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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**

Research and Innovation

Horizon Europe – Guide

for Swiss participants on how to apply for direct funding in collaborative projects

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¹ This is a pre-version, which is subject to ongoing revision. In case of open questions and/or ambiguities, please let us know by email: europrogram@sbf.admin.ch



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1 Introduction

As long as Switzerland is not associated to Horizon Europe (HEU) , SERI can fund the participation of Swiss entities in projects responding to calls that are open for participation of Swiss partners. Figure 1 gives an overview over the accessibility of HEU-programme parts for Swiss participants. We attempt to give an overview on how Swiss

Figure 1: Eligibility and funding of Swiss participants in Horizon Europe and Euratom.

participants can submit requests for funding of their participations in HEU collaborative projects to the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) . This overview is complemented by a “shortlist” of the most important nancial rules from the [nancial guidelines](#) that need to be considered.

Financial support can be requested for Swiss participations in HEU collaborative projects that have been positively evaluated, proposed for funding and for which a grant agreement (GA) has been signed² in which the Swiss participants are mentioned as so-

² at least by the European Commission (EC) and the project coordinator.

called associated partners (APs) .

Currently, SERI can fund Swiss participants in HEU projects with call identifier 2021³, if Switzerland is not associated to HEU⁴ at the time of signature of the project's GA⁵.

Though we will do our best in trying to keep this document up-to date, the situation might change quickly and we highly recommend keeping track of the latest developments on www.horizon-europe.ch.

Please note that you can no longer apply for financial support for your participation in HEU projects once Switzerland is associated to HEU. Swiss participants would then be funded directly by the EC.

This “living” document will be extended and adapted according to how things evolve regarding a possible association to HEU and will also include the experiences both Swiss participants and administrative staff will make during the transition period.

We really do hope that the procedure outlined below (see also [fig. 2](#)) is slim and straightforward enough to allow you participating in HEU projects and being part of the European research community as unhampered as possible.

2 Project submission to the EC: how to participate in HEU as an associated partner

As outlined on www.horizon-europe.ch, the administrative and research policy settings for Switzerland have significantly changed with respect to the predecessor framework programme Horizon 2020 to which Switzerland was partially and, from 2016 on, fully associated. In Horizon Europe (HEU), Switzerland currently has the status of a non-EU-member state not associated to HEU. Informal EC-wording uses the term “third country” (TC) for such a country that is also said to participate “in TC mode” or “as a non-associated TC”.

³ i.e. “2021” is included in the call ID on the EC's funding & tenders portal

⁴ i.e. if Switzerland has the status of a so-called non-associated third country (TC) or “is in TC-mode”

⁵ 8 projects with call identifier 2021: in case Switzerland is associated to Horizon Europe after the signature of the grant agreement, project partners based in Switzerland who participate in a collaborative project as participants from a non-associated third country (and therefore receive funding via SERI) will normally continue to receive funding from SERI for the entire duration of the project, unless a specific solution were found during the association negotiations between Switzerland and the European Commission (EC). In any case, the Swiss project partner will receive funding for the entire duration of the project (either by SERI or the EC).

In HEU, eligibility for participation of partners from non-associated TCs is generally restricted to collaborative projects; even so excluding some topics which are exclusively restricted to EU member or associated states.

Being project partners from a non-EU member country not associated to HEU, Swiss entities are eligible to participate in collaborative projects of HEU with the legal status of a so-called associated partner (AP) : APs do not sign the grant agreement (GA) and their budget is neither funded by the EC nor counted towards the total project budget. Furthermore, APs cannot act as project coordinators.

Though the underlying administrative and political settings are admittedly complex, participating in HEU collaborative projects as an AP from a non-associated TC is straightforward (see g. 2) and grossly follows the procedure sketched below. In what follows, we will address the Swiss participant as “you”.

2.1 Start

We assume that you are member of a consortium that intends to submit a proposal in response to a collaborative HEU call that is open for participants from TCs. As a participant, you will have the legal status of an “associated partner” (AP) who will not sign the GA but is legally attached to the project consortium⁶.

2.2 to-do-list

As an AP, you need to consider a few points already during the preparation of a project proposal:

contact: It is highly recommended to notify [Euresearch](#) and/or your institution's research of ce of your intention to participate in a HEU proposal submission. For University or ETH domain participants, please refer to your Euresearch regional of ce and/or your institution's research of ce. For participants from other institutions or enterprises, please refer directly to Euresearch's [network of ce](#) .

⁶ This may be technically implemented by the consortium agreement (CA) or by an association agreement between the AP and one or more of the other project partners who have the legal status of a “beneficiary”.

Figure 2: Outline of how to apply for direct funding of a HEU participation as an AP from Switzerland.



check conditions: The [general annexes](#) to the HEU work programme 2021/22 give an overview of the general conditions a project consortium and its proposal need to match to be eligible for EC funding. Any deviating and/or additional conditions are explained in the call topic text. First of all, please make sure that you and your partners match the two most prominent and important conditions:

(1) As an AP, you need to be eligible for participation which is, as outlined above, true for most but not for all calls for collaborative HEU-projects.

(2) the project consortium as a whole needs to match the “rule of three”: if not stated otherwise in the call text, the consortium must, additionally to you as an AP, consist of at least three partners from three different **EU member states (MS)** and/or **associated countries (AC)**. At least one of these three must be from a MS.

specify your budget: As explained in the [financial guidelines](#)⁷, SERI adheres to the EC’s budgeting rules applicable for HEU project applicants. That is, please specify your costs (in EUR) along the categories **(A)** personnel costs, **(B)** subcontracting costs, **(C)** purchase costs, **(D)** other direct costs, **(E)** indirect costs. For further explanations, see Section 2.1. of the [financial guidelines](#).

place your budget: In the project proposal form, indicate your total costs but leave blank the “requested funding” field. Note that Swiss partners need to be included as APs⁸ and that in the budget table (Part A of the proposal template), only the total cost of the Swiss partner can be included as a “financial contribution” of an “associated partner”.

However, your budget would ideally also appear in the proposal’s Part B, Section 3 or in an annex (not counting to the page limit) to the proposal template. However, this is not required by the EC and therefore depends on the project coordinator’s goodwill (see Section 2.2 of the [financial guidelines](#)).

wait for the evaluation: Once the proposal is submitted, wait until the project is positively evaluated and the coordinator is invited by the EC to prepare a grant agreement (GA).

⁷ which we highly recommend you read as well! The financial guidelines describe also the few financing rules that are specific to Switzerland due to the Swiss national legal framework. You can also download the financial guideline here: www.horizon-europe.ch.

⁸ The Euresearch [factsheet](#) shows how this is done.



3 How to apply for direct federal funding: submission to SERI

If you are lucky to belong to such a successful consortium (and if it is “only” as an AP), the following sections provide you with a short overview of what to do once the project has been evaluated positively and the GA has been signed. In general, all you need to do is complete the [web form](#).

At this place, we need to place a **technical caveat**: If there is **no input** encountered on the web form for \geq **20 minutes**, it will **shut down without saving!**

This is due to technical boundary conditions that cannot be changed in a straightforward way.

3.1 Required information and documents

To get the web form completed swiftly, please be prepared to provide contact data of

- participant (PI);
- your affiliating institution (including legal name and PIC),
- authorised signatory (“Vertragsperson”): if you sign the contract with SERI, then you are the authorised signatory,
- contact person (if this is not you).

Furthermore, copies of the following documents need to be uploaded as pdf-files:

- the submitted proposal,
- evaluation summary report (ESR),
- signed consortium agreement and/or agreement between AP (=you) and beneficiary/ies.
- Signed GA⁹, including Annexes,
- your costs of participation, detailed in the same way as the beneficiaries’ costs (if not included in the GA and/or its Annex).

⁹ We need to see at least valid e-signatures from EC and coordinator to be able to process your application.



3.2 Enter data and submit

When completing the web form, you have the option to pause the procedure at any time and to resume it later.

Only once you hit the “submit”- button in the web form, your request will be submitted to SERI where it will be checked for consistency and completeness.

Should there be any missing information or ambiguities in your request, we will get back to you. Close collaboration and communication are essential at this stage.

By submitting the request, you state that you have checked and approved the final version of the request and that you accept being legally responsible for the submission to SERI. Please note that this also implies that you have secured the consent of your institution's hierarchy.

3.3 Timeline and further steps

As soon as your application has been submitted to SERI and does not require consultations for fixing anymore, you should normally receive an email from the responsible scientific advisor within a maximum of 30 working days, informing you of the next steps leading to the conclusion of the funding contract with SERI¹⁰.

3.4 Important rules

The financial guidelines¹¹ indicate which specific financial aspects need to be taken into account to ensure that the project funding complies with Swiss national legislation.

In what follows, citations via “Art” or “par” refer to the [FIPBV](#) (“Verordnung über die Massnahmen für die Beteiligung der Schweiz an den Programmen der Europäischen Union im Bereich Forschung und Innovation”).

We compile and explain some rules and conditions of participation that the submission procedure is based on and that we consider particularly relevant for you to be aware of when submitting a funding request to SERI.

¹⁰i.e. you will receive a subvention contract signed by SERI which you need to counter-sign to receive the first funding installment.

¹¹You can download the document “Horizon Europe Guidelines for financial reporting on SERI financed participation of Swiss partners in EU research framework programmes” [here](#).



3.4.1 What can be funded

Currently, SERI can fund Swiss partners¹² in HEU projects with call identifiers 2021¹³, unless EC funding is exceptionally provided for participants from non-EU-member states who are not associated to HEU^{14 15}.

3.4.2 Who can be funded

On request, SERI funding can be provided to higher education research institutions, non-commercial research institutions outside the higher education domain and companies that are based in Switzerland (Art. 11 [FIPBV](#)).

Note, however, that for units of the central federal administration¹⁶, specific conditions apply as these cannot receive direct SERI funding. A specific [factsheet](#) has been distributed to the institutions to which it may concern.

Guidelines and a web form for submitting funding requests for mono-beneficiary projects that have been positively evaluated by the EC will be published on the [SERI website](#) as soon as possible.

3.4.3 Submission of requests

(i) Each participating institution handles all SERI funding requests within its domain by one internal centre that (ii) informs SERI about all submitted HEU proposals within its domain, (iii) SERI may define submission deadlines for funding requests (Art. 13 par 3 [FIPBV](#)).

¹²In HEU, eligibility for participation of countries that are neither EU members nor associated to HEU, is generally limited to collaborative projects; in addition, some topics are exclusively restricted to EU member states and associated countries.

¹³i.e. "2021" is included in the call ID on the EC's funding & tenders portal

¹⁴Such countries (to which, for the time being, Switzerland belongs) have the status of a so-called "non-associated third country" (TC) or are "in TC-mode".

¹⁵In case Switzerland becomes associated to Horizon Europe after the signature of the grant agreement, project partners based in Switzerland will continue to receive funding from SERI for the entire duration of the project, unless specific solutions were found during the association negotiations between Switzerland and the EC. In either case, the Swiss project partner will receive funding for the entire duration of the project (either by SERI or the EC).

¹⁶The ordinance on governmental and administrative organisation [RVOV](#) provides a list of the offices that make up the central federal administration.



3.4.4 Formal conditions for SERI funding

- (i) You need to be member of a HEU project consortium where you may have the status of an AP¹⁷.
- (ii) Your participation is not exceptionally funded by the EC (Art. 11 par 3 lit. b FIPBV).

3.4.5 General financial rules

Rules on funding and financial controlling that apply to project partners from EU member states (MS) or associated countries (AC) do, in principle, also apply to Swiss participants. This means, in particular, that SERI funding shall not exceed the funding costs for the Swiss participants as indicated in the GA with respect to funding rates and funding cuts that apply to all project partners. (Art. 12 par 4 FIPBV).

There are some more subtleties that may apply in special situations that are not covered here and below. Should you encounter such a situation, please refer to the [financial guidelines](#), the [Q&A](#) or [contact](#) us directly.

3.4.6 Only costs in Switzerland

SERI funding can only be provided for costs that are incurred in Switzerland. Exceptions: (i) subcontracting costs for work that cannot be performed in Switzerland (Art. 11 par 5 lit. a FIPBV), (ii) costs that are incurred for use of research infrastructures that are not based in Switzerland (Art. 11 par. 5 lit. b FIPBV).

3.4.7 Subcontracts

If you intend to involve subcontractors, these need to be based in Switzerland except if there are no Swiss subcontractors available who are capable of performing the task and the subcontracting cannot be handled by another project partner.

¹⁷Although Art. 11 par 3 lit.a FIPBV states that, to be eligible for SERI funding, your project participation needs to be based on a contract (i.e. the GA) between the European Commission (EC) or an agency mandated by the EC and the Swiss participant, Art. 11 par 4 FIPBV also allows funding of Swiss project partners who participate as APs not signing the GA.



3.4.8 Personnel costs

Please indicate your costs according to the ones indicated in the GA. When indicating direct personnel costs, please use the usual salary rates of your institution. Private companies should comply with the maximum salary rates indicated in Section 3.1 of the financial guidelines. These maximum salary rates are based on Art. 12 FIPBV and, as referenced from there, on Art 7 par 2-5 FIPBV. They are listed in Table 1 for convenience.

staff category	CHF/a	CHF/h
(deputy) project leader; experienced scientist	220'500	119
research assistant	126'000	68
specialist staff member	113'400	61
doctoral student / assistant	85'100	46

Table 1: Staff categories and their maximum gross annual and hourly salary rates for companies and non-higher education institutions. Note that employer's social contributions are not included and that these can be claimed on top.

3.4.9 Be aware of reporting obligations

Although not required when applying for SERI funding, you or your financial department will be requested by SERI to provide detailed financial reportings and to perform audits. The general rules for this will generally follow the ones of the EC.

3.4.10 Within reason!

SERI reserves the right to impose funding cuts should the costs of the Swiss participant be unproportionally¹⁸ and unreasonably high. This includes the right to mandate an external expert panel to review the Swiss project part.

¹⁸As a rule of thumb, you may expect that "Swiss costs" significantly exceeding the costs of the next-expensive project partner will be particularly scrutinised on whether they are justified.



3.4.11 Exchange rate

Please provide all your costs in EUR. SERI will convert the requested amount into CHF, applying the month average exchange rate at the call deadline as published by the [Swiss National Bank](#)¹⁹. If your project was evaluated in a two-stage evaluation, the submission deadline for the 2nd stage proposal will be relevant for the exchange rate calculation.

3.4.12 Payments

SERI funding will be based on a contract between the Swiss participant and SERI (Art. 13 par 4 FIPBV). A first payment instalment of 50% of the funding will be paid on contract signature, the next tranche of 30% after receipt of the interim financial report and the last one (remaining costs up to 20%) after approval of the final financial report. The Swiss participant has to issue an invoice to SERI for each payment.

3.4.13 How to report

You will be asked by email to submit financial and scientific reports when they are due. Copies of all project reports submitted to the EC and the EC project review reports have to be (electronically) sent to SERI according to the reporting periods specified in the GA . Furthermore, specific financial reports to SERI will be required to release payments of funding instalments:

1st financial reporting after 2 years (for projects lasting at least 36 months), or after 1 year for shorter projects. Invoice for max 30% of the grant.

Final financial report at the end of the project. Invoice: remaining eligible costs up to 20% of the grant.

3.4.14 Notifications

All notifications made to the EC concerning amendments to the GA and to the **Consortium Agreement (CA)** must be notified to SERI by email to the responsible scientific

¹⁹for more details, please refer to Section 2.4 of the [financial guideline](#)



and financial advisors²⁰.

3.4.15 Change of affiliation

If the participant (you) changes his or her affiliation, SERI must be informed immediately by email to the scientific advisor assigned to the project participation.

3.4.16 Confidentiality:

Towards Swiss participants, SERI assumes the EC's role as a funding agency and therefore needs to be provided with appropriate project related information to meet its financial controlling obligations. Of course, all information submitted to SERI will be treated confidentially.

If you want to make sure that your partners will not consider transmitting the reports and other official project documents a breach of confidentiality, you may ask your project partners to add a clause to the consortium agreement (if there is one) or to the association agreement that "the Swiss State Secretariat for Research and Innovation (SERI) shall not be considered a third party in the sense of the articles dealing with confidentiality" (Art. 10 DESCA).

3.5 Further information and assistance

Should you encounter any problems or ambiguities, please feel free to contact us or have a look at the [Q&A](#). Please let us know about hooks and pitfalls in the text and within the application procedure. Any recommendation for improvement is most welcome!

SERI-EURA; 22/11/2021

²⁰These contact persons will be assigned to your project participation along the application procedure.