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Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA)

of 14 December 2012 (Status as of 15 April 2022)

*The Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation,
based on Article 64 paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Federal Constitution¹,
and having considered the Federal Council Dispatch of 9 November 2011²,
decrees:*

Chapter 1 General Provisions

Art. 1 Purpose

With this Act, the Confederation aims to:

- a. encourage scientific research;
- b. encourage science-based innovation;
- c. support the analysis and exploitation of research results;
- d. ensure cooperation between research bodies;
- e. ensure the economical and effective use of federal funding for scientific research and science-based innovation.

Art. 2 Definitions

In this Act:

- a. *scientific research (research)* means the method-based search for new knowledge; it covers in particular:
 1. *basic research*: research, the main goal of which is to gain knowledge,
 2. *applied research*: research, the main goal of which is to contribute solutions to practical problems;

AS 2013 4425

¹ SR 101

² BBl 2011 8827

- b. *science-based innovation (innovation)* means the development of new products, methods, processes and services in industry and society through research, particularly applied research and the exploitation of its results.

Art. 3 Scope of application

This Act applies to research bodies that use federal funding for research and innovation.

Art. 4 Research bodies

Pursuant to this Act, research bodies are:

- a. the following research funding institutions:
1. the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF),
 2. the association of the Swiss academies, which comprise:
 - the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences (SCNAT)
 - the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS)
 - the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS)
 - the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW);
- b.³ the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse) under the Federal Act of 17 June 2016⁴ on the Swiss Innovation Agency;
- c. the following higher education research centres:
1. the two federal institutes of technology and research institutes within the Federal Institutes of Technology Domain,
 2. higher education institutions and other institutions within the higher education sector that are accredited under the Federal Act of 30 September 2011⁵ on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector (HEdA),
 3. research facilities of national importance which receive funding from the Confederation under this Act (Art. 15);
- d. the Federal Administration, insofar as it:
1. conducts policy research for the fulfilment of its remit, or
 2. carries out activities to promote research and innovation.

Art. 5 Non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector

Pursuant to this Act, non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector are defined as institutions with public or private funding bodies which are not research bodies under Article 4, whose aim is to conduct research activities and which meet the following requirements:

³ Amended by Annex No 2 of the FA of 17 June 2016 on the Swiss Innovation Agency, in force since 1 Jan. 2018 (AS 2016 4259, 2017 131; BBl 2015 9487).

⁴ SR 420.2

⁵ SR 414.20

- a. the funding bodies and owners of the institution do not gain pecuniary advantage from its research activities;
- b. the level and quality of the research is comparable to that of research carried out by higher education research centres.

Art. 6 Principles and missions

¹ When planning federally funded activities, research bodies shall take the following into account:

- a. the freedom of research, the scientific quality of research and innovation, and the variety of scientific opinions and methods;
- b. the freedom of teaching and the close relationship between teaching and research;
- c. scientific integrity and good scientific practice.

² When fulfilling their tasks, they encourage:

- a. the career development of promising young researchers;
- b. equal opportunities and true gender equality between men and women.

³ Furthermore, when fulfilling their tasks, they take account of:

- a. the goals of the sustainable development of society, the economy and the environment;
- b. international collaboration undertaken by other research bodies and the Confederation.

⁴ When promoting innovation they are attentive to their contribution to competitiveness, value creation and employment in Switzerland.

Chapter 2 Promotion

Section 1 The Confederation's Tasks and Competences

Art. 7 Tasks

¹ The Confederation shall promote research and innovation pursuant to this Act and other specific legislation by:

- a. supporting the two federal institutes of technology and the research institutes within the Federal Institutes of Technology Domain;
- b. granting financial contributions under the HEdA⁶;
- c. supporting research funding institutions;
- d. supporting research facilities of national importance;

⁶ SR 414.20

- e. its own policy research, including setting up and operating federal research institutes;
- f.⁷ managing Innosuisse and other innovation support measures;
- g.⁸ international cooperation in research and innovation.

² The Confederation may support the creation of a Swiss Innovation Park in order to secure Switzerland's position as a location for research and innovation.

³ The Federal Council may give the task of implementing topic-specific funding programmes to research funding institutions and to the Innosuisse.⁹

⁴ It may delegate international cooperation tasks to research funding institutions and Innosuisse, when their specific competencies are required in order to carry out these tasks.¹⁰

Art. 8 Service level agreements

¹ The Federal Council may draw up service level agreements with non-governmental research bodies and other beneficiaries specified in this Act.

² It may delegate these competences to the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) or to the competent administrative unit.

Section 2 **Tasks, Promotion Principles and Contributions of the Research Funding Institutions**

Art. 9 Tasks and promotion principles

¹ The research funding institutions perform tasks that, in practice, need to be carried out within the scope of scientific self-governance.

² They promote research which does not directly serve commercial purposes.

³ They promote research in accordance with their own statutes and regulations. These require the approval of the Federal Council, insofar as they cover activities for which federal funding is used. The research funding institutions may delegate the task of issuing implementing provisions of minor importance to the statutes and regulations requiring approval to subsidiary bodies. These provision do not require approval.¹¹

⁷ Amended by Annex No 2 of the FA of 17 June 2016 on the Swiss Innovation Agency, in force since 1 Jan. 2018 (AS 2016 4259, 2017 131; BBl 2015 9487).

⁸ Amended by Annex No 2 of the FA of 17 June 2016 on the Swiss Innovation Agency, in force since 1 Jan. 2018 (AS 2016 4259, 2017 131; BBl 2015 9487).

⁹ Amended by No II of the FA of 30 Sept. 2016, in force since 1 Jan. 2018 (AS 2017 163; BBl 2016 3089).

¹⁰ Amended by Annex No 2 of the FA of 17 June 2016 on the Swiss Innovation Agency, in force since 1 Jan. 2018 (AS 2016 4259, 2017 131; BBl 2015 9487).

¹¹ Amended by No I of the FA of 30 Sept. 2016, in force since 1 Feb. 2017 (AS 2017 163; BBl 2016 3089).

⁴ The research funding institutions place particular emphasis on the promotion of basic research.

⁵ They promote research in non-commercial research institutes outside the higher education sector according to the following requirements:

- a. the scientific independence of the persons in charge of the implementation of research is ensured;
- b. the research serves the education and training of young researchers;
- c. the results will be made available to the scientific public.

Art. 10 Swiss National Science Foundation

¹ The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is the Confederation's funding body for research in all academic disciplines that are represented at a higher education research centre.

² It uses the contributions granted by the Confederation for, in particular:

- a. research funding within the framework of the research instruments that it has set up;
- b. funding programmes and networked research projects at national and international level that it has decided to participate in;
- c. implementing national funding programmes which have been approved and commissioned by the Federal Council, particularly the National Research Programmes and the National Centres of Competence in Research;
- d. supporting Switzerland's participation in international programmes which have been approved and commissioned by the Federal Council;
- e. supporting measures for the evaluation and exploitation of results of research which it has encouraged.

³ Within its remit and responsibilities, it decides on suitable instruments and the type of funding. In so doing, it focuses on the funding of:

- a. excellent research projects;
- b. highly qualified young researchers;
- c. research infrastructures which serve the development of fields of expertise in Switzerland and which are not within the remit of the higher education research centres or the Confederation;
- d. international research cooperation in accordance with the Confederation's relevant goals and measures.

⁴ In the context of its support for higher education research centres and non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector, it pays contributions in order to compensate for indirect research costs (overheads) which are incurred. The Federal Council regulates the principles for calculating the contributions.