Rules governing the SBB Research Fund

Anhang zum KOOPERATIONSVERTRAG

zwischen

SBB AG, Hilfikerstrasse 1, 3000 Bern, nachfolgend genannt SBB

und der

Universität St. Gallen, 9000 St.Gallen, Institut für Systemisches Management und Public Governance (IMP-HSG), Dufourstrasse 40a, nachfolgend genannt Institut

gemeinsam genannt die Parteien

betreffend

- Führung des «SBB Lab-HSG» am IMP-HSG an der Universität St. Gallen St.Gallen

- Führung des Office des SBB Forschungsfonds SBB

Preamble

The Schweizerische Bundesbahn AG (hereinafter referred to as *SBB*), by contract dated ..... (hereinafter referred to as *Agreement*), has commissioned the Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance (hereinafter referred to as *IMP-HSG*) to provisionally manage a research fund for SBB (hereinafter referred to as *Research Fund*), endowed by SBB with CHF 300k per year until and including 2029.

These rules specify the governance of the SBB Research Fund.

This Research Fund pursues the following objectives:

- promoting of and providing financial grants for primarily socio-economic applied research projects relevant with regard to current issues of transport in Switzerland and the operation of railways;
- answering questions that concern the practice of transport science and relevant to SBB, particularly work on innovative approaches as a contribution towards the long-term and sustainable development of the transport system as an important strategic competitive factor of Switzerland;
- promoting cooperation and the visibility of research at Swiss universities and research institutions in the field of transport in order to strengthen Switzerland as a centre of research in a sustainable way.

The IMP-HSG is supported by a Research Committee which also takes the decisions in academic questions f.e. decisions on funding of research projects.

Art. 1 Object of the Rules

a) The Rules governing the Research Fund shall refine the Agreement and, in particular, specify

   1) the selection, allocation and funding of research projects financed by the Research Fund,

   2) the management of the Research Fund and Research Committee, as well as

   3) the latter's reporting obligations.

b) Unless these Rules provide otherwise, the provisions of the Agreement shall be applicable.

Art. 2 Appointment of the members of the Research Committee

a) SBB appoints the members of the Research Committee.

b) SBB's representation on the Research Committee always amounts to at least 50%.

Art. 3 The activities of the Research Committee

The Research Committee shall

a) meet at least twice a year (ideally in spring and autumn), whereby the first meeting usually focuses on the development of future key research topics and the second meeting discusses project results;

b) in a continuing process, maintain a list of possible current research topics;

c) govern the project related submission and decision processes, including the tendering and selection of projects and the corresponding allocation of funds;

d) evaluate the final reports and coordinate the communication of results.

Art. 4 Decision-making by the Research Committee

a) All decisions concerning financial grants for projects, shall be taken by the Research Committee.

b) Decisions with regard to financial grants shall ideally be based on two reviews by academic members of the Research Committee.

c) Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the members of the Research Committee present, whereby at least one representative of SBB shall be present for the decisions made to be valid. Such decisions shall always be made in consultation with SBB.

d) The number of voting rights has to be equally shared between SBB and Academia, e.g. if there are 6 academic members present also not more than 6 SBB members can vote and vice versa. The chairperson of the committee who is according to the contract an academic from IMP – HSG has final decision right.

e) Decisions can also be taken in circular form (mail, email) and meetings can also be held using teleconferencing tools.

f) If a member of the Research Committee or a member of his/her research unit has submitted a project proposal, he/she shall abstain from voting on the granting of the contributions to the project of his/her chair.

g) Invitations to a meeting including the list of projects to be discussed shall be submitted to the members at least one week before a meeting. In case of written circular ballots at least one week answering time shall be granted.

Art. 5 Selection and allocation of projects

Art. 5 §1 General provisions

a) Researchers from Swiss universities and Swiss universities of applied sciences, including the persons represented in the Research Committee and their academic staff, shall be entitled to apply directly. Commercial research service providers and their staff as well as EU universities shall be entitled to indirectly apply as project partners of the aforementioned parties.

b) There are two procedures for applying for and awarding projects: (1) Procedure of project selection based on an invitation for tenders by the Research Committee and (2) Procedure of project selection based on a non-tendered application for a financial grant.

Art. 5 §2 Procedure of project selection based on an invitation for tenders by the Research Committee

a) The selection of projects and allocation of grants shall be subject to a two-stage procedure.

   1) Qualified parties according to Art. 5 §1a shall lodge a short project proposal with which they apply for an invitation to submit a project application to the SBB Research Fund. The Research Committee can define specific rules and procedures for this process and the contents of the proposals.

   2) On the basis of these proposals, the Research Committee shall decide which party to invite to submit a project application. The Research Committee can define specific rules and procedures for this process and the contents of the application.

b) If an invited party fails to accept and comply with such an invitation by a given submission deadline, its right to submit project proposals or applications shall be forfeited.

c) Steps 1 and 2 of (a) can be directly combined into a project application, provided a letter of support from an SBB department is endorsing a project.

d) The Research Committee makes the final decision on financial grants for projects. Legal recourse is excluded.

e) The channel and the form of the feedback provided by all members of the Research Committee (orally, in writing) to the applicants (throughout the process) may basically be chosen freely.

f) Owing to the objective of conducting research into topical issues, the aim shall be to keep the cycle time of the process short and if necessary complete one stage of the procedure by correspondence.

Art. 5 §3 Procedure of project selection based on a non-tendered application for a financial grant

(a) Assuming that there is strong support by an SBB department (signified by a corresponding Letter of Intent), qualified parties according to Art. 5 §1a may lodge a project application with which they apply for a project grant by the SBB Research Fund.

(b) The Research Committee makes the final decision on the financing of such a project. Legal recourse is excluded.

(c) The channel and the form of the feedback provided by all members of the Research Committee (orally, in writing) to the applicants (throughout the process) may basically be chosen freely.

(d) Owing to the objective of conducting research into topical issues, the aim shall be to keep the cycle time of the process short and if necessary complete one stage of the procedure by correspondence.

Art. 6 Features of the funded projects

A project supported by the research fund has the following characteristics:

a) A project shall have socio-economic or socio-technical background and has to be considered as applied research project.

b) A project shall be headed by the persons specified by the application.

c) A project shall reflect the scope of the topics prioritized by the Research Committee. Those in turn shall be relevant to the practice and/or science of transport economy and have the potential to make an impact on such issues.

d) Project reports are published electronically and provided to the public by open access.

Art. 7 Submission of applications

a) Any applications submitted to the Research Fund shall contain at least the following information:

1) project managers, researchers and their subject-specific competencies,

2) topic and objective,

3) research questions,

4) current state of research,

5) methodology,

6) expected results and their significance/relevance,

7) budget,

8) research and project plan, including planned communication of results,

9) Short letter of support by at least one SBB representative, demonstrating and explaining his/ her interest in and support for a given project.

b) The Research Committee issues additional rules as required It also can provide forms for applications and expression of interest.

Art. 8 Project grants allocation

a) Project grants shall not exceed the amount of CHF 100,000.

b) The Research Committee shall determine the scope of the intended grant in the invitation to submit an application; the exact amount shall then be fixed in the submission of the application and in the discussion of the application in the Research Committee.

c) The project grants shall be conceived of as ceilings rather than lump sums. Amounts shall be disbursed against invoice.

d) The grants may be used to cover the following costs:

1. personnel costs for academic staff and project leaders;
2. travelling and accommodation expenses, particularly for participation in congresses and workshops;
3. room costs and rentals, as well as other third-party costs f.e. for empirical work support.

e) Cost shall be disclosed in the project application in such a manner that the cost rates can be readily understood. In principle, the Research Committee shall take its bearings from the cost rates applied by Swiss National Science Foundation projects.

f) If the ceiling is exceeded, a supplementary application has to be submitted.

Art 9 Research Committee membership compensation

a) Participation in and costs related to the work in the Research Committee is compensated by the provision of a personal 1st class GA travelcard free of charge.

b) No further compensation is foreseen.

Art. 10 Reporting

a) Subsequent to a project that has been funded by the Fund, the project party shall submit a written report about the funds granted and the central results of the project to the Research Committee. Such written report shall be accompanied by a management summary about the concrete practical implications of the results, as well as a comment on any significant deviations from the approved research plan. There should also be a presentation of final results in the research committee.

b) In addition to the academic channels, a further multiplication of the results shall take place, ideally in the form of a discourse between academia and practice, newspaper reports, workshops, the use of existing platforms, and conferences. SBB shall be entitled to

a non-exclusive use of the research results free of charge for corporate purposes. The exploitation rights of the texts shall remain with the authors.

c) The use of the funds shall be accounted for in accordance with commercial business principles. A financial report shall be submitted by the project leader to the SBB Research Fund at the end of the project.

Art. 11 Office of the Research Fund

a) The office of the Research Fund shall be constituted by the SBB Lab at the Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance (IMP-HSG) at the University of St. Gallen.

b) The office shall act according to these rules and execute the decisions made by the Research Committee and manage the assets of the Fund as special reserves of the Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance (IMP-HSG) at the University of St. Gallen.

c) A report on activities, the use of funds and the assets of the Fund shall be submitted to SBB AG every year as of 31 December.

Art. 12 Period of validity of these Rules

The Agreement between SBB AG and the IMP-HSG shall be valid until the end of 2029. It is then extended by a further year if it is not terminated at the end of one year with a notice period of 6 months. These Rules shall therefore be applicable while said Agreement is in force.

Art. 13 Changes to these Rules

Changes to these Rules may be made upon agreement of SBB and IMP after consultation of the Research Committee.

Art 14 Date of entry into force of these rules

These rules are put into effect on 01.01.2025. They replace the Rules as of January 2020.

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