



Status Update: Swiss participation in the Horizon package 2021–2027

Information as of 15 December 2023

SERI provides regular updates on the status of Switzerland's participation in the Horizon package 2021–2027 (Horizon Europe, Euratom Programme, ITER and Digital Europe Programme):

Latest developments

- ➔ **15 December 2023, transitional arrangements:** A transitional arrangement was agreed with the European Commission (EC) to enable researchers in Switzerland to participate in the ERC Advanced Grant (AdG) 2024 call as soon as negotiations on the overall package and on association to the Horizon package have begun in the course of 2024. The negotiations on the association to the EU programmes (including the Horizon package) are part of the negotiations on the overall package and will start after adoption of the negotiation mandates on both sides. This transitional arrangement is to be applied to all Horizon Europe and Euratom calls for proposals for the 2025 programme year, provided that a corresponding agreement between Switzerland and the EU has been initialled¹ by then.
- ➔ **29 November 2023, exploratory talks:** The EC has invited Switzerland to have exploratory talks on Switzerland's association to EU programmes in the fields of education, research and innovation (Horizon Europe, Euratom, Digital Europe Programme, ITER and Erasmus+). These exploratory talks are intended to prepare the negotiations. The exploratory talks have started at the end of November 2023 in Brussels.
- ➔ **31 October 2023, Swiss Quantum Call 2024*:** SERI has assigned the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to launch the 'Swiss Quantum Call 2024' and to evaluate the received proposals. Applications that are evaluated positively will be funded by SERI within the framework of the transitional measures and the Swiss Quantum Initiative (SQI).
- ➔ **25 October 2023, ERC Starting (StG) and Consolidator Grants (CoG) 2024*:** The Federal Council has approved funds for transitional measures for the ERC StG and CoG 2024. SERI assigned the SNSF with the calls for the 'SNSF StG 2024' and the 'SNSF CoG 2024'.
- ➔ **14 June 2023, Financial guarantee 2024:** Due to the early launch of certain calls for proposals 2024 for collaborative projects (autumn 2023), SERI has provided the financial guarantee for Swiss participants in collaborative projects in the 2024 calls on its website. It can be shared with the consortium partners.
- ➔ **Various transitional measures (TM) 2023* (see section A):** The Federal Council approved funds for the following TM 2023 of the Horizon package and assigned the corresponding actors with their implementation: SNSF StG (integrative call for proposals), CoG and AdG as well as the SNSF Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowships (SPF) at the SNSF, the Swiss Accelerator at Innosuisse and further programmes at the European Space Agency (ESA). Additional funding was granted in the areas of quantum research and semiconductor technologies. In addition, the Federal Council has decided to approve national funding by SERI for all collaborative projects that have been positively evaluated.
- ➔ **Various transitional measures 2021 and 2022*:** See section A.

* The implementation of all transitional measures is subject to the approval of Parliament within the Confederations' credit and budget process.

¹ Initialling is a preliminary step before the final signing of a contract.

General information on Switzerland's current status

- ➔ Switzerland is considered a non-associated third country² in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives (Euratom programme, the Digital Europe Programme, DEP). As far as the construction of ITER is concerned, the EU no longer considers Switzerland a participating state for the time being.
- ➔ Switzerland's association to Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives as soon as possible remains the Federal Council's declared goal. Switzerland is ready for negotiations with the EU in this regard.
- ➔ The European Commission has invited Switzerland to have exploratory talks on Switzerland's association to EU programmes in the fields of education, research and innovation (Horizon Europe, Euratom, Digital Europe Programme, ITER and Erasmus+). These exploratory talks are intended to prepare the negotiations. The exploratory talks have started at the end of November 2023 in Brussels.
- ➔ In addition, a transitional arrangement was agreed with the European Commission (EC) to enable researchers in Switzerland to participate in the ERC Advanced Grant (AdG) 2024 call as soon as negotiations on the overall package and on association to the Horizon package have begun in the course of 2024. The negotiations on the association to the EU programmes (including the Horizon package) are part of the negotiations on the overall package and will start after adoption of the negotiation mandates on both sides. This transitional arrangement is to be applied to all Horizon Europe and Euratom calls for proposals for the 2025 programme year, provided that a corresponding agreement between Switzerland and the EU has been initialled³ by then.
- ➔ As members of a non-associated third country, project participants based in Switzerland can still participate in most collaborative projects. The funding for these projects is secured by SERI as part of the transitional measures (see section A) for positively evaluated projects.
- ➔ Participation in individual projects is not possible as a non-associated third country. These fellowships include the individual fellowships from the European Research Council (ERC), the Postdoctoral Fellowships from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and the Accelerator from the European Innovation Council (EIC). SERI has also introduced transitional measures here as a substitute for participation (see section A).

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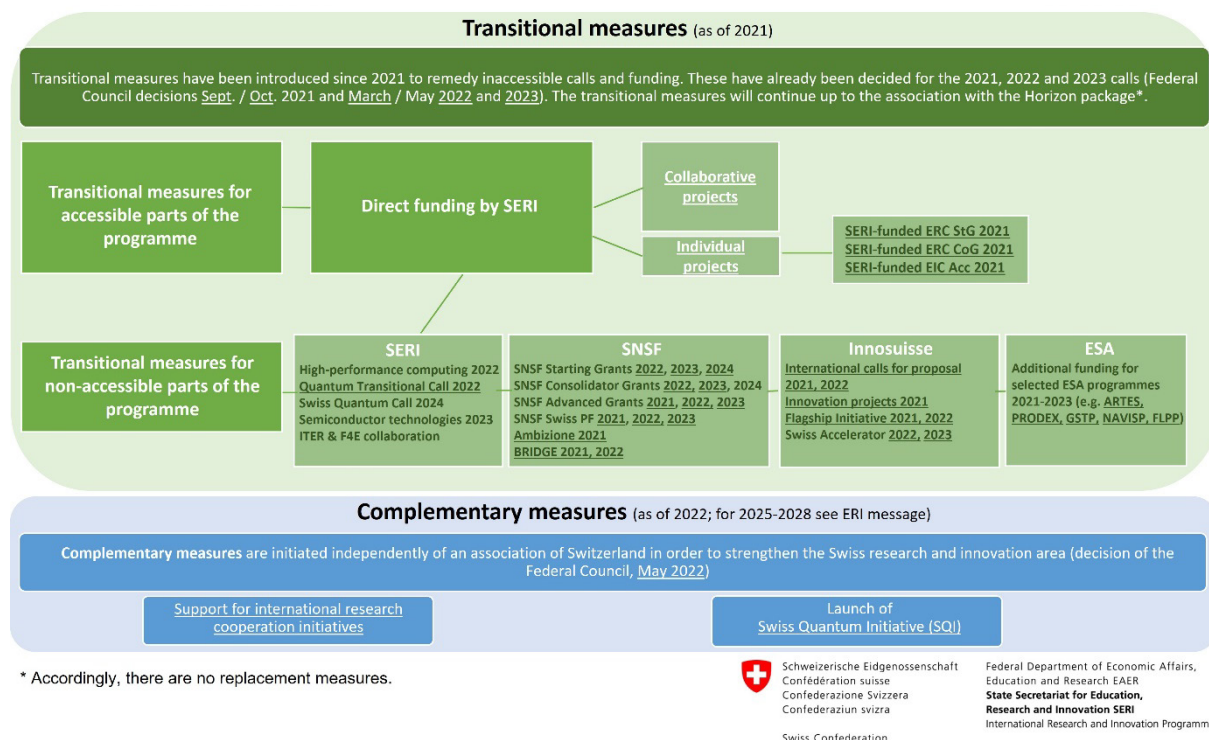
A. Transitional measures

The graphic below provides an overview of the current and planned measures concerning Switzerland's participation as a non-associated third country in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives

² Please note that according to the EU nomenclature, all non-EU states are referred to as third countries. Within Horizon Europe, a distinction is made between (i) associated countries and (ii) non-associated third countries. This nomenclature is also used in this document. Among the non-associated third countries, participants from high-income third countries do normally receive funding from the European Commission (EC), while a number of low- and middle-income third countries are automatically eligible for EC funding. Detailed information can be found here.

³ Initialling is a preliminary step before the final signing of a contract.

(direct links to the specific measures can be found in the [online version](#)). In addition, an overview of the finances of Switzerland's transitional measures for Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives is accessible on the following [website](#).



B. Guidelines for participants

Please note: To provide further information on specific issues, SERI has also published a document with the most “[frequently asked questions and answers](#) on the Swiss participation in Horizon Europe (as well as Horizon 2020) and related programmes and initiatives” on its [website](#).

B.1 Collaborative projects

- SERI recommends institutions based in Switzerland (including companies and notably SME) to participate in consortia responding to calls for proposals in Horizon Europe and in the Euratom programme. European project partners should be actively made aware that the inclusion of Swiss partners in a consortium has no negative influence on the evaluation of a project. The evaluation by independent experts follows clear guidelines and criteria and any discrimination would explicitly violate the evaluation rules.
- As participants from a non-associated third country, researchers and innovators in Switzerland need to explain at project submission how funding for their contribution will be secured. Corresponding financial guarantees for the calls 2021, 2022, 2023 and until further notice 2024 which can be shared with the consortium partners, are provided by SERI on its [website](#).
- Until further notice, applicants based in Switzerland must submit their project proposals on the [Funding & tenders portal](#) as participants from a non-associated third country ('associated partner'). This applies to the calls with call identifier 2021, 2022, 2023 and until further notice 2024 (meaning 2021, 2022, 2023 or 2024 is included in the call ID). Additionally, any proposal needs to fulfil the general eligibility criteria (minimum of 3 independent partners from 3 different EU member states or associated countries, of which at least one is based in an EU member state). Participants from non-associated third countries cannot coordinate projects. They can however lead work packages as any other participant.
- Should Switzerland be reclassified by the EC as a "country to be associated" before the deadline of the corresponding calls, Swiss participants must change their status from 'associated partner' to 'beneficiary' in the project proposal and apply for funding from the EC. In this case, the budget must be included in the total amount of funding requested by the consortium from the EC.

- Researchers and innovators in collaborative projects at institutions in an EU member state or an associated country can accept a call to an institution based in Switzerland and will be funded directly by SERI, as long as Switzerland participates as a non-associated third country in Horizon Europe.
- The Euresearch network, which is funded and mandated by SERI for this purpose, will continue to advise researchers and innovators in Switzerland planning to participate in Horizon Europe projects. It is recommended to seek advice from Euresearch when submitting project proposals.

B.2 Mono-beneficiary projects

- Participation as researchers from non-associated third countries in mono-beneficiary instruments (namely ERC, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships and EIC Accelerator) is no longer possible.
- However, exceptional rules apply to the 2021 calls of the ERC Starting (StG) and Consolidator Grants (CoG), which have already been closed. As the host institution for these projects can be changed during the preparation phase of the Grant Agreement, proposals submitted by Principal Investigators based at a Swiss host institution have been evaluated. Researchers and innovators with a positively evaluated project proposal for an ERC StG 2021 or an ERC CoG 2021 (an application on the so-called 'main list' that would in principle be eligible for EU funding) are awarded a 'SERI-funded ERC Starting Grants' or 'SERI-funded ERC Consolidator Grants' from SERI if they carry out their project at an institution in Switzerland (see results).
- Researchers and innovators with positively evaluated project proposals for the EIC Accelerator call 2021 (after two evaluation stages) will receive a 'SERI funded-EIC Accelerator Grant' (see results).
- For all other ERC StG, CoG and AdG, as well as MSCA PF calls already closed for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, SERI has assigned the SNSF with the implementation of transitional measures and is funding them. The national instruments are tailored to those of the EC as far as possible, but have independent submission deadlines. (see section A).
- The Federal Council also decided to initiate transitional measures for the 2022 and 2023 EIC Accelerator calls. These measures are implemented by Innosuisse through the Swiss Accelerator 2022 and 2023 (see section A).
- ERC grantees (namely principal investigators having received a ERC StG, CoG, AdG, PoC) under Horizon Europe can accept a call to an institution based in Switzerland and will be funded directly by SERI, as long as Switzerland is a non-associated third country. Likewise, principal investigators whose ERC application (for ERC StG, CoG, AdG and PoC) has been selected for EU-funding can transfer their project to a Swiss institution (before the signature of the EU grant agreement) and receive direct funding from SERI in the form of a transfer grant.

C. Contact

- **For questions on the status of Switzerland and on federal funding of Swiss participation in EU projects:**
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