



Swiss Personalized Health Network: Rules of Procedure (5.12.2016)

Preamble

“Personalized Medicine” (PM) is in rapid development worldwide as emphasized again by the recent initiation of a “Precision Medicine Initiative” (PMI) in the USA and/or the Summary on Personalized Medicine of the European Academies Science Advisory Council. In Switzerland, a national research initiative “Systems Medicine – Personalized Health”, the so-called “Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN) Initiative”, was proposed by the Federal Council in its ERI Dispatch 2017-2020.

This initiative aims at creating a national “Swiss Personalized Health Network” (SPHN) that integrates all relevant Swiss research institutions and organizations (e.g. University Hospitals and Universities, SIB Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics, Swiss National Science Foundation [SNSF], Federal Office of Public Health [FOPH]) as well as ongoing related projects (e.g. Swiss Biobanking Platform [SBP], Human Biomonitoring/Cohort Project [HBCP]) in order to cooperate by joining forces nationwide, to include all available competences and to coordinate the required infrastructures all over Switzerland.

Between 2017-2020, the SPHN consortium will receive a total amount of CHF 70 million. Rules on how and according to which criteria these funds are to be invested will be elaborated as soon as possible by the respective bodies.

The participating institutions strive to achieve the highest scientific quality in the field of personalized medicine and, through their collaboration within the framework of SPHN, establish for themselves a worldwide reputation of excellence.

Article 1.

Purpose

The Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN) has the following objectives:

- (a) Coordinate the national and international collaboration of the institutions in the field of personalized medicine research;
- (b) Establish various items of infrastructures, e.g. technology platforms and in particular a National Data Coordination Center;
- (c) Coordinate the financial contributions for research infrastructure including the national Data Coordination Center in the field of personalized medicine;
- (d) Foster R&D and communication in the field of personalized medicine;
- (e) Coordinate and intensify the cooperation between research institutions, public and private health institutions and organisations, politics and public administration;
- (f) Promote a dialogue in and with the public on personalized medicine;
- (g) Secure additional external funding.

Article 2.**Governing Bodies**

The SPHN has the following governing bodies:

- (a) National Steering Board (NSB);
- (b) Executive Board (EB);
- (c) Data Expert Group (DEG);
- (d) Ethical Legal Social Issues Advisory Group (ELSIag);
- (e) International Advisory Board (IAB);
- (f) Management Office (MO).

As a rule, the members of the bodies (a) – (d) provide their services in an honorary capacity. They are entitled to compensation for their out-of-pocket expenses. Mandates executed by the members which exceed the work in connection with the meetings of the bodies can be compensated according to a separate compensation directive. The directive also includes a section on the compensation of the International Advisory Board.

(a) National Steering Board (NSB)**Article 3.****Duties and Powers of the NSB**

1. The NSB reports regularly to SERI, the contracting authority. It also communicates on a regular basis with other political authorities (i.e. FOPH, Cantonal Public Health Ministers). It is coordinated by the SAMS in collaboration with partners such as for example the SNSF.
2. The NSB is the highest governing body of the SPHN. It has overall strategic responsibilities for the whole initiative including the coordination of data standards and interoperability, the integration of SBP and HBCP, and Personalized Health platforms at Universities and University Hospitals.
3. In particular, the NSB exercises the following duties and powers:
 - a. Within the framework of the mandate given by the political authorities, determining the SPHN's strategic focus (incl. requirements of data infrastructure, data semantic, scope of coordination, etc.);
 - b. Decide on funds allocation based on the funding principles and upon proposal of the International Advisory Board;
 - c. Appoint and dismiss the Chairperson of the NSB (and her/his Vice-Chair); the Chairperson shall be an elected Council Member of the SAMS;
 - d. Appoint and dismiss the members of the Executive Board; Appoint the Chairperson of the EB (and her/his Vice-Chair);
 - e. Appoint the Chairperson of the DEG (and her/his Vice-Chair);
 - f. Appointing an ELSI Advisory Group, its Chairperson, as well as prescribing the ELSI Advisory Group's tasks and powers in separate rules;

- g. Appointing an International Advisory Board and prescribing the International Advisory Board's tasks and powers in separate rules;
- h. Approve and dismiss the Managing Director;
- i. Annual report to the political authorities;
- j. Approve the business plan prepared and submitted by the Executive Board and the yearly budget and the yearly management report including accounting;
- k. Approve the Rules of Procedure and the Funding Principles of SPHN;
- l. Supervise the activities of the other governing bodies;
- m. Promote the SPHN's goals in industry;
- n. Report yearly to the SPHN Partners if wished;
- o. Represent the SPHN Initiative to the outside, in collaboration with the EB according to the communication concept;
- p. Determining who shall be entitled to sign on SPHN's behalf.

Article 4.

Composition | Appointment | Term of Office

1. The NSB is composed of about 17 members which represent University Hospitals (3; 1 "Lausanne-Geneva-Bern" cluster; 1 "Zurich-Basel" cluster; 1 Verband für Universitäre Medizin), swissuniversities (3; including 1 representative of the Universities of Applied Sciences), ETH domain (2; 1 ETHZ and 1 EPFL), SNSF (1; SNSF representative), FOPH (1), SIB (1; SIB Director), ELSI (1; Chairperson of ELSI advisory group), SAMS (2; president/vice-president plus 1 additional council member) and others (max. 3), plus the Chairperson of the EB and the Managing Director without rights to vote. The represented institutions can propose the NSB members, and they are elected by the SAMS on behalf of the SERI.
2. The Chairperson of the NSB and her/his Vice-Chair are appointed every four years and may be reappointed.

Article 5.

Meetings

1. There are at least three NSB meetings per year.
2. The meetings are convened by the Chairperson at least ten days before the meeting in writing and specifying the agenda.
3. A member of the NSB and/or the Chairperson of the Executive Board may request an additional meeting by giving written notice to the Chairperson specifying the agenda and the motions to be considered. It shall be convened following the same procedure as for the other meetings.

4. Minutes of each meeting shall be kept. A member may request that her/his motions, including a statement of justification, or her/his rejection of a resolution be recorded in the minutes.

Article 6.

Resolutions

1. In the meetings, each member has one vote. Vote by a fully empowered proxy is allowed.
2. Quorum shall be reached if at least half of all members entitled to vote are present.
3. The meetings shall adopt resolutions with the majority of votes.
4. Votes shall be cast by a show of hands. Any member may request a secret ballot.
5. Resolutions may also be adopted by circular letter (email), provided no member requests an oral discussion.

(b) Executive Board (EB)

Article 7.

Duties and Powers of the EB

The EB is the operative body of the SPHN. The EB shall be responsible for the scientific strategic planning and for the operative tasks of the initiative. The EB must cover the whole disciplinary range relevant to personalized medicine.

In particular, the Executive Board has the following duties:

- a. Establish the business plan, the budgets, the annual account and the annual management report of the SPHN to be submitted to the NSB;
- b. Coordinate the requirements of data infrastructure, data semantic, scope of coordination, etc. with the Data Expert Group;
- c. Provide projects, themes, and call for proposals suggestions to the NSB that the SPHN Initiative could support;
- d. Registration of the research projects approved by SNSF;
- e. Create and appoint commissions or committees for specific purposes and appoint and dismiss the members of such bodies;
- f. Support the SAMS in selecting a Managing Director to be proposed to the NSB;
- g. Coordinate the collaboration in data collection and research in the field of personalized medicine;
- h. Interact closely and ensure internal communications with the other committees/bodies within the SPHN;
- i. Support interdisciplinary programs of Partners within the limits of financial resources available;
- j. Present proposals and motions in all matters to be submitted to the NSB meetings;

- k. Represent the SPHN Initiative together with the NSB to the outside;

Article 8.

Composition | Appointment | Term of Office

1. The EB shall be composed of about eleven (11) members: active clinical scientists (2), Medical/Clinical Bioinformatics of University Hospitals (2; 1 "Lausanne-Geneva-Bern" cluster; 1 "Zurich-Basel" cluster), SBP (1), SIB (1, Director of the DCC), "technolomics" (2; 1 "Lausanne-Geneva-(Bern)" cluster; 1 "Zurich-Basel" cluster), CSCS (1, director), Public Health/Epidemiology (1) and others (1); the Managing Director without a right to vote.
2. The members of the EB shall be active scientists involved in basic, translational and/or clinical human research within their respective organizations/institutions. They shall have a strong international reputation in their research field and be able to dedicate time and their commitment to the SPHN Initiative.
3. The members of the EB shall be appointed by the NSB upon recommendation of each Partner and in consideration of No. 2 of this Article. They shall be appointed to office for a term of four years and may be reappointed.
4. The EB shall organize itself, with the exception of the Chairperson, who is appointed by the NSB for four years.
5. In case an issue is discussed in which a EB member has vested interests, she/he will have to withdraw from the discussion.

Article 9.

Resolutions

1. Each member of the EB shall have one vote. The principle of "ad personam participation" shall apply; vote by proxy shall not be allowed.
2. The EB shall take decisions by simple majority of the votes. In case of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
3. Quorum shall be reached if at least half of all members entitled to vote are present.
4. Resolutions may be adopted by circular letter (email), provided no member requests an oral discussion.

Article 10.

Meetings | Proceedings

1. The EB shall meet as often as the business may require, but no less than five (5) times a year.
2. The meetings shall be called by the Chairperson of the EB or by the Managing Director on her/his behalf. In addition, every member of the EB may request the convocation of a meeting by the Chairperson by submitting a written agenda for the meeting to be called.

3. As a rule, at the end of a regular meeting, the date of the next one should be fixed. The agenda is circulated at least five (5) days in advance. In urgent cases, without being required to comply with this notice provision, the Chairperson of the EB may also call a meeting by written notice or any other adequate means (e. g. by telephone or electronic mail). In such urgent cases, members unable to attend will have the opportunity to contribute to the decisions either during the meeting (discussion and vote by telephone), or within 24 hours after the meeting (vote by electronic mail).
4. A member of the EB may request that an item be placed on the agenda. An inquiry to this effect must be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the EB in good time before the invitation to the meeting is issued. Issues of great urgency raised after the invitation to the meeting has been issued may be discussed in the meeting. However, resolutions concerning such issues may only be adopted if all members of the EB are present and agree about the decision.
5. Only the resolution adopted in the meeting shall be entered in the minutes.
6. In case of circular resolutions, the decision memorandum shall be confirmed in writing (confirmation by e-mail sufficient) by all members, including the dissenting members, and by the keeper of the minutes.

(c) Data Expert Group (DEG)

Article 11.

1. The aim of the DEG is to elaborate and define common technical data standards, harmonize semantics, data storage formats, data security, database management and quality control. This information will be summarised in a roadmap.
2. The DEG shall inform the Executive Board of progress made and may, within the limits of its competence, submit proposals and motions to the Executive Board.
3. The DEG shall be composed of about twenty (20) members: experts from all institutions involved in the SPHN. The Chairperson shall be a representative of the SIB Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics.
4. The DEG shall define its internal organisation itself (with the exception of the Chairperson who is appointed by the NSB) and adopt its own rules of procedures, if necessary.

(d) Ethical Legal Social Issues Advisory Group (ELSIag)

Article 12.

1. The ELSI advisory group treats ethico-legal challenges that the SPHN Initiative will face related to Ethical, Legal and Social Implications. It supports adherence to the data protection rules according to the Human Research Act (HRA).
2. ELSIag shall develop robust ethical policies anticipating well-known challenges such as that of appropriate informed consent and privacy. Also, it should develop mechanisms and processes that will be ready to handle issues that have not been anticipated and will require a swift resolution.

3. The ELSIag shall play a key role in the development of such mechanisms. It provides advice to NSB and EB, but also to the SPHN research projects.
4. ELSIag shall advise the EB and NSB in the development of policies for data sharing and managing questions of intellectual property, authorship and attribution according to national and international standards.
5. Based on its important and multiform significance, the composition of the ELSIag must be diversified and should consist of about 9 members including representatives of the following fields/organizations: Bioethics (2), SAMS (1), swissethics (1), Life Sciences Law (1), Social Sciences (1), others (max. 3).

The ELSIag is represented at the National Steering Board (NSB) by its Chairwoman/ Chairman.

(e) International Advisory Board (IAB)

Article 13.

1. An International Advisory Board (IAB) provides international advise, expertise, and peer–review of specific funding proposals and of the initiative as a whole.
2. The IAB should be composed of a core of six to eight members.

(f) Management Office (MO)

Article 14.

1. The MO shall be responsible for the daily operations of the SPHN.
2. The MO shall be directed by a Managing Director; the Managing Director reports directly to the Chair of the NSB.
3. The MO shall be integrated at the offices of the Swiss Academy for Medical Sciences (SAMS) in Bern. The SAMS shall provide the necessary infrastructure for the Management Office.
4. The MO provides administrative support to all SPHN bodies (i.e. NSB, EB, DEG, ELSIag, IAB) as well as to the whole SPHN Initiative as required by the actual needs.
5. Communication (internal as well as external) will be an important part of the SPHN. This will be organized and coordinated by the MO.
6. Salaries and running costs for the MO shall be financed through Federal Funds.
7. Essentially, the MO shall have the following duties:
 - a. Prepare the agenda for the meetings of the NSB and the EB together with their respective Chairperson and record the minutes of the meetings;
 - b. Support the implementation of the resolutions by the NSB and EB;
 - c. Organize, direct and control the daily operations of the SPHN Initiative;
 - d. Report, control and prepare the budget;
 - e. Ensure timely and effective information flow between the MO, NSB and EB;

- f. Ensure the information flow between the various partner institutions, and in particular between the SNSF, the SERI, the FOPH and the office of the Cantonal Public Health Ministers.

Article 15.**Participation of Third Parties**

1. Bodies of SPHN (NSB, EB, ELSIag, DEG, MO) may invite interested third parties, e.g. representative of authorities, health sector, industry, politics or international research institutions, but also employees of the individual Partners as permanent or non-permanent guests to the meetings. By decision of the respective body, invited third parties may be excluded from the discussion and voting procedures concerning certain issues. Third parties shall be bound to confidentiality.
2. Permanent and non-permanent guests shall not have the right to vote or move a motion.

Governance**Article 16.****Business Year**

The business year of SPHN shall be the calendar year.

Article 17.**Financing**

1. SPHN's financing shall be ensured by the yearly contributions of the Confederation and the private sector (Third Party Fund from industry, SME etc) to the SAMS and the SIB.
2. SPHN funds shall be transferred in tranches to the institutions according to decisions by the NSB.
3. For the implementation of the approved projects, payments to the individual Partners shall be made in accordance with the regulations of the SAMS.

Article 18.**Power to Sign**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the NSB are authorised to sign legally binding documents on behalf of the SPHN together with another member of the NSB board or the Managing Director. The NSB is responsible for appointing additional persons with authority to sign on behalf of the SPHN and

specifying the details of the authority. Documents that are not legally binding can be signed by the Chair, the Vice-Chair or the Managing Director alone.

Article 19.

Accounting Records, Reporting and Audit

1. SPHN shall have its own accounting records.
2. The accounting and annual reporting of SPHN Federal funds shall be administrated by the SAMS and by the SIB respectively.
3. The audit shall be carried out by a third party company.
4. MO reports to the NSB. The NSB must approve any report sent to external bodies e.g. State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.

Final Provisions

Article 20.

Amendments

1. In order to be put to the vote, a motion proposing an amendment to the rules of procedure must be submitted by a member to the president in writing at least thirty days prior to a meeting.
2. To amend the rules of procedure, a resolution passed by the majority of the members present at a meeting is required.

These rules of procedures were adopted by the National Steering Board on 5 December 2016.