic cohesion and to contribute to the further development of research and development sector in Poland as well as to accelerate its integration into the international research area.

The PSRP supports the implementation of Joint Research Projects realized by Polish and Swiss researchers⁶. This goal may be achieved by making resources under the PSRP available for Beneficiaries to permit researchers from both countries to carry out joint research activities in research in the five thematic fields described above.

The indicators, which will be monitored within the projects realization are enumerated in the Appendix No 1.

4. Grant rates, advance payments and eligible costs

4.1.1. Grant rates

The Contribution in form of grants is up to 100% of total eligible costs of the single Project, where 85% is provided by the Swiss Contribution and 15% by the Polish state budget. Beneficiaries may receive grant assistance under the PSRP for smaller Projects in the amount from CHF 0,3 million up to CHF 1 million and for bigger Projects from CHF 1 million up to CHF 2 million.

The final eligibility date of single projects realization is June, 30th 2016.

The final eligibility date of the Programme realization is June, 30th 2017.

As a general rule, grant assistance under the PRSP shall be given as reimbursements of already incurred eligible costs, according to the disbursement schedule in the Grant Agreement.

3 On the Polish side this category encompasses research and development entities and scientific centres of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

4 Information on how to look for non-commercial Swiss partners can be found at the following website:

[http://www.erweiterungsbeitrag.admin.ch/de/Home/Projektauswahl/Nicht kommerzielle Partner in der Schweiz](http://www.erweiterungsbeitrag.admin.ch/de/Home/Projektauswahl/Nicht_kommerzielle_Partner_in_der_Schweiz).

5 OJ L of 9.8.2008 No 214

6 In the time of submission of the application, the role of Swiss partner in the Project shall be certified by the letter of intent. However, at the moment of signing the grant agreement under PSRP, it should be confirmed by the partnership agreement, determining the rights and duties of both contracting parties.

4.1.2 Advance payments

Advance payments for research Projects

The Beneficiary may apply to the IPC for advance payments under the following conditions:

- the concerned institution has to include the request for an advance payment in the application form;
- the advance payment does not exceed 10% of the overall Project budget;
- the advance payment does not exceed 50% of the current year's Project budget.

Advance payments for the Executing Agency

The advance payment for the Executing Agency is assured in the amount of 10% of total value of the Programme's Management Costs. The reimbursement of the effective costs will be carried out on a quarterly basis.

4.1.3. Eligible costs

In general, eligible expenses are those costs that are borne by Beneficiary and partners. Division of expenses among partners of the Project will be determined in the partnership agreement, however the maximum admissible participation of the Swiss partner in the total eligible expenses of the Project may not exceed 50% of the Swiss contribution to the PSRP. The beginning of the eligibility of costs is the date on which the Grant Agreement is signed by all parties.

- **DIRECT COSTS** (are all those eligible costs which can be attributed directly to the Project and are identified by the Beneficiary as such, in accordance with its accounting principles and its usual internal rules):
 - **Project management** (namely costs related to the salary of the persons responsible for managing the Project, the travel costs, office materials etc. which must relate to requirements of the Project / Implementation Agreement, NCU or national legislation, etc.). Such actual costs have to be well justified, assuring the cost effectiveness, and cannot exceed 10 % of total eligible Project costs.
 - **Personnel / staff:** personnel costs of researchers, technicians and other supporting staff are eligible if (cumulatively) a) costs are directly attributed to the implementation of the Project and occur entirely within the Beneficiaries b) costs are not exceeding usual salary rates at the institution involved and c) the staff involved in the Project implementation is identified personally/specifically. Eligible personal costs include salaries, social security contributions and all other statutory costs related to employment obligations.
 - **Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the Project:** as a general rule, actual travel and related subsistence costs relating to the Project may be considered as direct eligible costs, provided they comply with the beneficiary's usual practices.
 - **Instruments and equipment:** costs of equipment to the extent and for the period used for the research project. If such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life for the research project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the research project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practice, shall be considered eligible. The maximum percentage for the instruments and equipment equipped within the joint research projects is 30% of total project costs.
 - **Other operating costs:** other operating costs such as costs of materials, supplies and similar are eligible if incurred directly as a result of the joint research activity.
 - **Patents / external services:** costs of contractual research, technical knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at market prices as well as costs of consultancy / equivalent services used exclusively for the research activity. Fees for legal advice, notary fees and costs of technical and financial expertise are eligible if directly linked to the Project implementation.

- **Publicity costs:** These costs may include such costs as publication of joint scientific articles, etc. Costs of organization of seminars/conferences on the joint research project's subject are also included.
- **INDIRECT / OVERHEAD COSTS** (are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the Beneficiary as being directly attributed to the Project, but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the Project - e.g. building costs, heating, water/gas/electricity, insurance, communication/postage, general administrative/financial management etc.)
Indirect costs are eligible on the basis of a **flat rate** of 10% of its total direct eligible costs.

4.1.4. Not eligible costs

The following costs would not be eligible within Joint Research Projects:

- expenditures incurred before or after the dates of eligibility,
- interest on debt, purchase of land / real estate,
- fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation,
- purchase of second-hand equipment,
- activities supported from other resources,
- losses connected with currency exchange⁷,
- costs which exceed the usual market prices
- VAT, if it could be recoverable by the Beneficiary under national regulations.

5. Call for proposals

Documents for a call for proposals should be elaborated by the Executing Agency and approved by the Joint Selection Committee.

Information on the call for proposals under the PSRP shall be published by the Executing Agency.

There will be one call announced in the beginning of 2010.

Deadline for submitting Project applications should be of 3 months. At least 3 months before the launching of the call, an information event about the upcoming call should be undertaken in both countries.

The content of the call will be in line with general requirements and will contain the following information:

- types of eligible Projects,
- types of eligible costs,
- rules for financing,
- formal criteria,
- content-related selection criteria (approved by the Joint Selection Committee),
- timeline for particular stages of appraisal,
- requirements on every level of the call,
- available allocation,
- internet website address where Beneficiaries may find more information on the Programme,
- exemplary Grant Agreement,
- deadlines,
- eligible applicants,
- grant scheme/rate.

⁷ Division of a potential risk of exchange rate fluctuations between Polish and Swiss partner can be stipulated in the partnership agreement.

6. Application, appraisal and selection procedure

6.1. Application

Applications to the Operational Programme for the use of financial resources under the Polish – Swiss Research Programme will be submitted in Polish and English on the specific application form elaborated by the Executing Agency.

6.2. Appraisal

The organization of appraisal and selection procedure lies within a responsibility of the Executing Agency. The overall supervision over the appraisal and selection procedure is performed by the Intermediate Body (NCU).

The appraisal shall be carried out in two phases described below.

6.2.1. Formal appraisal

All submitted applications will be subject to registration performed by the Executing Agency. After registration, applications cannot be subject to any modifications or completions except those ones which are allowed to be inserted by the applicant in result of a written request issued by the Executing Agency during the process of formal verification.

Having received and registered an application - Project proposal – the Executing Agency performs its formal verification within maximum of 21 days. During the appraisal procedure in a form of screening, in case certain lacks or irregularities arise, the Executing Agency addresses to an applicant with request to correct errors and/or complete defects within 72 hours from an hour of a dispatch of the notification by the Executing Agency. Information about the above faults shall be transmitted by the Executing Agency to the applicant by e-mail and fax, on e-mail address and fax number given by the applicant in the application form. Documents sent by Executing Agency via fax or e-mail, should be at the same time provided in writing (by a registered letter).

The following errors/defects are subject to correction/ completion within 72-hour procedure:

- completeness of the application form (excluding strictly required signature/s of person/persons duly authorized to represent Beneficiary) – item 4;
- obvious arithmetic and linguistic mistakes – item 4;
- lack of copies of the application form in the amount requested in the application form user guide - item 6;
- lack of electronic version of the application form – item 7;
- inconsistency of electronic version of the application form with its hard copy (signature is not a subject to any changes) – item 8.

In order to qualify the content – related appraisal, Projects submitted under the Programme need to fulfil all the formal and eligibility criteria set out in the Table 1.

Table 1. Formal and eligibility criteria

Item		YES	NO
	Formal correctness		
1	Project has been submitted in time and place stipulated in the announcement on the call for proposals.		
2	Project has been prepared on valid application form.		
3	Project has been prepared in Polish and English on valid application form.		
4	Project is complete (all the fields to be filled-in have been completed) – with the reservation that signature/s of person/persons duly authorized is/are strictly required.		
5	Project has been signed by person/persons duly authorized to represent the applicant according to the rule of representation set out in National Court Register or other relevant document confirming the representation of the applicant.		
6	Project has been submitted in writing in 3 copies.		
7	Project has been submitted in 2 copies on electronic carriers (e.g. CD) in pdf. format at the same time.		
	Eligibility criteria		
8	Project is in line with objectives, thematic areas and catalogue of eligible activities within particular thematic area.		
9	Beneficiary belongs to the group of eligible applicants within particular thematic area.		
10	Requested grant amount complies with donor's rules referring to the Project type.		
11	Requested grant amount complies with donor's rules referring to level of financing with respect to sources of financing as well as state aid rules.		
12	Timeframe of the Project does not exceed final eligibility date, i.e. 30 June 2016.		
	Appendix		
13	Original or a duly certified copy (by person/-s authorized by the Beneficiary) of valid extract/transcript from the National Court Register or any other document of similar character confirming the legal status of Beneficiary in case of “non-governmental institutions” and “other entities...” and personal data of person/-s authorized to represent Beneficiary, issued no earlier than 6 months before the submission date of the Project proposal.		
14	All the documents required for a given thematic area and a type of the Project have been attached.		

Information on the results of formal appraisal (including appealing procedure) is communicated to the applicant in writing by the Executing Agency. Applications that fails to meet formal criteria will be returned to the applicant without unnecessary delay and be accompanied with reasoned opinion on the rejection of the application. One original version will remain in the Executive Agency.

6.2.2. Content-related appraisal

Projects that met formal criteria, are subject to content – related appraisal within maximum of 90 days of the close of a formal appraisal. The assessment is performed by the appraisal experts in the form of a peer review, in principle by international ones. However, in case the competence is available, the review is done by Polish and/or Swiss experts. The peer review experts are designated by the Executing Agency based on national and international peer databases and by Joint Selection Committee members. The appraisal is conducted in a score system, on the basis of provisions defined in the appraisal criteria, adopted by the Joint Selection Committee.

- The appraisal experts make a peer review of the application and recommend particular Projects for the financing. This is to be meant that the peer review done by experts verifies scientific quality of Projects (Current scientific interest and impact of the project. Experience and past performance of the applicants. Novelty of the proposed research approach and research questions) and their conformity with the overall Objective of the PSRP and the Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme. The following elements will namely be evaluated:
 - *Relevance*: is the topic of the research relevant for the specific field?
 - *Scientific quality*: does the design of the research meet current standards with regard to methodology and time frame? Is the research set-up targeted towards the achievement of its objectives?
 - *Project partners*: do the involved institutions have relevant experience in the specific field of research? Which strengths do they bring to the research project?
 - *Sustainability*: what are the chances that a stable, long-term partnership will arise from the project?
 - *Management/Budget*: The research plan is realistic, the project is feasible. The Project proposal includes a clearly defined research objective, research results and indicators to track the progress towards objectives. The project budget is adequate. Does the budget correspond to other, comparable projects? Do the institutions have access to other financing instruments? Can an efficient utilisation of the budget with regard to the object of research be assumed?

Based on conducted appraisal in the form of peer reviews, there is elaborated a list of Projects recommended for the financing, with scores and ranking. Recommendations should include proper justification. Recommended Projects along with accompanying documentation is submitted by the Executing Agency to the Joint Selection Committee. Members of the Joint Selection Committee shall carry out additional appraisal of the Joint Research Projects (in the form of an A-B-C classification), based on the peer review appraisal. The final grant decision on Projects is made by the Joint Selection Committee, based on the list of ranked Project applications and above-mentioned classifications made by the members of Joint Selection Committee.

On its basis, the Executing Agency prepares Grant Agreements and disbursement plans and signs them with the Beneficiaries.

List of Grant Agreements shall be sent by the Executing Agency to the NCU and published on the website of the Executing Agency.

6.2.3. Appealing procedure

One-instance-appealing procedure will be applied, for which the proper decisive institution is the Executing Agency. An applicant may appeal against the decision on refusal of the Project only with respect to the compliance with formal requirements.

An applicant cannot appeal against the decision of a content-related character.

Decision on the Project refusal should be justified by the Executing Agency in a clear and exhaustive matter. In order to examine an appeal, the Executing Agency once again thoroughly analyses the Project with regard to formal criteria, taking into account argumentation of an applicant included in the appeal and any new explanations/documents.

The appeal is due within 10 days, dated from the day of dispatch by the Executing Agency to an applicant of the notification about the Project refusal. After the end of this date appeals shall not be considered.

The appeal submitted to the Executing Agency in due time should be examined by it within 7 days upon the day of its arrival.

In case of positive decision on the appeal, the Project is a subject to content-related appraisal. After the Project has received sufficient number of scores in the content-related appraisal to qualify to the next stage, it shall be added to the recommended list.

7. Grant Agreement

Each Project is subject to a Grant Agreement which includes key dates/financial table for project implementation, constituting appendix to the Agreement⁸. Both documents set out the terms and conditions of grant assistance as well as the tasks and obligations of the contracting parties.

The Grant Agreement is signed by the Executing Agency and the Beneficiary.

8. Financial aspects

8.1. Budget

In order to implement Projects in the activities of the Operational Programme the total amount of CHF 21.2 million, resulting of CHF 18 million of the Swiss Contribution plus 15% of national co-financing by Poland's state budget amounting to CHF 3.2 million, will be granted.

In order to achieve the overall objective of the Operational Programme, the total amount up to CHF 19,1 million will be disbursed for Projects within the time of Programme implementation.

Table 2. Programme's budget in CHF mln.

	Swiss Contribution	Poland state budget	Total
Grant for Beneficiaries 90%	16.2	2.9	19.1
Management costs IPC 10%	1.8	0.3	2.1
Total	18.0	3.2	21.2

Resources disbursed under the Swiss Contribution and the State Budget will be transferred to the Executing Agency account quarterly.

8.2. State aid

Please note that if an applying eligible entity (see point 3) runs above all an economic activity, or if the proposed research Project is connected with an economic activity, aid can only be granted if in conformity with the European Commission (EC) Regulation no 800/2008 of 6 August 2008, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in application of Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty (General block exemption Regulation)⁹.

The Executing Agency is obliged to examine each Project on the basis of state aid rules.

8.3. VAT and other taxes and charges

Value added tax (VAT) shall be considered eligible expenditure only if it is genuinely and definitively borne by a Beneficiary and cannot be recoverable. This is to be meant that the expenditures related to VAT which by law are not recoupable from the Beneficiary's State, are eligible for financing. If VAT

⁸ Appropriate document will be available by the date of call for proposals.

⁹ Regulation no 800/2008 provide for the acceptability of aid for fundamental research, industrial research and experimental development.

is an eligible expense, the Executing Agency is obliged to apply provisions on the eligibility of the value added tax which refer to all thematic areas of the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme.

Other taxes and charges (in particular direct taxes and social security contributions on wages and salaries) which arise from financing the PSRP, do not constitute eligible expenditure, except when they are genuinely and definitely borne by the Beneficiary.

8.4. Double financing

- 1) Double financing means unlawful total or partial reimbursement of a given expense twice from public resources – the SPCP, community, national and/or other resources EEA Mechanism, EU funds etc.).
- 2) Double financing includes in particular:
 - a) reimbursement of the same expense under two different Projects financed from the resources of SPCP and other resources,
 - b) reimbursement of costs of VAT from the resources of the SPCP, and then recovery of this tax from the resources of the state budget on the basis of the Act of 11 March 2004 on the goods and services tax (Journal of Law No. 54, item 535, as amended),
 - c) receiving reimbursement from the resources of the SPCP for expenses which were earlier financed from preferential loan from public resources without paying back immediately the reimbursed part of this loan.

8.5. Disbursements under the PSRP

Transfer of the resources from the Swiss Contribution to the Executing Agency will be made on the basis of the Project Agreement concluded between SDC/SCO and NCU (Ministry of Regional Development) as well as Project Implementation Agreement signed between the Executing Agency and the NCU.

The grants will be pre-financed from the Polish state budget (Paying Authority), transferred from NCU and IPC to Beneficiary. On the basis of verified expenditures of the Beneficiary, IPC will request NCU for the refund. Subsequently, Paying Authority will request for the refunds from Swiss side.

The financial flow in the Operational Programme is shown in the Appendix No. 2 to the Operational Programme.

8.6. Reimbursements under the PSRP for Beneficiaries

The Project that is awarded grant assistance under the PSRP must be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Grant Agreement concluded between the Executing Agency and the Beneficiary. The grant rate stipulated in the Agreement will be given in CHF.

Reimbursement of incurred eligible costs will take place upon request for disbursement, which constitutes appendix to the Project interim report (quarterly). Such a report shall be submitted by the Beneficiary to the Executing Agency along with appendices.

While reimbursing payments under the PSRP, the Executive Agency will follow rules below:

1. Disbursements for Beneficiaries shall be made as reimbursements (with the exception of Projects which will receive advance payment of max. 10%; see point 4.1.2 for the conditions) of incurred eligible expenses, in accordance with Grant Agreements and the schedule of expenditures included in Project Implementation Plan.
2. All the eligible expenses that are to be reimbursed should be proven by the submission of the copy of the invoice or other accounting documents of equivalent probative value with confirmed receipt. Beneficiary will submit to the Executing Agency, no more than once every calendar quarter, Project interim report together with payment claim. Forms of Project interim reports shall be elaborated by Executing Agency. The Executing Agency, after positive verification of the report and documents certifying that eligible costs have been borne, will transfer resources to the

bank account designated by the Beneficiary. Detailed information on reimbursements made by the Executing Agency for the Project's implementation will be set out in the Grant Agreement. Final clearance of the Project will be made on the basis of completion report including last payment claim submitted to the Executing Agency.

3. Initial and final eligibility date of the expenses within the Project shall be fixed individually in the Grant Agreement. It will not be sooner than the day of the signature of the grant agreement. Final eligibility date will be no later than on 30 June 2016.
4. In case of suspected or actual irregularities occurred during disbursement of grants made by the Beneficiary, the Executing Agency, NCU or SDC/SCO may decide on inhibition/ suspension of further payments till the clarification of the case.

9. Implementation and Management System

9.1. Introduction

The scheme of the PSRP organization – an integral part of the Conceptual Elements for a Polish – Swiss Research Programme, Annex 1 - is presented in the Appendix No. 2 to this Operational Programme.

9.2. Institutional structure

9.2.1. National Coordination Unit - NCU

Ministry of Regional Development acts as the NCU. The NCU, has the overall responsibility of the Swiss Contribution, together with the Monitoring Committee. The NCU, acting as Intermediate Body for the PSRP, plans and organizes the process of the orientation and implementation of the above programme. It leads, based on *The Conceptual Elements for a Polish-Swiss Research Programme* (approved as the Project Outline), the development of a comprehensive programme document and final programme proposal to be submitted to Switzerland for the financing request. After consultation with the Ministry for Higher Education and Research and the Swiss side the NCU appoints an Executing Agency (operator) for the management of the Programme. At a later stage, the NCU supervises the Programme's implementation and ensures an efficient and correct use of the funds under the Contribution in accordance with the Framework Agreement.

The NCU designates the Polish members of the Joint Selection Committee. SDC/SCO designate the Swiss representatives of the Committee.

9.2.2. Executing Agency – EA

The Polish – Swiss Research Programme shall be managed by the Information Processing Centre (IPC) acting as the Executing Agency, appointed with the recommendation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. IPC in Warsaw is the legal entity subordinated to the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

IPC manages the Programme. Main management tasks encompass:

- preparation of the call,
- launching of the call,
- collecting of the applications,
- organizing the assessment and selection according to the defined procedures and structures,
- making contractual arrangements with the selected Project partners,
- providing reporting and payment claims to the NCU,
- providing consolidated reporting to the NCU,
- monitoring the Projects.

In particular, the Executing Agency shall:

- organize call for and collect Project proposals, review compliance with the requirements for Project proposals and assess the quality of applications submitted;
- submit Project proposals with appraisal reports to the NCU;
- sign Grant Agreements with Beneficiaries;
- supervise and steer the implementation of Projects in accordance with the Grant Agreements and carry out the necessary controls;
- check the invoices or the documents of equivalent value received from Beneficiaries, verify the authenticity and correctness of submitted documents as well as the eligibility of costs on payment claims;
- certify invoices or the documents of equivalent value and submit certified invoices or documents of equivalent value to the NCU or to the Paying Authority;
- report to the NCU on the progress of Programme's and Projects' implementation; Consolidated Interim Reports, Annual Reports and a Completion Report are to be submitted at the Programme level on the base of similar reports at the Project level;
- monitor if the Project audit has been performed before finishing of the project;
- check for irregularities and report them to the NCU;
- ensure storing of all relevant documents related to Projects implemented within the Polish – Swiss Research Programme for 10 years after the completion of the Programme;
- agree with Beneficiaries in writing justified amendments to the implementation of agreed Projects within the limits defined in the respective Grant Agreements;
- ensure the information and promotion campaign on the Polish – Swiss Research Programme.

The PSRP Secretariat - created within the structures of the IPC – will fulfil the aforementioned tasks.

Additionally, the Secretariat will support all activities of appraisal experts making peer reviews and the Joint Selection Committee.

9.2.3. Joint Selection Committee - JSC

The NCU designates the Polish members of the Joint Selection Committee. SDC/SCO designates the Swiss representatives of the Committee. The primary task of the Joint Selection Committee is to consider the results of the peer reviews, to select and to take the final decision on the Project proposals. Additionally the Joint Selection Committee will participate in the determining of Project selection criteria; it will be consulted in the conditions of the calls and in the organization of reviews and evaluations. Moreover its objective is to monitor the selection process, provide and receive general information on the development of the Programme, and identify additional measures.

The Joint Selection Committee is a scientific panel. It is constituted by 3 Polish and 3 Swiss members, including a Polish chair and a Swiss co-chair. Members are legitimated representatives of umbrella organizations of national research institutions and research authorities. NCU and SDC/SCO will have the possibility to participate as observers in the Joint Selection Committee.

9.2.4. Paying Authority - PA

Responsible for financial management of the resources under the Polish – Swiss Research Programme at the national level is the Paying Authority, which tasks are performed by the Ministry of Finance. The Paying Authority is responsible for ensuring appropriate financial control over the use of the Swiss Contribution on Programme level.

Furthermore, the Paying Authority ensures that the usual standards and procedures valid for public funds are applied in the management of the Swiss Contribution. It verifies their application by the NCU and the Executing Agency. The Paying Authority ensures that payments are made accordingly to the claims within the specified deadlines.

9.2.5. Audit Institution – AI

The external Audit Institution is to control the use of financial resources under the Swiss - Polish Cooperation Programme incl. Polish – Swiss Research Programme.

The audit reports are transmitted to the NCU. The competent authorities with the full support of the Government of the Republic of Poland shall investigate alleged cases of fraud or irregularity. Proven cases of fraud shall be prosecuted according to existing regulations.

9.2.6. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) / Swiss Contribution Office (SCO)

SDC/SCO has been appointed in the Conceptual Elements for a Polish – Swiss Research Program as the institutional partner on the Swiss side for NCU and other actors in the implementation and management system of the Polish – Swiss Research Programme.

Its function is to:

- administrate the Programme on the Swiss side,
- facilitate contacts, assure the liaison and the networking between partners,
- inform and give advice to partners on procedures and conditions of the Contribution,
- transmit official information and proposals to and from the Swiss authorities,
- organise, together with the NCU, missions of Swiss delegations,
- participate in meetings on the overall Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme,
- provide information to the general public on the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme and the Contribution,
- participate as observer in the Joint Selection Committee.

9.3. Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting systems are to control progress in the process of the PSRP implementation. Overall recommendations related to the monitoring of Projects implemented under the Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme are stipulated in Annex 2 to the Framework Agreement and Monitoring System of the Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme.

Reporting is one of the basic instruments used for monitoring of the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme, Polish – Swiss Research Programme and particular Projects in a permanent and sustainable manner. Responsibility for monitoring of the Programme and particular Projects' implementation progress has been entrusted to the institutions involved in the disbursement of the funds available under the Cooperation Programme, i.e. the Executing Agency (IPC) and the Intermediate Body (NCU).

The overall reporting scheme within the framework of the Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme is shown in the Appendix No. 4.

9.3.1. The monitoring and reporting scheme for the PSRP at the level of the EA

The IPC is responsible for elaboration of the interim, annual and final reports. On the basis of data received from the Beneficiaries (reports), the IPC will prepare consolidated reports and send them to the NCU.

The *Interim Reports* will be submitted along with payment claims quarterly. The Interim Reports are linked to the reimbursement requests elaborated by the Paying Authority on the basis of the information contented in the payment claims. The Interim Reports should cover the information on physical and financial progress of the Programme, a comparison of actual with planned expenses, an update on progress status while confirming financing. The Interim Reports shall be transmitted to the Swiss side no later than 3 months after expiry of the given reporting period.

The *Annual Reports* describe the progress of the Programme and include summary data on financial progress for the reporting year as well as cumulative data to the cut-off date of the report. The Annual Reports are submitted to the Swiss side no later than on 31st March after expiry of the given annual reporting period. The Annual Project reports are not however linked to the reimbursement requests.

The *Completion Report* is submitted to NCU together with the last Interim Report and Final Financial Report constituting the base for the final reimbursement. The Final Financial Report covers the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Final Financial Audit carried out for the Programme at its completion.

The above mentioned reports are the subject to verification by the NCU and subsequently submitted to the Swiss side.

9.3.2. The monitoring scheme for the PSRP at the level of the Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries implementing Projects financed by the PSRP, will be obliged to provide the Executive Agency with the following reports on the Project implementation:

Interim report on the project implementation prepared by the Beneficiary for the IPC will consist of:

- a) a part related to progress in the project implementation:**
 - information on financial and actual progress in the project implementation,
 - comparative study of actual and planned expenditures,
 - comparison of actual and planned progress,
 - explanation of possible deviations from Project Implementation Plan,
 - information on the progress in reaching indicators of the product.

- b) a section containing payment claim** on the basis of which (after report approval) the IPC will reimburse incurred eligible expenditures in the reporting quarter. Beneficiary does not need to apply for the payment at the end of each quarter, however, he cannot request for reimbursement more often than once every quarter.

Interim Report on the Project's implementation should embrace the period of calendar quarter. It must be submitted to the IPC no later than on the 21st day of the month following calendar quarter.

The Beneficiary is informed electronically about the approval of the interim report and reimbursement of resources within the Polish – Swiss Research Programme. In the case of mistakes occurred in the report, the Executive Agency requests for correction or the clarification of the actual situation in the fixed date.

Annual report includes information on content – related implementation of the Project, in particular:

- concise information about financial progress in the reporting year,
- accumulated data (financial) for the day of the conclusion of the reporting period,
- comparative study of actual and planned expenditures,
- comparison of actual and planned progress,
- description of possible effects of deviations for the Project,
- analysis of the reasons of deviations,
- proposed action plan in case of deviations,
- information on the progress in reaching indicators of the product and result,
- risk analysis and risk management (feasibility of assumptions, possibility of occurrence of risk of a new sort).

Annual report must be submitted to the IPC no later than on the 21st January of the following year in relation to the reporting year, due to the fact that the IPC is bound to send collective report on the Programme's implementation to the NCU till 31st March.

If the Beneficiary has submitted the Project's completion report up to the 1st of January of the next year, in that case the Beneficiary does not need to submit the annual report.

The Beneficiary is informed electronically about the approval of the annual report and reimbursement of resources within the PSRP. In case of mistakes occurred in the report, the IPC requests for correction or the clarification of the actual situation in the fixed date.

Completion report should include:

- certification that the Project was implemented in accordance with specific criteria, basing on which financing was granted;
- information on the holistic result of the Project in relation to the primary plan;
- information on:
 - reaching indicators of the product and result,
 - Project's sustainability,
 - most important knowledge acquired,
 - Project's follow-up;
- last payment claim.

Completion report must be submitted to the IPC no later than on the 21st day of the month after conclusion of the Project. In case of mistakes occurred in the report, IPC requests for correction or the clarification of the actual situation in the fixed date.

After the approval of the completion report by the Executive Agency and the NCU, last payment for the given Project is being disbursed.

9.4. Audit and financial control at Project level

The certified external audit organisation – (bodies from outside the public finance sector dealing with audits), will carry out Interim Financial Audit of the Research Projects.

As a rule, all Joint Research Projects shall be audited. The share of Joint Research Projects to be audited may be reduced to not less than 80 % of them because of lack of funds available according to Article 3.13 of the PSRP Agreement as result of funding remuneration of the members of the Joint Selection Committee as referred to in Art. 3.13 of the PSRP Agreement.

The Audit organizations shall perform audit in accordance with the terms of reference and International Audit Standards (IAS). In doing so, it shall verify the correct use of funds, make recommendations to strengthen the control system and report any actual or alleged fraud or irregularity. Related conclusions and recommendations shall be transmitted to IPC, the NCU and through it, to the Swiss Contribution Office.

The audit of the Project co-financed by the PSRP shall be carried out by an audit company procured by the Executing Agency. In particular, it is necessary to collect all the documents required to the Project implementation and to store them for 10 years after completing Project so that it would be possible to:

- compare amount under the PSRP with records of particular expenditure and originals of documents confirming it,
- check the accuracy of eligible expenses on the basis of the representative sample of approved activities.

Relevant documents must be stored in strictly defined place, secured from potential destruction, and in the right order.

10. Promotion

Promotional activities within the PSRP will be carried out by the IPC and will contribute to increase of a wide range of recipients' awareness of the financing possibilities available in activities under the Programme. Among the promotional activities carried out by IPC there will be information actions issued in media about the possibilities of the use of resources within the Programme, deadlines for submitting applications and about approved Projects together with financing sources.

Before launching the call for proposal, an intensive promotion campaign, supported by appropriate informative documents, shall be carried out in Poland and in Switzerland in order to make all potential applicants aware of the opportunities and conditions of the Programme. In Poland the campaign shall be organized by the IPC and the NCU. In Switzerland, it will be organized by an organization representing the Swiss research institutions.

Moreover, each Beneficiary of the Polish – Swiss Research Programme shall be obliged to promote the Programme according to the information and promotion plan described in the application form. The promotion plan must follow the Guidelines on Information and Promotion of the Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme.

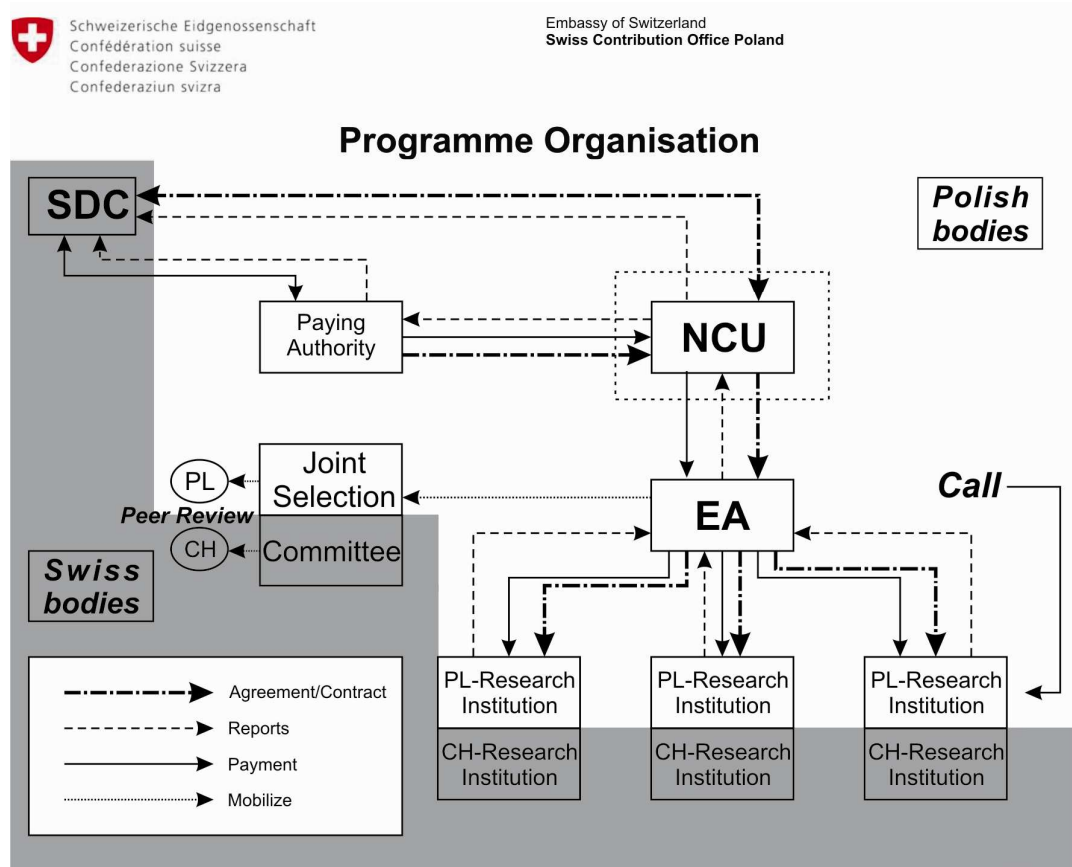
Appendix No. 1

Catalogue of monitoring indicators for the Beneficiaries of Polish – Swiss Research Programme

Indicators of the product Name of indicator	Indicator's measurement unit
Number of researchers from Poland participating in the Project	Persons
Number of researchers from Switzerland participating in the Project	Persons
Number of women among Project participants	Persons
Number of scientific research within the Project	Units
Number of purchased scientific - research equipment for scientific research	Units
Number of seminars organized within the Project	Units
Number of workshops organized within the Project	Units
Number of conference, seminar, workshop participants	Persons
Number of speakers participating in conference, seminar, workshop	Persons
Number of women among speakers, lecturers at conference, seminar, workshop	Persons
Number of presentations, lectures during conference, seminar, workshop	Units
Number of all joint scientific publications	Units
Number of joint publications in scientific magazines of international importance informing about results of research within the Project	Units
Number of letters of intent concerning the implementation of new joint scientific Projects	Units
Number of conference reports	Units
Number of submitted patent applications related to the Project's implementation	Units
Number of Projects submitted jointly by the team of researchers, being continuation of the Project	Units
Number of post-conference materials that were elaborated and made available	Units
Number of certificates on the completion of seminar, workshop	Units

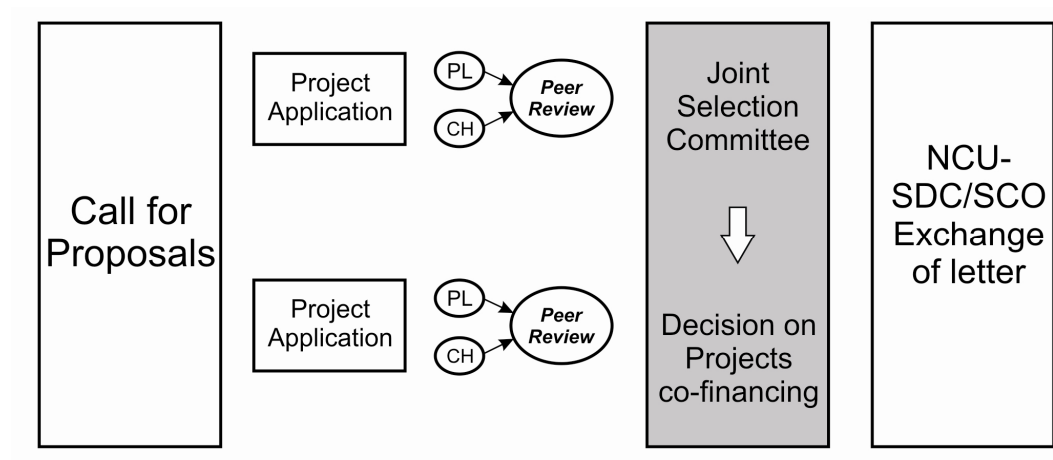
Appendix No. 2

Organization of the Polish – Swiss Research Programme



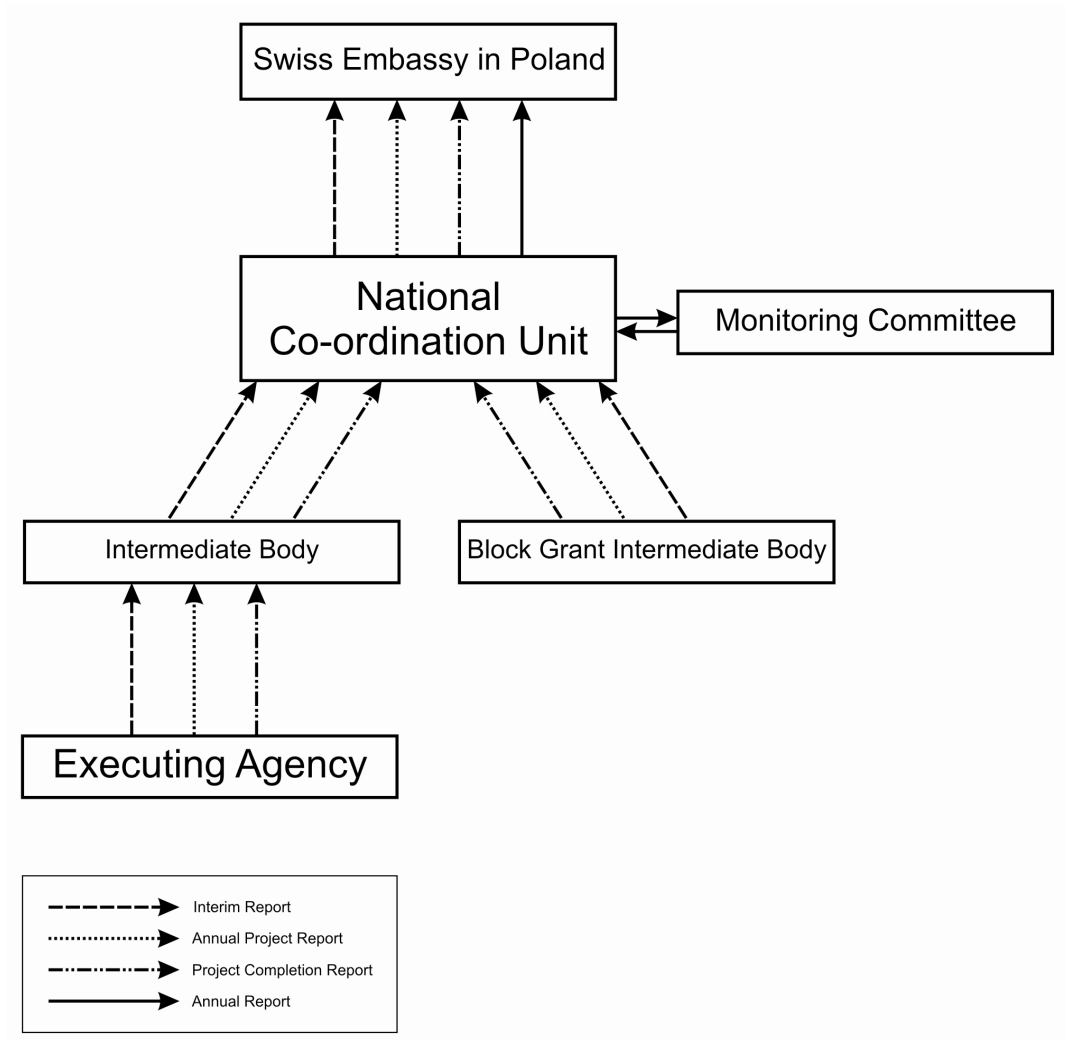
Appendix No. 3

Selection procedure



Appendix No. 4

The overall reporting scheme within the framework of the Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme



Appendix No. 5

List of abbreviations

AI - Audit Institution

EA - Executing Agency

EC - European Commission

IAS - International Audit Standards

IP - Institutional Partnership

IPC - Information Processing Centre

JRP - Joint Research Projects

MC - Monitoring Committee

NCU - National Coordination Unit

PA - Paying Authority

PSRP - Polish – Swiss Research Programme

SCO - Swiss Contribution Office

SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SPCP - Swiss - Polish Cooperation Programme

VAT - Value added tax