

## CFS AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES CHECKLIST (version 2, 27.03.2025)

Under Article 4.1 of the contractual agreement concluded between the SERI and the Swiss research institution (hereinafter referred to as SERI funded partner), all SERI funded partners that request a total financial contribution of CHF 500'000 or more (including indirect costs) have to submit an audit certificate covering the entire project period together with the final financial report. The audit certificate has to be carried out by an external licensed audit expert (in French: Expert-réviseur agréé / in German: zugelassene/r Revisionsexperte/in / in Italian: Perito revisore abilitato). For public institutions, this may also be done by the competent financial control unit. In the following, the person carrying out the audit is referred to as the auditor.

**The following numbered listing corresponds to all the audit procedures auditors must perform in order to confirm the Standard Factual Findings.**

If an affiliated entity to the SERI funded partner exceeds the threshold of CHF 500'000 (including indirect costs), the SERI funded partner must submit a separate audit certificate to the SERI for the affiliated entity. If the certificate therefore is made for an affiliate entity, any reference to the 'SERI funded partner' is to be considered as a reference to the affiliate entity.

The auditor must assess the result of each Standard Factual Finding using three options: "C", "E" and "N.A."

- **"C"** stands for **CONFIRMED** and means that the auditor can confirm the Standard Factual Finding and so there is no exception to be reported.
- **"E"** stands for **EXCEPTION** and means the auditor carried out the procedures but cannot confirm the Standard Factual Finding, or that the auditor was not able to carry out a specific procedure (e.g. because it was impossible to reconcile key information or key data were unavailable). Declaring an EXCEPTION does not automatically implicate that costs will be qualified as ineligible by the SERI.
- **"N.A."** stands for **NOT APPLICABLE** and means that the finding did not have to be examined by the auditor and the related procedure(s) did not have to be carried out. The reasons behind the non-applicability of a certain finding must be obvious. For example, factual findings do not have to be checked in categories in which no costs were incurred.

### Useful links:

[EU Grants – AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement – EU Funding Programmes 2021-2027 \(published by the European Commission\)](#)

[Horizon Europe – Guidelines for Financial Reporting](#)

## A: PERSONNEL COSTS

(incl.: A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons, A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries)

The auditor draws a sample of persons whose costs were declared in the financial report to carry out the procedures indicated in the consecutive points of section A. The sample should be selected randomly so it is representative. Full coverage is required if there are fewer than 5 people declaring costs (including employees, natural persons working under a direct contract and seconded persons, as well as SME owners and natural person beneficiaries); otherwise, the sample should have a minimum of 5 people, or 10% of the total, whichever is higher.

The auditor sampled \_\_\_\_\_ people out of the total of \_\_\_\_\_ people.

---

For persons included in the sample and working under an employment contract or equivalent agreement:

To check and confirm the following Standard Factual Findings, the SERI funded partner must provide the auditor with the following information/documents:

- a list of all the persons included in the sample indicating the period during which they worked for the action, their position (classification or category) and type of contract;
- the payslips of the employees included in the sample;
- reconciliation of the personnel costs declared in the financial report with the accounting system (project accounting and general ledger) and payroll system;
- information concerning the employment status and employment conditions of personnel included in the sample, in particular their employment contracts or equivalent;
- the SERI funded partner's usual policy regarding payroll matters (e.g. salary policy, overtime policy and variable pay);
- applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security;
- any other documents that support the personnel costs declared. The auditor also verified the eligibility of all components of the retribution (see Art. 6 of the Grant Agreement) and recalculated the personnel costs for employees included in the sample.

**1) The employees were directly employed by the SERI funded partner in accordance with its national legislation; were under the SERI funded partner's sole technical supervision and responsibility; and were remunerated in accordance with the SERI funded partner's usual practices.**

☐ Confirmed   ☐ Exception   ☐ Not Applicable

**2) Personnel costs were recorded in the SERI funded partner's accounts/payroll system.**

☐ Confirmed   ☐ Exception   ☐ Not Applicable



- 3) **Costs were adequately supported and reconciled with the accounts and payroll records.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 4) **Working hours are documented using timesheets showing the actual number of hours a given person has worked on the project.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 5) **Timesheets are manually or electronically signed at least monthly by the employee and its supervisor or employer.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 6) **Working hours are documented using a declaration on exclusive work for the action stating the fixed work-time percentage a given person has worked on the project.<sup>1</sup>**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 7) **The declaration on exclusive work for the action is signed, either electronically or manually, by the employee's supervisor.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 8) **In the declaration on exclusive work for the action leave incurred as an actual cost (short-term sick leave and additional non-insured parental leave) and leave reimbursed by social security scheme or private insurance (long-term sick leave, leave due to accident, parental leave, military leave) have been declared and proved with HR records.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 9) **There were no discrepancies between the personnel costs charged to the action and the costs recalculated by the auditor.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 10) **Variable complements (e.g. bonuses) were paid based on objective conditions set out, at least, in the internal rules of the SERI funded partner.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

---

<sup>1</sup> Not only the template for declaration on exclusive work for the action provided on the [SERI homepage](#) is recognized as a declaration on exclusive work for the action, but also any extract from the SERI funded partners' accounting system showing the same level of detail as the [SERI template for the declaration on exclusive work for the action](#) (e.g. regarding name of the person, percentage worked in a specific month etc.). Moreover, if a SERI funded project partner has a system in place where working time is approved electronically by their supervisor, the auditor could confirm Standard Factual Finding 7.



- 11) The amount of variable complements paid corresponded to the SERI funded partner's usual remuneration practices and was consistently paid whenever the same kind of work or expertise was required.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 12) The criteria used to calculate the variable complements were objective and generally applied by the SERI funded partner.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 13) Variable complements were paid in a consistent manner, e.g. not just for publicly funded projects.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 14) For in-house consultants and seconded personnel: the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement are met (i.e. that the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee, that the result of the work carried out belongs to the SERI funded partner (unless agreed otherwise), and that the costs are not significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks under an employment contract).**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 15) The personnel costs included in the financial report were calculated in accordance with the SERI funded partner's usual cost accounting practice. This methodology was consistently used in all Horizon Europe actions.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 16) The SERI funded partner is a**  
☐ profit-oriented company, foundation, association  
☐ university, university of applied sciences or public office
- 17) For profit-oriented companies, foundations, associations: The employees were split across the following different function levels: project leader, deputy project leader, experienced scientist, research assistant, specialist staff member, doctoral student / assistant.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 18) For profit-oriented companies, foundations, associations: The number of employees charged in the personnel cost category "project leader" does not exceed the number of work package leads held by the SERI funded partner according to Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement by more than 1.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable



- 19) **For profit-oriented companies, foundations, associations:** The number of employees charged in the personnel cost category “deputy project leader” does not exceed the number of work package leads held by the SERI funded partner according to Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement by more than 1.  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 20) **For profit-oriented companies<sup>2</sup>, foundations, associations:** The overall annual gross salary (including hours worked on non-project related tasks; excluding employer’s social contributions) of project leaders, deputy project leaders or experienced scientists does not exceed CHF 220’500 per calendar year.  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 21) **For profit-oriented companies, foundations, associations:** The overall annual gross salary (including hours worked on non-project related tasks; excluding employer’s social contributions) of research assistants does not exceed CHF 126’000 per calendar year.  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 22) **For profit-oriented companies, foundations, associations:** The overall annual gross salary (including hours worked on non-project related tasks; excluding employer’s social contributions) of specialist staff members does not exceed CHF 113’400 per calendar year.  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 23) **For profit-oriented companies, foundations, associations:** The overall annual gross salary (including hours worked on non-project related tasks; excluding employer’s social contributions) of doctoral students / assistants does not exceed CHF 85’100 per calendar year.  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 24) **The natural persons under direct contract reported to the SERI funded partner and worked under the SERI funded partner’s instructions.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 25) **The natural persons under direct contract worked on the SERI funded partner’s premises (unless otherwise agreed with the SERI funded partner).**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable
- 26) **The results of work carried out by natural persons under direct contract belong to the SERI funded partner.**  
☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

---

<sup>2</sup> Please note that profit-oriented research facilities of national importance according to Art. 15 [RIPA](#) (listed [here](#)) are not subject to this maximum rates (see also [Art. 7 para. 1 FIPBV](#)). If the SERI funded partner audited is a profit-oriented research facility of national importance, the Standard Factual Findings 20 to 23 can be answered with “Not Applicable”.



**27) Costs of natural persons under direct contract were not significantly different from those for staff who performed similar tasks under an employment contract with the SERI funded partner.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**28) Seconded persons reported to the SERI funded partner and worked on the SERI funded partner's premises (unless otherwise agreed with the SERI funded partner).**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**29) The results of work carried out by seconded persons belong to the SERI funded partner.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**30) SME owners who do not pay themselves a regular salary did not charge more than CHF 42.50 per hour they worked for the project.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

## B: SUBCONTRACTING COSTS

The auditor obtained the detail/breakdown of subcontracting costs and sampled \_\_\_\_\_ cost items selected randomly. Full coverage is required if there are 5 items or fewer; otherwise, the sample should have a minimum of 5, or a maximum of 10%, whichever is higher.

---

To confirm the following Standard Factual Findings, the auditor reviewed the following for the subcontracting cost items included in the sample:

- the use of subcontractors was originally foreseen in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement or was subsequently affected through an amendment of the Grant Agreement and an amendment to the contractual agreement with the SERI;
- subcontracting costs were declared in the subcontracting cost category of the financial report;
- additional information on the selection and award procedure were followed;
- the SERI funded partner ensured best value for money with regard to subcontractors. Lower costs abroad are not usually a sufficient justification for subcontracting work to a service provider outside Switzerland. If an existing framework contract was used, the SERI funded partner ensured it was established on the basis of the principles of best value for money, transparency and equal treatment.

In particular, the auditor verified the following:

- whether the SERI funded partner is an institution that is bound by the law on public procurement, and if the procurement value exceeded the thresholds in the relevant law, the applicable legal provisions were compliant with;
- whether the SERI funded partner, if it is bound by a law on public procurement, complied with its usual procurement rules;
- if subcontracts were concluded with non-Swiss service providers, whether the final financial report to the SERI contains justification as to why a Swiss service provider was not considered.

For the items included in the sample, the auditor also verified that:

- the subcontracts were not awarded to other institutions (e.g. beneficiaries directly funded by the European Commission) in the consortium;
- there were signed agreements between the SERI funded partner and the subcontractor;
- there was evidence that the services were provided by the subcontractors.

**31) The use of claimed subcontracting costs was foreseen in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement or was subsequently affected through an amendment of the Grant Agreement and an amendment to the contractual agreement with the SERI.**

☐ Confirmed   ☐ Exception   ☐ Not Applicable



**32) The subcontracting costs were charged to the correct cost item in the financial report (cost item B).**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**33) There was evidence showing that different providers were asked to submit offers and that different offers were assessed before the SERI funded partner awarded the contract to a subcontractor in line with internal procurement criteria. If the institution is bound by the law on public procurement, the contract was awarded in line with the principles in the relevant law.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**34) If the SERI funded partner did not obtain different offers, the auditor explains the reasons provided by the SERI funded partner.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**35) The subcontracts were not awarded to other institutions of the consortium.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**36) All subcontracts were supported by signed agreements between the SERI funded partner and the subcontractor.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**37) There was evidence that the services were provided by the subcontractors.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**38) If subcontracts were not awarded to Swiss service providers, the financial report to the SERI should justify why no Swiss service provider was selected.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable





## C: PURCHASE COSTS – TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE (C.1)

The auditor sampled \_\_\_\_ cost items selected randomly. Full coverage is required if there are 5 items or fewer; otherwise, the sample should have a minimum of 5, or a maximum of 10% of the total, whichever is higher.

The auditor inspected the sample and verified that the costs were consistent with the SERI funded partner's usual expenses policy and its usual travel cost policy.

In this context, the SERI funded partner provided evidence of its normal policy for travel costs (e.g. use of first class train tickets, usual hotel standards, daily allowances, etc.) to enable the auditor to compare the travel costs charged with this policy:

- travel costs were correctly identified and linked to the action. The link to the action is supported by minutes of meetings, workshops or conferences. Attendance of conferences explicitly linked to the action should be consistent with time records;
- no ineligible costs or excessive or reckless expenditure was declared.

**39) The costs charged to the action were consistent with the SERI funded partner's usual travel cost policy.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**40) The meetings and workshops attended were project related.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**41) The supporting documents were consistent regarding purpose of the trip, dates and duration, and reconciled with the accounting.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**42) No ineligible costs or excessive or reckless expenditure were declared.<sup>3</sup>**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

---

<sup>3</sup> Business class flights or stays in five-star hotels, for instance, would be considered as an excessive expenditure.



## C: PURCHASE COSTS – EQUIPMENT (C.2)

The auditor sampled \_\_\_\_ cost items selected randomly. Full coverage is required if there are 5 items or fewer; otherwise, the sample should have a minimum of 10 items, or 10% of the total, whichever is higher.

For the cost items included in the sample, the auditor verified that:

- the assets were acquired in conformity with the SERI funded partner's internal guidelines and procedures;
- they were entered in the SERI funded partner's accounting system and correctly allocated to the action.

The auditor recalculated the depreciation costs and verified that they were in line with the applicable national and cantonal rules and with the SERI funded partner's usual accounting policy (e.g., depreciation calculated on the acquisition value).

The auditor also verified that no ineligible costs, such as deductible VAT, exchange rate losses, excessive or reckless expenditure, were declared.

**43) If the SERI funded partner is bound by the law on public procurement, and the value of the equipment purchased exceeds the threshold set out in the relevant law, the auditor verified that the equipment was acquired in a legally compliant manner. If the SERI funded partner is not bound by the law on public procurement, the auditor verified that the SERI funded partner followed its usual procurement rules when purchasing equipment.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**44) There was a link between the Grant Agreement and the equipment charged to the action.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**45) The equipment charged to the action was recorded in the SERI funded partner's internal accounting system.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**46) The depreciation method used to charge the equipment to the action was in line with the applicable national and cantonal rules and the SERI funded partner's usual accounting policy.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**47) The amount charged corresponded to the actual usage for the action.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable



## **C: PURCHASE COSTS – OTHER GOODS, WORKS AND SERVICES (C.3)**

The auditor sampled \_\_\_\_ cost items selected randomly. If there are more than 5 items, the sample should have at least 5 items, or a maximum of 10% of the total, whichever is higher.

For the cost items included in the sample, the auditor verified that:

- contracts for services did not cover tasks described in Annex 1 (Description of the action) of the Grant Agreement;
- the cost items were correctly identified, allocated to the proper action and entered in the SERI funded partner's accounting system;
- the costs in this cost item were not placed in the inventory of durable equipment;
- the costs charged to the action were accounted in line with the SERI funded partner's usual accounting practices;
- no ineligible costs or excessive or reckless expenditure were declared.

In addition, the auditor verified that these goods, works and services were acquired in conformity with the SERI funded partner's internal guidelines and procedures, in particular:

- if the SERI funded partner is an institution acting as a contracting authority bound by a law on public procurement, the applicable legal provisions were complied with;
- if the SERI funded partner is not bound by a law on public procurement, that it complied with the usual procurement rules.

For the cost items included in the sample, the auditor also verified that:

- the SERI funded partner ensured best value for money. A key element to assess compliance with this principle is the award of the contract to the bid offering the best price-quality ratio, under conditions of transparency and equal treatment. If an existing framework contract was used, the auditor also verified that the SERI funded partner ensured that it was established on the basis of the aforementioned principles.

### **48) Contracts for services did not cover tasks described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.**

☐ Confirmed   ☐ Exception   ☐ Not Applicable

### **49) Costs were allocated to the correct cost category.**

☐ Confirmed   ☐ Exception   ☐ Not Applicable



**50) The costs were charged in line with the SERI funded partner's accounting policy and were adequately supported.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**51) No ineligible costs or excessive or reckless expenditure were declared.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable

**52) If there are no internal procurement rules established by the SERI funded partner and the sample contains cost items above CHF 15'000: There was evidence showing that different providers were asked to submit offers and that different offers were assessed before the SERI funded partner decided on the purchases. The purchases were made in accordance with the principle of best value for money. If the SERI funded partner did not obtain different offers, the SERI funded partner must prove that the purchase is in line with usual accounting practices.**

☐ Confirmed ☐ Exception ☐ Not Applicable



## EXCHANGE RATES

For SERI funded partners with expenditures in a currency (foreign currency) other than Swiss francs:

The auditor sampled \_\_\_\_\_ cost items in foreign currencies selected randomly. Full coverage is required if there are 5 items or fewer; otherwise, the sample should have a minimum of 5 items, or 10% of the total, whichever is higher.

The auditor verified that the conversion rates used to convert foreign currencies into Swiss francs corresponded with one of the following methods:

- A) the daily exchange rate of the Swiss National Bank at the time of the booking;
- B) the average monthly exchange rate of the Swiss National Bank at the time of the booking;
- C) the rate charged by the credit card company;
- D) an internal conversion rate that does not vary by more than 3% from the daily exchange rate (A) or the average monthly exchange rate (B) at the time of the booking.

**53) When converting foreign currencies into Swiss francs, one (or more) methods A to D were used.**

☐ Confirmed   ☐ Exception   ☐ Not Applicable

**The licensed audit expert or audit firm on whose behalf he/she was acting - respectively for public institutions the competent financial control unit - hereby declares that he/she has completed this CFS Agreed-Upon Procedures checklist truthfully and is not employed by, related to, dependent on or associated with the SERI funded partner.**

**Audit company:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date and signature of the licensed audit expert, respectively the public officer working for the competent financial control unit:**

\_\_\_\_\_