



NRP 57 Programme Manual

Approved by the Steering Committee:
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1. Introduction

The programme manual is an internal document describing the management of the National Research Programme 57 (NRP 57). It is intended for the project leaders for transparent information as regards planning, monitoring and controlling of the scientific, administrative and implementation tasks in the framework of the programme.

In complement to the implementation plan of the NRP 57 and the general NRP regulations of the SNF, the programme manual comprises information relevant to the successful accomplishment of the NRP 57: scientific goals, overview of the research projects, basic implementation tasks, stakeholders, internal organisation, task sharing and duties. The main protagonists are the SC and its president, the administrative office of the SNF, the implementation officer, the operative office of the programme and the researchers.

The president of the SC and the programme coordinator are responsible for the regular updating of and adherence to the programme manual.

2. Goals and Framework of the Programme

2.1 Goals

The main objective of this National Research Programme (NRP) is to address key scientific questions regarding the potential adverse health effects of non-ionising radiation (NIR). The programme is complementary to international research activities in the field of NIR and focuses on specific issues defined in the EMF research agenda of the WHO, such as changes in well being and behaviour, brain or sleep physiology, and the underlying basic mechanisms between electromagnetic fields and biological systems. A better understanding of the causal relationship between NIR and neurophysiologic responses as well as responses at the cellular level will facilitate the risk assessment of current and future technologies, thereby directly attending to the growing concern in the public regarding potential health hazards by NIR. Another emphasis of the programme lies on risk management and the determination of parameters influencing public awareness and perception and how research can be adequately communicated.

The findings should increase our understanding of a potential causal association between EMF and health effects and have some potential for practical implementation, e.g., define needs for action, propose solutions for protective measures, adapt the current legal prescriptions, guide the industry in the development of new technologies or help in restoring public trust into the respective technologies and the protection measures in place. Thus, the findings should significantly contribute to the international risk assessment and evaluation.

2.2 Framework

The NRP 57 is committed to the framework outlined in the implementation plan as regards:

- available funds: 5 Mio. CHF
- duration: 4 years
- organisational structures
- project selection and evaluation

The scientific framework is also specified in the implementation plan (see description of the modules). Needs of action were clarified in advance of the programme approval (feasibility study, expert hearing). A concept for future implementation activities will be issued in more detail.

3. Time Plan of Programme

The NRP 57 was approved of the Federal Council in March 2005. Subsequent to the approval of the implementation plan, the evaluation and selection of preproposals and full proposals, the approved projects were then launched in January 2007 and will run until December 2009. The programme will end in 2010 after the final report has been issued. For details, see figure below.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Federal Council approves NRP 57	March					
Federal Department of Home Affairs (DHA) approves Implementation Plan	Nov					
Public call for submission of project outlines	Dec					
Evaluation and selection of projects outlines submitted		June				
Invitations to submit full research proposals		July				
Evaluation and selection of project outlines		Oct				
Work launch			Jan			
Public launch			Feb			
Kick-off			March			
Ongoing research					End: Dec	
Workshops			1	2	1	
Satellite symposium BEMS 2009					June	
Monitoring and controlling (incl. progress reports and meetings^(*))				*March	*March	
Implementation and coordination						End: March
Final meeting and report, end of programme						End: March

4. Research Projects and Protagonists

4.1 Modules of the Programme

The four main research topics use an interdisciplinary approach and correspond to international state-of-the-art with respect to scientific originality and methodological standards. They were defined in the implementation plan:

- the characterization and measurement of NIR caused by the range of present technologies („Dosimetry and Exposure Assessment“)
- epidemiologic and in vivo human laboratory studies to assess the various effects of NIR on the human body („Laboratory and Epidemiologic Studies“)
- „Cell Biologic Studies“
- risk communication and enhancement of public perception („Risk Perception“).

4.2 Research Projects

The selected projects are listed by modules and project leaders are indicated:

Dosimetry and Exposure Assessment

Determination of the exposure of the fetus to electromagnetic fields in an uncontrolled environment

Dr. Nicolas Chavannes, IT'IS Foundation, Zurich

Cumulative exposure in time and frequency domains of the central nervous system

Prof. Niels Kuster, IT'IS Foundation, Zurich

Live cell imaging during EMF exposure

Dr. Albert Romann, IT'IS Foundation, Zurich

Laboratory and Epidemiologic Studies

Effects of pulse-modulated radio frequency electromagnetic fields on the human brain: Critical field parameters, site of interaction and sensitivity in early adolescence

PD Dr. Peter Achermann, Inst of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Univ of Zurich

Radio frequency electromagnetic field exposure and health related quality of life: Prospective cohort study

Dr. Martin Röösli, Dept of Social and Preventive Medicine, Univ of Bern

Effects of UMTS radiation on cerebral blood circulation assessed by near infrared imaging

PD Dr. Martin Peter Wolf, Clinic of Neonatology, Univ Hospital Zurich

Cell biology

Characterisation of effects of non-ionising radiation on the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* as a model organism

Prof. Dr. Pierre Goloubinoff, Dept of Plant Molecular Biology, Univ of Lausanne

Effects on electromagnetic fields in vitro and in vivo: Identification and characterisation of stress-response pathways

Prof. Dr. Meike Mevissen, Div of Veterinary Pharmacology and Toxicology, Vetsuisse Faculty Bern, Univ of Bern

Genotoxic effects of non-ionising radiation

Prof. Dr. Primo Schär, Inst of Biochemistry and Genetics, Univ of Basel

Risk Perception and Communication

Structure and effects of societal communication on non-ionising radiation

Prof. Dr. Peter J. Schulz, Health Care Communication Laboratory, Univ della Svizzera italiana

Affect and perception of non-ionising radiation: Implications for risk communication

PD Dr. Michael Siegrist, Inst for Environmental Decisions, ETH Zurich

5. NRP 57 Management: Responsibilities and Protagonists

5.1 Division IV (Section NRP/NCCR) of the Research Council

Division IV of the Research Council has overall responsibility for conducting the National Research Programmes (NRP). The decisions taken by Division IV on accepting or rejecting research projects are submitted to the National Research Council Presidial Board for ratification. Based on the recommendations of the Delegate, they select the SC, appoint the Implementation Officer and define the standards for project evaluation. They assess the intermediate and final reports of the Delegate and the SC and if necessary, support them in the execution of the programme.

5.2 Delegate of the Research Council

The Delegate of the Research Council represents Division IV of the Research Council in the SC and assures the transfer of information and experiences, thereby safeguarding that the SC acts true to the regulations and standards. He submits the recommendations for the selection of the SC, and he submits the SC's decisions on acceptance or rejection of research proposals to the Research Council for approval. He informs the Research Council on a regular basis about the developments in NRP 57.

5.3 Steering Committee (SC)

The SC is a small and flexible body that takes on primarily strategic responsibilities for the entire duration of the NRP 57. It is the formative body giving the programme its profile, and guaranteeing the necessary continuity and coherence in any decision. It is responsible for assessing the scientific quality and implementation of the NRP 57 by:

- elaborating the implementation plan (completed)
- evaluating and selecting the full proposals on the basis of external reviews for approval by the Research Council (completed)
- rejecting preproposals at its own option (completed)
- supervising the financial planning in collaboration with the programme coordinator and yearly financial report for approval by the Research Council
- organising and supervising the scientific coordination:
 - monitoring the progress of the projects and reviewing the intermediate and final reports
 - supporting the president of the SC in the international coordination activities
- supervising the implementation activities:
 - reviewing the implementation documents and their adherence to the quality standards of the SNF for approval by the Research Council
 - recommending the implementation concept (describing future implementation activities; to be issued) for approval by the Research Council
 - monitoring and supporting the implementation activities of the projects and the programme as a whole
 - supporting the implementation officer in updating the stakeholder database and in writing editorials for the programme newsletter
- compiling a scientific synthesis and final programme report at the end of the programme.

Paragraph 11 to 15 of the NRP regulations detail the specifics. The SC is flexible in so far as its composition may change according to different needs during the programme.

5.4 President of the Steering Committee

The president of the SC represents the NRP 57 internally and towards the outside. He coordinates contacts between stakeholders and the SC, in particular the federal and cantonal authorities, as well as other social, environmental or economic organisations. In collaboration with the programme coordinator, the president is responsible for the scientific coordination of the approved research projects and monitors and supports the implementation officer with his scientific expertise. Paragraph 16 to 17 of the NRP regulations detail the specifics.

5.4.1 Scientific Associate in Support of the President of the SC

The president of the SC is assisted by a scientific associate who supports him as regards the ongoing technical communication with the research groups and the communication with comparable programmes within (e.g., the Swiss Research Foundation on Mobile Communication) or outside Switzerland (e.g., the International EMF Project (WHO), EMF-NET, or other national programmes). The associate continuously surveys and critically evaluates the scientific literature on EMF rele-

vant to the research projects and to health risk assessment in general, maintains a standardized database of the projects and supports the president of the SC in drafting the final synthesis report. He supports the programme coordinator and the implementation officer in preparing the arguments for sensitive issues in the media and other external interactions and helps with the organisation of the annual meetings and topical workshops for the advancement of an open and interdisciplinary dialogue between the researchers.

5.5 Implementation Officer

The Implementation Officer has a clearly defined mandate of responsibility for assuring that the implementation of the NRP 57 fulfils the demands of the research topics, assuring that the realisation of implementation measures meets professional standards, and for assuring quality in the public relations sector. At the start of the programme and in collaboration with the SC, he elaborates an implementation concept (to be issued) that describes all implementation activities (not to be confounded with the “implementation plan” describing the programme framework and module specifications). The concept needs to be recommended by the SC for approval by the Research Council. The implementation officer plans, manages and coordinates the implementation activities according to the concept and advises the SC and the project leaders as regards communication and implementation. He also coordinates the interactions with the media and is responsible for issues management.

The implementation officer informs the programme coordinator on the state of the actual implementation activities.

5.6 Administration Office

5.6.1 Programme Coordinator

The Secretariat of Division IV of the SNSF is responsible for operations management and implementation of decisions taken by the Research Council and the SC. The Secretariat coordinates administrative and financial support functions and, in collaboration with the president of the SC, is in charge of project supervision, coordination and controlling. He advises the project leaders and the SC in these matters, in particular in case of deviations of time plan and budget and supports all protagonists in their task assignments. He assures the information transfer between the president of the SC, the SC and the Delegate of the Research Council and is involved in the administrative conception and organisation of the progress report meetings and scientific workshops. In addition, the programme coordinator archives all documents relevant to the execution and management of the NRP 57.

His tasks and duties in specific are regulated by the NF.

5.6.2 Accounting

The accounts office is responsible for assisting the researchers and their affiliations in financial matters, reviewing and controlling the financial status of the research projects and administering changes and corrections where needed, and it controls and approves the financial intermediate and final reports. In addition, it is responsible for the financial administration of the whole NRP 57.

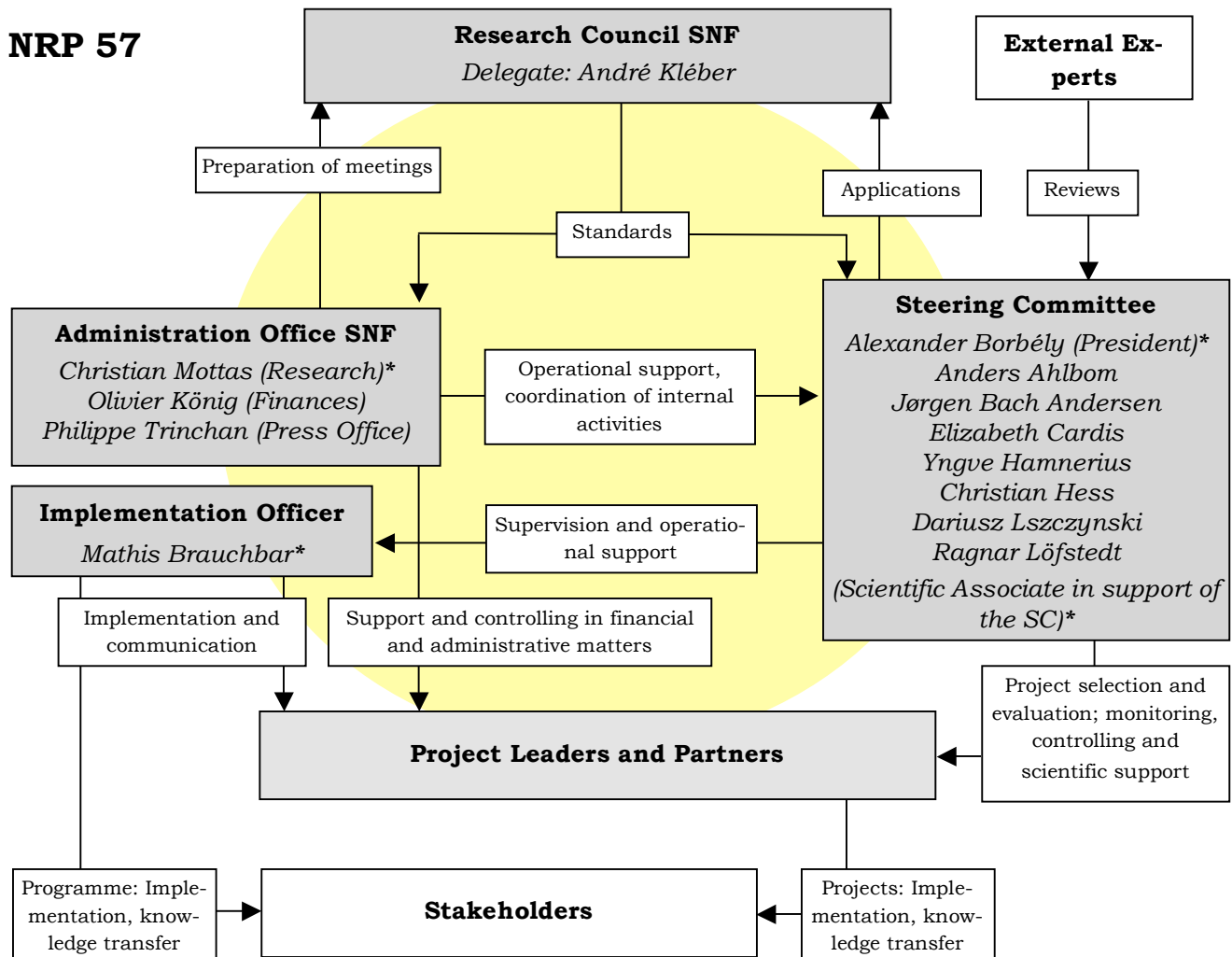
5.6.3 Press and Information Office (PRI)

The Press and Information Office sets the quality standards in communication and is responsible for public relations guidelines and their implementation in the programme. It reviews the implementation concept and supports the implementation officer for the duration of the programme as regards communication and publicity work. In collaboration with the implementation officer, it organizes and finances all national media contacts (interviews, press conferences and releases).

5.7 Office of the NRP 57

An operational office consisting of the president of the SC and his scientific associate, the implementation officer and the programme coordinator meets regularly to prepare the operational and strategic dealings of the NRP 57 and implement the decisions of the SC. The office represents the NRP 57 towards the outside.

The different protagonists and their interactions are depicted in the figure below:



* These protagonists constitute the office of the NRP 57.

5.8 External Experts

External experts (anonymous) review the scientific quality of the preproposals and full proposals according to the criteria defined in the implementation plan. They can also be consulted with respect to the intermediate and final reports of the funded projects.

5.9 Federal Representatives

The government is one of the main addressees of the NRP 57. Some ministries deal closely with the topics of non-ionising radiation and have a strong and direct interest in the proceedings of the programme. To enhance the exchange of experiences, information, knowledge and collaborations and to optimally implement the findings, two federal observers (no vote) are represented in the SC (Federal Office of Public Health and Federal Office for the Environment).

5.10 Researchers

As a basic principle, the regulations of the NSF apply. The project leaders are responsible for the scientific and administrative execution of their project. They are requested to deliver within the agreed time all necessary and required documents for the smooth proceeding of the NRP 57, such as intermediate reports, final reports, abstracts, workshop material, etc. They are the contact persons for all parties involved and are available for all information to the steering bodies of the NRP 57 and for site visits, thereby assuring the communication flow to their collaborators and project staff. They are requested to participate in the yearly Progress Report Meetings and to directly and actively partake in implementation activities. The project leaders represent their project at official events of the NRP 57, including topical workshops, thereby complying with the regulations of the Press and Information Office of the NRP 57 as regards publicity work.

The researchers can inform the media about their own research in the framework of the programme; all media requests regarding the programme need to be forwarded to the implementation officer.

6. Project Monitoring and Scientific Quality Assurance

According to NFP regulations, scientific steering and monitoring is mandatory for quality assurance. The specifics of the scientific steering and monitoring and of the quality assurance tools and procedures are described in the following.

6.1 Goals of Scientific Quality Assurance

The goals of scientific quality assurance can be summarized as follows:

- Verification of the scientific soundness and quality of the projects
- Alignment of the projects with the goals of the NRP 57
- Identification of changes, deviations and problems in the projects as regards scientific contents, method and aims, as well as their time plan and budget
- Identification of interfaces between projects, usage of synergies
- Exchange between SC, implementation officer and project leaders

6.2 Protagonists and Responsibilities

The SC bears the main responsibility for the scientific monitoring of the projects. In addition, the SC can appoint external experts for the monitoring, e.g., for site visits or evaluation of the intermediate and final reports. In detail:

The **SC** reviews the intermediate and final reports and support the president of the SC and the programme coordinator in organising and executing the topical module workshops and, if necessary, the site visits.

The **federal representatives** in the SC assure the information transfer between authorities and projects. They selectively partake in the scientific monitoring of the projects.

The **implementation officer**, the **delegate of the Research Council**, and the **programme coordinator** are also selectively involved in the scientific monitoring.

6.3 Tools of Scientific Quality Assurance

In the NRP 57, scientific quality is assured by: 1) yearly scientific progress reports and progress report meetings, 2) module workshops, 3) optional site visits (on request), 4) final project reports, and 5) the final meeting. In addition, a kick-off meeting was organised at the start of the project work for the project leaders to get acquainted with the projects in more detail, to get to know its leadership, its collaborators, and to foster the exchange of experiences and knowledge as well as to enable early collaborations and cooperations.

Accompanying measures serve to optimally align the projects with the goals of the NRP 57. They comprise aspects of both counselling and controlling and offer a means to the project leaders to discuss administrative, financial or scientific issues, to obtain advice and to form ties with other projects.

In regard of the political relevance of the NRP 57, a rather close technical and scientific steering and monitoring of the projects is envisaged. It embraces the input of all stakeholders and hence the implementation of the findings in practice.

6.3.1 Intermediate Reports

The intermediate report comprises two elements:

- the actual yearly progress report
- a contribution at the yearly progress report meeting.

All projects need to submit a progress report at the same time independent of the start date of the project. The project leaders are further requested to participate in the progress report meeting to present their projects, followed by a discussion on scientific issues and implementation measures. Attending the progress report meeting will be members of the SC, the programme coordinator and the implementation officer and it will be presided by the president of the SC.

The progress report and the progress report meeting will enable an overview of the status of the research activities. The first intermediate report is scheduled for February 2008, the second intermediate report for January 2009.

Progress Report

The scientific progress report is evaluated by the entire SC. The SC decides for each project whether an external review is requested. In the following, taking into account the contribution at the progress report meeting, the SC recommends:

- approval without comments
- approval with requirements
- request for revision
- rejection.

Rejection of a report needs to be ratified by the Research Council and results in the termination of the project. The respective project is then excluded from the final synthesis.

The submitted progress reports further need to comprehend an abstract that can be used for dissemination at the progress report meeting.

Progress Report Meeting

Coupled to the progress report is a scientific convention that is intended to foster the scientific, multidisciplinary exchange and synergies between the researchers of the NRP 57. It serves as a platform to present the actual results but also for overall evaluation of the progress and the findings of the NRP 57.

The scientific convention comprises two elements: The internal progress report meeting and a scientific workshop open to the scientific community. Participation at the progress report meeting is part of the intermediate report and will be included in the evaluation.

6.3.2 Scientific Workshops

Several scientific workshops topically pertaining to the four modules are planned in the course of the programme. They can be initiated and organised by the researchers or the SC and, for reasons of convenience and if possible, are carried out in combination with the progress report meetings. The researchers are expected to attend the workshops, which are aimed at the deepening of scientific issues as regards contents or methodology. Invited experts and members of the SC will be invited to actively participate at the workshops; however, the workshops are also intended to be open to other researchers not involved in the programme. The workshops thus also serve as a communication platform between the researchers of the NRP 57 and other interested parties on a national and international level.

It is also envisaged to organise a NRP 57 symposium at a larger convention in the last year of the ongoing work (e.g., at the EBEA/BEMS meeting in 2009).

6.3.3 Site Visits (optional)

Site visits are performed if requested by the project leaders or if deemed necessary by the SC. At least two members of the SC visit the researchers at the institution where the project is being carried out.

Site Visits are announced to the project leaders several weeks in advance. Thereby, reasons and goals for the visit are specified. During the site visit, the project leaders present the projects and enable contacts with the project staff as well as insights in the actual work and operating procedures. After the site visit, the members of the SC in charge issue a report with emphasis on the recommendations issued during the site visit. The report is part of the next intermediate or final report.

6.3.4 Final Report

The final report comprises two elements:

- the actual final report
- a contribution at the final report meeting.

The final report is requested individually depending on the duration of the project and at the latest six weeks after termination of the project. It is evaluated by the entire SC and then approved:

- without comments
- with request for revision
- or rejected.

A rejection of the report by the SC may result in the exclusion of the project in the final programme synthesis.

The submitted final report further needs to comprehend an abstract that can be used for dissemination at the final meeting.

6.3.5 Final Meeting

The final meeting will be held during the spring of 2010, subsequent to the submission of all final reports. The first part of the meeting will be an internal, scientific project presentation (final report meeting), the second part will be dedicated to the scientific exchange with the stakeholders (final conference).

7. Implementation, Communication and Publications

7.1 Background

The focus of the implementation lies on facilitating the flow of information and the application of the programme's findings, as well as on raising the awareness of the relevant stakeholders for the programme. The prospective, implemented communication platform may be continued after termination of the programme. The implementation concept (to be issued) will further outline how insights gained can be of use in the political discussion and how the findings can be implemented in practice and put at the disposal of all stakeholders.

The implementation measures are aimed at assisting the project leaders in implementing their results in practice and at assuring that the overall goals of implementation are reached within the programme.

7.2 Public Relations

A detailed implementation concept will be developed by the implementation officer. The contact, exchange and public relations with all stakeholders will be an important measure of publicity work. It will comprise a communication platform that contains all relevant information for both internal and external target groups, as well as direct interactions of the SC with the main stakeholders. A main pillar of public relations is the programme website; however, interactions will also be enabled on a personal level.

Many of the stakeholders can be reached via communication with the media. In addition, the organisation of specific events for the stakeholders will be envisaged, such as public symposia, ideally in collaboration with the respective stakeholders. A large public convention that will also inform about the continuation of sustainable activities in the field of NIR shall confer a worthy closing of the NRP 57.

7.3 Publications

The researchers are expected and encouraged to publish their work in scientific journals of their own choice (national or international). They are however requested to mention that the research was carried out in the framework of the NRP 57 (e.g., "This project was supported by the National Research Programme NRP 57 "Non-ionising radiation – Health and Environment" of the Swiss National Science Foundation (Project Number-xxxxxxx).).

Programme publications comprise documentation at the programme level, such as the public programme brochure, the newsletters or the final programme synthesis by the SC.

8. NRP 57 in the National and International Context

The NRP 57 covers a markedly interdisciplinary field, comprising medical sciences and neuroscience, cell biology, epidemiology, physics and engineering as well as sociology. In addition, it is situated in a sensitive environment that requires specific know-how and judgment from the steering bodies. The widespread concerns about health hazards resulting from NIR have to be accommodated at various levels: In the domain of governmental agencies and other political instances as concerns legal regulations (e.g., legal values, precautionary principle), the viewpoints of industry and citizens' groups need to be considered, the exchange of information with the various European and transatlantic programs must be assured, and finally, the very diverse and partly controversial findings published worldwide need to be continuously evaluated for a meaningful health risk assessment.

The research carried out in the NRP 57 takes into account the expertise present in the country but is also coordinated with the international scientific effort. The researchers in the NRP 57 are well embedded in the scientific network and further encouraged to use synergies within the modules and also to invest in interdisciplinary collaborations. At the programme level, an active participation in the ongoing international health risk assessment discussion is envisaged, as well as a close monitoring of the international research efforts. A large emphasis is also put on the final programme synthesis elaborated by the SC, which will set the findings in a scientific and political context and thereby put the research of the NRP 57 into perspective on both the national and international level.

8.1 Coordination on the National Level

Coordination on the national level is largely covered by the implementation tasks and facilitated by the two federal observers in the SC. In addition to the public relation tasks, the goal is to engage in an open dialogue with the stakeholders, asking for responses, feedback and views, and taking those views into consideration as regards the stakeholders' integration in the scientific process and knowledge trans-

fer. As regards scientific coordination, the researchers of the NRP 57 are required to develop transfer strategies and actively participate in the implementation activities. Also, a dialogue platform with all interested parties will be established (e.g., with the Foundation for Mobile Communication, individual scientists, etc.).

8.2 Coordination on the International Level

In the last few years, national research programmes have been initiated worldwide, and particularly in various European countries. In addition, several bodies are engaged with the coordination, evaluation and enhancement of research, among them the international EMF project of the WHO or EMF NET (Coordination Action within the 6th Framework Programme for research and technological development of the European Commission). Contact and mutual exchange between the NRP 57 and other research programmes will serve to foster international collaboration. In particular, the exchange of experiences with program coordinators from other national programmes and other scientific bodies shall be advanced by initiating an active dialogue, with the aim to compare experiences and results and foster compliance in health risk communication and management. In addition, the increasing concerns of the general population shall be broached and the contribution of research for risk management promoted and harmonised.

9. Stakeholders

To foster the scientific dialogue and information transfer, important target groups have been identified and a stakeholder database has been compiled. The database is administered by the implementation officer and the target groups comprise authorities (federal, cantonal and communal bodies), politics, industry, NGOs, the scientific community (individual scientist and organisations), as well as the general public and private individuals. The database is continuously being updated.

10. Budget

The financial controlling lies in the responsibility of the programme coordinator and the auditor of the Division IV of the SNF.

11. Perspectives

It is a further task of the SC to present the findings and experiences within the programme in such a way as to ensure a sustainable benefit of the programme. It will also make recommendations as to the continuation of research beyond the termination of the programme. For these purposes, a final programme synthesis will be elaborated, containing information on the course of the programme and a scientific as well as socio-political appraisal of the results. It shall contain experiences and recommendations as regards the realisation of such programmes. The synthesis will comprise two parts: a scientific synopsis of the results and their embedding into the scientific context for the scientific community, and a synthesis related to practice for the public.