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On the role and the independence of the Steering Committee

What is the role of the Steering Committee in a National Research Programme?

Within the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Division IV (Targeted Research) is responsible for the National Research Programmes (NRPs). In accordance with Switzerland's Research Decree, the SNSF alone is responsible for nominating Steering Committees for NRPs. The members of the Steering Committee for each NRP are selected based on their scientific expertise. As the individual members of the NRP 57 Steering Committee have expertise in different fields of the research on non-ionising radiation, they can evaluate research proposals and reports competently.

For the evaluation of individual research proposals, the Steering Committee draws upon reviews prepared by experts in the field, who are mostly from abroad. The final approval or rejection of research proposals is not made by the Steering Committee itself but, upon its recommendations, by the Research Council of Division IV and finally by the National Research Council Presidial Board.

Is the Steering Committee of NRP 57 independent?

NRP Steering Committees are scientific committees that are put together according to scientific criteria. It is therefore not their task to represent any interests other than research.

The Steering Committee of NRP 57 is made up of eight experts with recognized international scientific reputations. Six of them are from other countries. As is usual in research, some of the committee members have, in the context of their research activities, conducted projects in cooperation with industry. In very technologically oriented research areas, these forms of cooperation are desired by the universities, in the interest of knowledge and technology transfer.

The experts selected by the Swiss National Science Foundation for the Steering Committee do not have a preconceived position with regard to the risks of non-ionising radiation. Their only commitment is to independent research. None of the members of the Steering Committee has closer ties to interest groups outside of research.