



## Status Update: Swiss participation in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives

### Information as of 24 May 2023

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) provides regular updates on Switzerland's participation in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon Europe:

### Latest developments

- **24 May 2023, Transitional measures (TM) 2023:** The Federal Council (FC) decided to adopt TM relating to the 2021–2027 Horizon package (Horizon Europe, Euratom programme, ITER and Digital Europe Programme). It will provide CHF 625 million in funding for 2023 calls for proposals (see [chapter A](#)). The FC therewith provides the necessary funds for the 2023 execution of the ERC Consolidator and Advanced Grants as well as the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships at the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Swiss Accelerator at Innosuisse, and further TM. The implementation of the TM 2023 is subject to the approval of Parliament within the Confederations' credit and budget process. Further information will follow.
- **25 January 2023, Preliminary budget decision of the Federal Council (FC):** The FC has taken [preliminary decisions on budget adjustments](#) and plans to absorb deficits of up to CHF 2 billion in the 2024 budget estimate. The mandatory contribution that would have been necessary for association to the Horizon package is no longer to be budgeted for from 2024. Instead, funds will be earmarked for further national measures. However, since a timely association remains the FC's goal, the mandatory contribution can be applied for in the corresponding year with a supplementary credit in the event of an association. Thus, no money is to be taken away from the Swiss Research and Innovation landscape.
- **8 December 2022, Financial guarantee 2023:** SERI has provided the financial guarantee for Swiss participants in collaborative projects in the 2023 calls on its [website](#). It can be shared with the consortium partners.
- **14 October 2022, ERC Starting Grants 2023:** Researchers in Switzerland are currently not eligible to apply for the 2023 call of the ERC Starting Grants (StG). For this reason, SERI has assigned and funds the SNSF to implement a transitional measure. According to a consultation held by SERI on 15 July 2022, it was unanimously decided by the SNSF, swissuniversities and the ETH Board that the SNSF would open an integrative call in the form of the SNSF Starting Grants 2023 as in early 2022. Further information on this call is published on the website of the SNSF.
- **31 August 2022, Quantum Transitional Call:** As a transitional measure, SERI has mandated the SNSF to launch the Quantum Transitional Call and to evaluate the proposals in response to the call. Positively evaluated proposals will be directly funded by SERI. The implementation of the transitional measure is subject to the approval of Parliament within the Confederations' credit and budget process. Further details about the call will be provided by the SNSF.
- **10 June 2022, ERC AdG & MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA PF) 2022:** As a substitute for the participation in the 2022 calls of the ERC AdG and the MSCA PF, SERI has assigned and funds the SNSF to implement transitional solutions.

→ **4 March & 4 May 2022, various transitional measures:** The Federal Council decided to provide funds for further 2022 transitional measures. These include the 2022 calls of the ERC AdG and the MSCA PF, which will be carried out by the SNSF such as the EIC Accelerator, carried out by Innosuisse. Further transitional measures will be initiated at the European Space Agency ESA and other actors. In addition, the Federal Council has decided to provide national funding by SERI for all collaborative projects of the 2022 calls that have been positively evaluated. Additional funding was granted in the areas of high-performance computing and quantum research. The implementation of the transitional measures in 2022 is subject to the approval of Parliament within the Confederations' credit and budget process. In case Switzerland's participation possibility in Horizon Europe does not change, the Federal Council has already earmarked funds for potential transitional measures in 2023 for the ERC StG, CoG, AdG and the EIC Accelerator. SERI will provide information in given time.

## General information on Switzerland's current status

- Switzerland is considered a non-associated third country<sup>1</sup> 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, including negotiations on a so-called Specific Agreement for the general modalities of programme participation. However, the European Commission (EC) informed SERI on 12 July 2021 that it was not in a position to discuss the next steps towards exploratory talks and negotiations on an association. The EU continues to view the question of Switzerland's association to Horizon Europe in the light of overall relations between Switzerland and the EU.
- 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](#)).

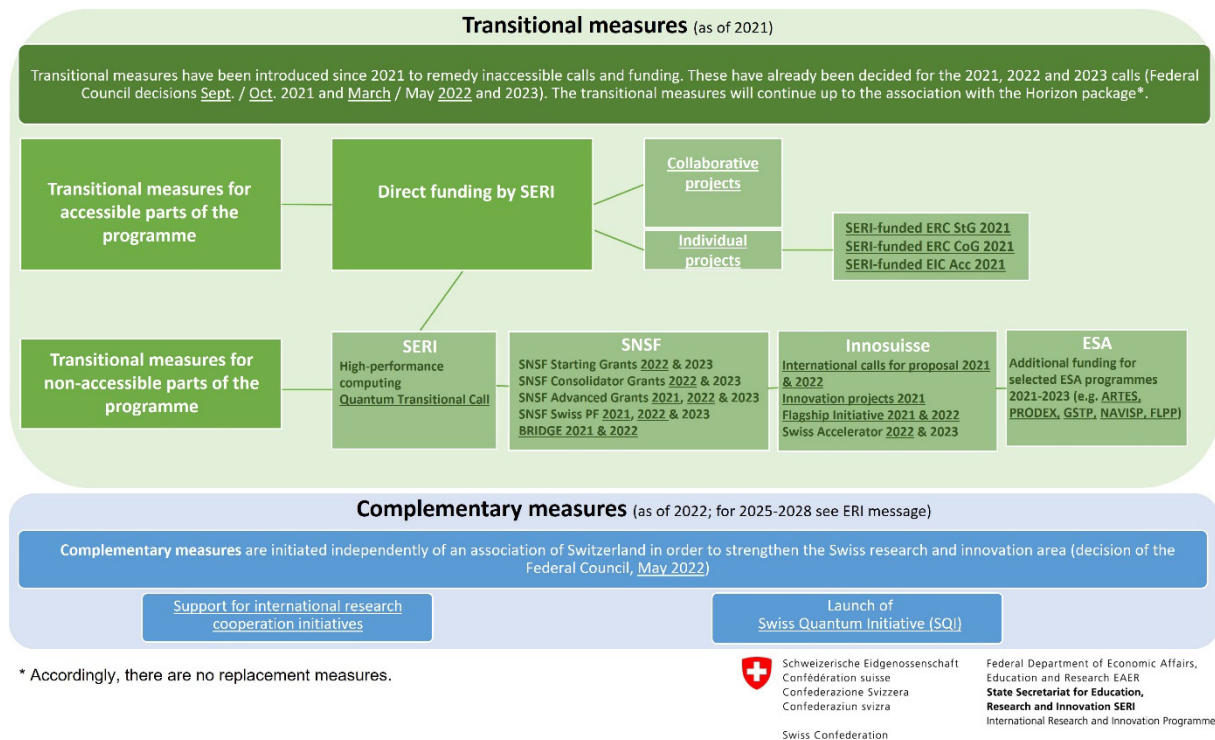
## Index

A. Transitional as well as further measures .....	3
B. Guidelines for participants .....	3
B.1 Collaborative projects .....	3
B.2 Mono-beneficiary projects .....	4
C. Contact .....	4

<sup>1</sup> 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](#).

## 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 (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 and 2023, 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 and until further notice 2023 (meaning 2021, 2022 or 2023 is included in the call ID). Additionally, any proposal needs to fulfil the general eligibility criteria (minimum of 3 independent partners from 3 different Member States or associated countries, of which at least one is based in a 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.
- 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'.
- As a substitute for the participation in the 2021 ERC Advanced Grants (ERC AdG) and MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA PF) calls, in the 2022 ERC StG, CoG, AdG and MSCA PF calls, as well as in the 2023 ERC StG calls, the SERI has instructed the SNSF to implement transitional solutions (see section A).
- The Federal Council also decided to initiate transitional measures for the 2022 EIC Accelerator calls. These measures will be implemented by Innosuisse (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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