

## SSPH+ Financial Concept 2023-2027

Approved by the SSPH+ Foundation Board at the meeting on 6 May 2022

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### SUMMARY

The SSPH+ Financial Concept 2023-2027 sets the rules for the SSPH+ budget. The core budget is funded by contributions from the SSPH+ Foundation partner universities, while services, activities, projects, or programs that exceed the core funded activities of SSPH+ must be funded by external donors.

For the annual core budget (CHF 970'00), each partner university contributes a flat rate of CHF 22'000 and a per capita amount based on the number of SSPH+ Faculty members (as of February 1, 2022). This contribution remains stable for the whole 5-year period as long as the SSPH+ Foundation remains stable. A 5-year agreement between SSPH+ and each partner university guarantees a stable and predictable core budget. Its use is approved on an annual base by the Foundation Board.

A new university joining SSPH+ per 2023 or later will contribute an annual flat rate of CHF 22'000 and a per capita amount of CHF 3'500 for each SSPH+ Faculty member approved by the SSPH+ Foundation Board. Half of this new core contribution will result in an increase in the overall SSPH+ core budget, while the rest will result in a deduction of the core contribution of universities that already belonged to SSPH+ as of January 2023.

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## A. BACKGROUND

The current SSPH+ Financial Concept (years 2018-2022) marks the first period in which SSPH+ core activities are fully funded by the SSPH+ partner universities. From 2005 - 2016, indeed, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) funded the SSPH+ core activities with a total of CHF 29 million, including CHF 8 million assigned for research (Assistant Professor programs), many postgraduate programs, and all central services of SSPH+, which amounted to approximately CHF 2 million per year. Salary costs for the Director, Deputies and the Directorate's office ranged from CHF 300'000-450'000 per year.

With the first SSPH+ Financial Concept 2018-2022, the Foundation Board secured the budget for the Directorate at a similar level as in the past, whereas the budget for the core activities was reduced, resulting in an annual core budget of CHF 930'000 provided by eight universities. The SSPH+ expansion to 12 universities increased the annual core budget to CHF 1 million while the contribution of the original eight partners decreased. The core funded salary costs remained at the same level. The decline in the core budget after 2016 corresponds to the closure of the Assistant Professor programs and to the end of support for continuing education, as this cannot be funded anymore by universities but must be fully self-funded.

The core budget contributions were distributed among the SSPH+ partner universities based on the size of public health research, determined by the number of SSPH+ Faculty members registered in February 2016 (or thereafter, at the time of joining SSPH+). With the adoption of the 2018-2022 concept, SSPH+ increased the acquisition of funds to support its network in all three strategic pillars (see summary of developments in the Strategy 2023-2027). The stable 5-year core budget allowed the Directorate to focus on fostering core activities, implementing the first two phases of the expansion strategy, and acquiring additional funds. The pandemic further amplified this success, resulting in SSPH+ channeling, on average, four times more funds to the SSPH+ network in 2020 and 2021 than what the 12 universities had to contribute to the SSPH+ core budget.

With this in mind, the SSPH+ Foundation Board (in December 2020) has specified the following conditions in its request for a financial concept for the next period:

1. The next Financial Concept should again apply for a 5-year period.
2. The total core budget during those 5 years should remain at the current level of approximately CHF 1 million per year (assuming that 12 universities belong to the SSPH+ Foundation at the time of implementation of the new Financial Concept).
3. The distributor of university contributions should be fixed prior to 2023 and not change during the 5-year period.
4. The distributor shall be based on fair and transparent criteria that reflect the unequal size of the public health science constituencies across universities.
5. For activities not funded by the core budget, SSPH+ should continue to raise funds while avoiding any competition with its partner universities' sources of funding.

## B. GENERAL FUNDING CONCEPT OF SSPH+

Activities supported by the SSPH+ Foundation are either funded by the agreed upon annual contribution of the universities of the SSPH+ Foundation ("Core Funding") or from any other third party ("External Funding"), as specified in the following parts:

**1. Core Funding:** The basic infrastructure and both fixed and variable core activities of SSPH+ are financed through the core budget. This covers in particular all basic services provided by SSPH+ to fulfill its inter-university mission. It also funds the academic and administrative core staff of the Directorate's office to ensure the basic operations of SSPH+. The SSPH+ faculty regularly assesses the priorities for central core services to ensure that SSPH+ continues to add value for its constituencies. The size of the core budget, its distribution across the partners and the funding mechanisms (Agreements with SSPH+) are pre-set for the 5-year funding period: a) to guarantee stability and predictability in the planning; and b) to omit annual re-discussions or negotiations of the core budget, which distract from fulfilling the SSPH+'s core missions.

**2. External Funding:** Services, activities, projects, or programs that exceed the core funded activities of SSPH+ must be funded by external donors. This may include the acquisition of grants (e.g., fellowship programs) or the general fundraising to support SSPH+ activities. Externally funded projects must also cover all related administrative costs incurred by the SSPH+ Directorates' office to avoid using core university funding as an "in-kind contribution" to the fixed costs of externally funded projects.

This two-tiered approach allows SSPH+ to remain operational in a sustainable and predictable way with basic core activities, regardless of whether SSPH+ experiences an increase or decrease in externally funded projects and activities. As seen during the pandemic, the latter can completely vary over time. The SSPH+ Directorate's office can mandate SSPH+ activities to the academic institutions of the SSPH+ Faculty members. Thus, despite the growth and development

of SSPH+ due to subsidiary funds, the central infrastructure can remain stable, while SSPH+ channels external funds or parts of the core budget to its constituencies. To optimize procedures, governance and the overall success of SSPH+ projects, and to avoid competing with partner institutions, SSPH+ may opt for centralizing minor parts of a project in the Directorate's office (e.g., coordination or administration), while mandating most activities – especially research and teaching – and channeling the related funds to the SSPH+ partner institutions.

### C. FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE CORE BUDGET

1. **SSPH+ partner universities:** As long as there are no other sources available to fund the core budget of SSPH+, the universities belonging to the SSPH+ Foundation commit to the full annual contribution in line with the above principles. In case other sources of funding of the core budget materialize, the Foundation Board can approve corresponding reductions of the SSPH+ partner universities' contributions while keeping the total core budget stable.
2. **SSPH+ journals IJPH / PHR:** According to the business model approved by the Foundation Board in May 2021, the SSPH+ journals are expected to generate net revenues which are primarily invested in the development of the journals (e.g., fee waiver programs for authors from low-income countries, trainings, etc.). However, if the revenues are larger than the total costs of the journals, the additional revenues shall contribute to reduction of the universities' contributions to the core budget. Modalities of this option can be defined and approved by the Foundation Board by May 2023.
3. **Sponsors for core activities:** Although most sponsors prefer to support specific projects rather than the core budget of SSPH+, the option to find funders willing to support SSPH+ in general (i.e., infrastructure, staff, or core activities) remains open. Modalities of the reduction in universities' contribution to the core budget need to be defined later on. However, such adjustments will apply only to sponsoring commitments secured for at least 24 months. Targeted (conditional) contributions such as grants for specific activities or projects do not lead to an adjustment of the universities' contributions.
4. **Overheads from project revenues and other surpluses:** Occasionally, the annual financial statements of SSPH+ resulted in a surplus, which the Foundation Board approved for investment in the activities of the following year or to increase the 'safety reserve'. In case of relevant surpluses in the annual financial statements, the Foundation Board may decide to assign it toward the university funded core contributions of the following year. This decision must be made by at least a 2/3 majority at the time of approval of the previous year's financial statements (usually in May), with application to the next year budgeting.

### D. PRINCIPLES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF THE CORE BUDGET

Based on the conditions set by the Foundation Board, SSPH+ will receive an annual core budget of CHF 970'000 (assuming only 11 of the current 12 SSPH+ partner universities for the funding period 2023-2027). To ensure a smooth and fair process, and in respect of the budgetary and strategic authority of the Foundation Board, SSPH+ partner universities cannot individually decide on the use of their core contribution for SSPH+ activities. The collective budget allocation is instead a key annual responsibility of the Foundation Board.

The Foundation Board already decided to dismiss a model which would allocate the same amounts to each Foundation university. Public health sciences are unequally distributed across the SSPH+ partners and Swiss universities in general. Whereas some have small faculty clusters for highly specialized public health domains, others recruited up to ten times larger constituencies of professors (thus, related research groups), covering a broad multidisciplinary range of public health sciences in a single institute or university. As the number of all SSPH+ beneficiaries (SSPH+ Faculty members, fellows, lecturers, students, labs, etc.) varies widely across universities, the model would be unfair and thus not in line with the Foundation Board's decision to adopt a fair burden distribution. Thus, it is essential to define "criteria of size" to allocate the core budget amounts to each partner university.

### E. CRITERIA FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CORE BUDGET

To define the distribution of the core budget (CB) among the SSPH+ partner universities, a range of distributional criteria were considered.

The chosen criterion should be

- a) a fair reflection of differences in the "academic size", structure and organization of each partner
- b) easy to define
- c) easy to measure (or enumerate)
- d) transparent
- e) applicable to new universities joining SSPH+

Number of SSPH+ Faculty members

The Foundation Board approved that this is the sole criterion that fulfills all requirements. The Concept 2018-22 was based on this criterion as well. Apart from complying with the given requirements, advantages of this choice stand out:

- 1) The number of SSPH+ Faculty members is a direct and strong indicator of the importance and role of the public health sciences at a university. Thus, the criterion reflects the relative importance within the SSPH+ network and the strategic priorities that a university assigns to public health in recruiting faculty.
- 2) "SSPH+ Faculty member" is a well-defined, unique status, thus enumeration is simple and clear. To be approved as SSPH+ Faculty member by the Foundation Board, scientists must be a faculty member (*full, associate, adjunct (or titular), "Förder"- or assistant professors or habilitated / PD*) at their home university and have an academic record in a public health science domain. Thus, both the university's authority in recruiting faculty and the academic SSPH+ requirements are well reflected in this single criterion.
- 3) Faculty members and their research groups are the primary beneficiaries of SSPH+ activities and services. More specifically, the ability to take up SSPH+ mandates also depends on the number of SSPH+ faculty, thus, the benefits generated and the funds flowing from SSPH+ to the partners naturally correlates with this indicator. Thus, large constituencies will not only pay larger contributions to the core budget, but will also more likely be larger beneficiaries of SSPH+ funded mandates.
- 4) Faculty members of SSPH+ partner universities interested in becoming SSPH+ Faculty members are the driving factor for a university to join the SSPH+ Foundation. Thus, this indicator greatly facilitates the procedures in negotiations with new SSPH+ partner universities as defined in the SSPH+ expansion strategy adopted by the Foundation Board in 2018.

The Foundation Board also examined other options which were rejected (see Annex 2).

**F. APPROACHES FOR DEFINING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CORE BUDGET**

Annex 3 contains all the discussion details on the four approaches considered for the core budget distribution among the SSPH+ partner universities. The Foundation Board approved the following two rules:

**1. Combination of fixed amount per university and size-dependent distribution**

A fraction of 20-25% of the total core budget shall be equally divided by the number of SSPH+ partner universities, reflecting a "flat rate" for costs which are not dependent on the number of faculty. The faculty enumerations (see Annex 1) and the final rounding procedures resulted in CHF 22'000 being equally assigned to the annual contribution of each SSPH+ partner university, corresponding to 25% of the total core budget.

**2. Per capita distribution of the remaining amount**

The remaining 75% of the core budget shall be distributed on a per capita basis of the SSPH+ Faculty members as enumerated by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. This approach is identical to the one used in the Financial Concept 2018-2022.

**G. HANDLING OF CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF SSPH+ PARTNER UNIVERSITIES**

The chosen approach of the Financial Concept 2023-2027 will be kept fixed for 5 years. Thus, the annual core contribution of each university remains stable as long as the Foundation remains stable. Any changes in the university-specific faculty size occurring during those 5 years (e.g., new recruitments, retirements, departures, etc.) do not affect the agreed upon amounts except one of the following conditions apply:

- a) Expansion of SSPH+ Foundation: The SSPH+ expansion strategy adopted by the Foundation Board in 2018 has not yet been finalized, thus, a few other universities may still join SSPH+. In that case the formerly adopted concept will apply. Details of those rules are provided in the next section H. As shown, the expansion results in reductions of the core contribution of the current SSPH+ partner universities.
- b) Reduction of SSPH+ partner universities: In case a university decides to leave the SSPH+ Foundation, the SSPH+ core budget will be reduced by the respective amount, with no changes made to the remaining universities. Payment rules for departing universities are specified in the 2023-2027 Agreement signed by each university. After leaving SSPH+, the SSPH+ Faculty members and institutions are no longer entitled to SSPH+ funds, resources, or mandates.
- c) New sources of core budget contributions apart from the universities: As mentioned above (see Funding Sources in C) SSPH+ may find other sources in contribution to the core budget. For core contributions provided by other funders, details will be subject to negotiations and contracts with the latter. At least part of these contributions is expected to be used to reduce those of the universities. For internal contributions to the CB (revenues from journals,

surplus etc.) the Foundation Board will decide on its carry over to the core budget of the following year. Related deductions in the contributions of the universities will follow the same per capita-based % distribution as the per capita-based total annual contribution of each university (i.e. no change of the fixed amount).

- d) Changes in the number of SSPH+ Faculty members: New faculty members joining SSPH+ from one of the current SSPH+ partner universities (e.g. promotion or new recruitment) after 1.2.2022 as well as retirements or individual cancellation of faculty status do not result in any change of the annual 2023-2027 core contribution.

#### **H. FINANCING RULES IN CASE OF THE EXPANSION OF SSPH+ FOUNDATION**

The SSPH+ expansion is not closed given that a few Swiss universities not yet in the Foundation but engaged in public health-oriented sciences may be interested in joining SSPH+ (in line with the expansion strategy adopted by the Foundation Board). The following rules apply, when a new university joins the SSPH+ Foundation.

a) Foundation capital contribution

At entry into the SSPH+ Foundation, the SSPH+ statutes require a Foundation capital contribution of CHF 10'000, to be paid once, at entry.

b) Derivation of the core contribution of a new Foundation university

According to the Financial Concept 2023-2027, the new university pays the following on an annual basis:

1. The same annual fixed fee of CHF 22'000 as all other SSPH+ partner universities;
2. An annual per capita amount of CHF 3'500.

c) Use of the core contribution of a new SSPH+ partner university

As in the past years, half of the new core contribution will result in an increase of the total SSPH+ core budget, whereas the rest will result in a deduction of the core contribution of the universities which belonged already to SSPH+ in January 2023. This deduction follows the same % distribution as the fraction of core budget distributed on a per capita basis (i.e. no change of the fixed amount).

All other rules of the Financial Concept 2023-2027 also apply to the new universities. In particular, universities have no rights to assign their core contribution to specific activities only. As in case of current SSPH+ partner universities, promotions or new recruitments of faculty during 2023-2027 who apply as SSPH+ Faculty member will not change the core contribution. However, if a faculty member of the new university who was already eligible as SSPH+ Faculty member at the time the university joined the SSPH+ Foundation is later approved as a new SSPH+ Faculty member, this will result in a per capita increase in the annual core contribution.

**ANNEX 1: DERIVED CORE CONTRIBUTION 2023-2027**

The Table shows the current (until December 2022) distribution of the core contribution with the related number and % of faculty enumerated in February 2016 or at entry date and the upcoming conditions.

The final distribution is based on the SSPH+ faculty enumeration (data base as of 1.2.2022).

University	Core distribution 2022 (concept 2018-22)			Core distribution 2023-2027					
	annual core (CHF)	number of faculty members	faculty in %	number of faculty members	faculty in %	annual core fixed fee (CHF)	annual core per-capita (CHF)	TOTAL CORE (CHF)	total core in %
Basel	338'760	51	35%	59	27%	22'000	195'236	217'236	22%
BFH	45'500	7	5%	7	3%	22'000	23'164	45'164	5%
Fribourg	45'500	7	5%	8	4%	22'000	26'473	48'473	5%
Geneva	43'431	7	4%	32	15%	22'000	105'891	127'891	13%
Lausanne	95'549	15	10%	30	14%	22'000	99'273	121'273	13%
Luzern	43'431	6	4%	8	4%	22'000	26'473	48'473	5%
Neuchâtel	34'745	5	4%	9	4%	22'000	29'782	51'782	5%
SUPSI	52'000	8	5%	8	4%	22'000	26'473	48'473	5%
USI	52'117	8	5%	7	3%	22'000	23'164	45'164	5%
ZHAW	104'000	16	11%	10	5%	22'000	33'091	55'091	6%
Zurich	121'606	18	12%	42	19%	22'000	138'982	160'982	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>976'639</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>242'000</b>	<b>728'000</b>	<b>970'000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**ANNEX 2: OTHER POSSIBLE CRITERIA FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CORE MONEY**

The following criteria were examined, but not retained.

*Size of the university*

The size of Swiss universities (e.g., budget, number of FTEs, number of Bachelor, Master, and PhD students, etc.) has very little correlation with the strength of the public health sciences. However, only the latter is a relevant determinant to benefit from the value created by SSPH+.

*Number of PhD students*

The enumeration of PhD students is much more difficult given its fluctuation over time and locally varying arrangements. To name a few, the criterion raises questions of how to deal with students spending most of their time abroad, unfunded PhD students, part-time PhD students, or co-supervision with partners outside SSPH+. Moreover, at this stage, universities of applied sciences face a range of regulatory obstacles to contract PhD students or to officially act as “primary supervisor”, which would add to the complexity in using this indicator as a basis for the distributor of core funds (e.g. in assigning PhD students simply to the university of their promotion, the UAS partners of SSPH+ would not need to pay any core contribution as long as UAS are not entitled to promote doctoral degrees).

*Number of publications*

The use of this indicator would raise a number of complex issues in enumeration, such as authorship position, year and type of publication to be included, or search engines to be used. It would not take into account the major differences in scientific culture across the various disciplines of public health sciences, with some being strongly focused on publishing many articles whereas others ought to focus on few high-impact papers or monographs. In addition, funding is biased toward research dissemination through papers and monographs, neglecting the other two strategic pillars of SSPH+. And last but not least, to the extent that a high publication record may be an indicator of scientific success, a publication-based distributor would penalize the most successful partners.

### ANNEX 3: APPROACHES FOR DEFINING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CORE BUDGET AND RELATED DECISION SCHEME PROVIDED TO THE FOUNDATION BOARD MEETING OF 10.12.2021

The chosen approach needs prior decisions on the following two issues:

**Issue 1:** As in the current period 2018-22, the entire CB could be distributed across the partner universities based on the chosen “criterion of size”. The model, thus, assumes that the core contribution of each university depends solely on the cross-university distribution of the chosen criterion (see below). The derivation of the CB amounts can be done in two ways:

- A) PER CAPITA: As in the current concept, the total CB is divided by the number of faculty to derive an exact per capita fee.
- B) CATEGORIES: Instead, “size categories” are derived (such as e.g. up to 10 faculty members per category), with a flat CB fee per category.

**Issue 2:** Alternatively, given that some 20-25% of the central costs do not depend on any distributional “criterion of size”, one could split the CB into two parts. Proportion  $p$  of the CB could be divided by the number of SSPH+ partner universities as a fixed and equal “annual fee”. The remaining proportion  $(1-p)$  would be distributed according to the chosen “criterion of size”. As in issues 1, this proportion  $(1-p)$  would be assigned either per capita (above A) or per categories of capita (above B).

**The following four approaches reflect various combinations of options described in the above two issues to guide the final decisions. To illustrate the differences between those options, Table 1 summarizes the resulting changes in the cross-university distributions. Those are only approximations given that the concept shall be based on data from early 2022.**

*Status quo:* “no change”, exact same amounts as in current model 2018-22

Description: The distributor used at the end of the current 2018-22 period could be kept for the next 5 years. It is solely based on the number of SSPH+ faculty enrolled as of Feb 2016 (among the eight SSPH+ partner universities at that time) and at the time of entering SSPH+ among those joining since.

- Pro: simple and all have previously agreed to this model
- Con: Ignores the dynamic developments of the academic field seen during the last 5 years. The SSPH+ faculty increased, on average, two-fold. All universities belonging to SSPH+ already in 2016 have seen an increase in SSPH+ faculty whereas those joining later remained more stable. The growth in the former was heterogeneous across universities. E.g., some listed almost all public health oriented professors already in 2016 (i.e. the last enumeration), thus, the growth rate was only +25% to 30%, while some grew a lot during the past 5 years, with their faculty increasing up to 5-fold by now. These drastic shifts are not reflected in the core budget assignment of the current distributor.

*Approach 1A:* Status quo updated (exact per capita, faculty 2022)

Description: The number of SSPH+ Faculty members enumerated in early 2022 will be used to derive the contribution of each university.

- Pro: simple; precise and fair
- Con: Enumeration procedures might be less precise than what the enumeration pretends (pseudo-precision). The sensitivity to single capita might put pressure on each and every faculty member to re-discuss Faculty membership (prior to the enumeration deadline). This may play a role among those few SSPH+ university partners where the core contributions are not paid by the general university budget (rectorate) but rather the unit, department or institute of each faculty. In case of newly joining universities such exact “per capita” derivation of fees might also put pressure on each SSPH+ faculty candidate to not apply.

*Approach 1B:* Categories based on faculty 2022 distribution

Description: Instead of calculating the exact per capita fee, the (identically) enumerated faculty members are put into categories where Cat 1 are universities with up to 15 faculty, Cat 2 are those with 16-25, Cat 3 with 26-35 etc. – (i.e. 10 SSPH+ faculty members per group). The first category includes 15 faculty due to the fact that 5 is the minimum critical mass required to join the SSPH+ Foundation. An amount X rounded to the next thousand is derived as the “fee per category unit” in such a way that the total annual budget corresponds approximately to the current one.



- Pro: Acknowledges the uncertainties in the exact enumeration of faculty (pseudo-precision); attractive for newly joining universities (expansion strategy). There is little financial pressure against those interested to join the faculty of SSPH+ as not “every capita matters”.
- Con: Cut offs may be unattractive to those at the lower end of a category and attractive to those at the upper end), e.g., 16 faculty would cost twice the amount of 15 faculty, etc. Thus, the current concept of a fixed amount “per capita” will not hold anymore. For newly joining universities it could be tempting to prevent passing the border of a category. Derivation is less intuitive given that the “per capita” fee varies to some degree.

*Approach 2A: Flat fee combined with exact “per capita” (based on faculty 2022)*

Description: Assuming only approximately 75-80% of SSPH+ core budget costs, benefits, and activities to be correlated with the size (i.e. number of SSPH+ faculty), this approach a) divides ~20-25% of the annual CB by the number of SSPH+ partner universities, whereas b) ~75-80% are distributed in accordance to the size criterion, enumerated in early 2022, using the exact per capita enumeration.

- Pro: simple, fair, proper reflection of fixed and size dependent costs of SSPH+
- Con: Major influence of precision of faculty enumeration – (see above approach 1A)

*Approach 2B: Flat fee combined with categories (based on faculty 2022)*

Description: This corresponds to the Approach 1B, but combines it with a flat fee (equal amount for each university). Thus, approx. 20-25% of the total core are covered with identical contributions per university and the rest is distributed along the categories described above. The per category unit amount is a rounded number.

- Pro: very simple, transparent, easy to derive and understand. All pro’s of flat rates mentioned above
- Con: to maintain rounded numbers, it is not possible to also pre-define the exact total CB. One can only approximate the latter.

*Decisions to be taken by the Foundation Board (10.12.2021)*

Final decisions about the approach to derive the new core funding distribution is an essential step to make final derivations in January 22. Thereafter, SSPH+ and its partner rectorates will need time to clarify the next steps.

Instead of deciding among the four approaches directly, one could make decisions on each conceptual element to be able to finalize the concept, derive the exact core contributions 2023-2027 early 2022, inform the university partners early spring 2022, and settle the Agreements (summer 2022) and the exact funding mechanisms. Those decision elements would be the following:

**DECISION 1:** The number of SSPH+ Faculty members is the distributional criterion

Rationale: The concept proposes the continuation of the current concept with regard to the distributional criterion. As in the current concept, the only “criterion of size” will be the number of SSPH+ Faculty members (either exact number or categories (to be voted on below).

Do you agree with this criterion?

- YES
- NO

If NO: I propose the following criterion (and rationale): .....

**DECISION 2:** Fixed central costs are covered with a “flat rate”

Rationale: As discussed in Approaches 2A and 2B, some 20-25% of the core activities can be considered “fixed costs” unrelated to the criterion of size. It is thus proposed to assign the same annual “flat rate” to each university as a contribution to those fixed costs whereas only the remaining core budget amounts will be distributed by the “criterion of size”. This new proposal reflects very well the experience made during the past years that certain central costs do not depend on the size of the faculty.

Do you agree with introducing a flat rate?

YES

If YES:

- I agree to assign some 20-25% to the fixed costs.
- I propose to assign the following % range of the total budget to the fixed costs: ....%

NO, I prefer to distribute the entire core budget by the “size criterion” (status quo)

### **DECISION 3: Categorization of the “criterion of size” instead of exact “per capita” calculations**

Rationale: As discussed in Approaches 1B and 2B the categorization of the enumerated faculty is intriguing both in the initial derivation of the distribution (i.e. early 2022) and in case of new universities joining SSPH+ during the upcoming years. It is not sensitive to uncertainties in the base line enumeration – which can happen, e.g. some faculty not informing us during the usual end-of-year control of the data base. In the communication with new universities interested in joining it is very easy to communicate the fee per category whereas the exact “per capita” calculation puts too much emphasize on the decision of each and every potential new faculty member.

Do you agree with “categories of size” instead of exact “per capita” calculations?

YES

If YES:

- I agree with the proposed categories where members per category can vary within 10 faculty members (thus, the first category goes up to 15 – varying between at least 5 and 15, the others range up to 25, 35, etc.)
- No, I prefer the following model to define the categories: .....

NO, I prefer exact “per capita” calculations