



Status Update: Swiss participation in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and other related programmes and initiatives

Information as of 17 September 2021

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) provides regular updates on Switzerland's participation in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020:

- The European Commission (EC) has informed the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) that Switzerland will be treated as a non-associated third country¹ for the submission of project proposals in Horizon Europe and other related programmes and initiatives. This status can be changed at any time, but now applies for all calls with call identifier 2021 (meaning 2021 is included in the call ID on the [Funding & tenders portal](#)).
- Switzerland will be treated as a non-associated third country in Horizon Europe, the Euratom programme and the Digital Europe Programme. Furthermore, the EU does not consider Switzerland a state contributing to the construction of ITER for the time being. The Federal Council remains committed to its goal of a full association to Horizon Europe and other related programmes and initiatives as soon as possible.
- Applicants based in Switzerland must submit their project proposals for the corresponding calls with call identifier 2021 (meaning 2021 is included in the call ID on the [Funding & tenders portal](#)) as participants from a non-associated third country.
- With this status, project participants in Switzerland can still participate in approximately 2/3 of Horizon Europe and notably in most collaborative projects. The Swiss project partner will not be funded by the EC but by SERI during the lifetime of the project. (For units of the central federal administration special conditions apply.)
- The participation in mono-beneficiary instruments (individual ERC grants, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, MSCA COFUND and EIC Accelerator) is by principle excluded as a non-associated third country. However, exceptional rules apply to the 2021 calls of the ERC Starting Grants (StG) and the ERC 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 will be evaluated. SERI will provide national funding for researchers whose proposals for an ERC StG or CoG were positively evaluated. In addition, positively evaluated project proposals of the EIC Accelerator call 2021 (after two evaluation stages) will receive direct funding from SERI.
- If researchers and innovators have obtained Horizon Europe project funding from an institution in an EU member state or an associated country and have accepted an appointment to an institution in Switzerland, as long as Switzerland is a non-associated third country, SERI will directly fund these researchers and innovators (so-called transfer grants). This applies to researchers and innovators in individual projects (namely ERC StG, CoG, AdG) as well as to collaborative projects.
- On September 17 2021, the Federal Council instructed SERI to initiate transitional measures, which will be submitted to the Parliament for approval as part of a subsequent notification for the 2022 budget estimate. As a substitute for participation in the ERC Advanced Grants and MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 calls, SERI will mandate the Swiss National

Science Foundation (SNSF) to implement transitional solutions. Furthermore, SERI will initiate additional transitional measures with Innosuisse, the European Space Agency (ESA), and other stakeholders. SERI will provide further information in a timely manner.

- ➔ In addition, SERI is examining suitable complementary measures, namely for program parts that are no longer accessible (including for the calls in the Quantum and Space areas).
- ➔ Switzerland's association to Horizon Europe and related programs and initiatives as soon as possible remains the declared goal of the Federal Council. SERI will provide information on the 2022 calls for proposals in due course.

¹ 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 not 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](#).

INDEX

A. GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS	2
A.1 Collaborative projects	2
A.2 Mono-beneficiary projects	3
B. SWISS PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON EUROPE	4
B.1 State of play.....	4
B.2 Transitional measures	4
C. PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON 2020	5
D. CONTACT	5

A. 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 answer on the Swiss participation in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives on its [website](#).

A.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.
- As long as Switzerland participates in Horizon Europe as a non-associated third country, SERI will fund participants in collaborative projects. This also applies to collaborative projects within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA Doctoral Networks and MSCA Staff Exchanges) and the European Innovation Council (EIC).
- As a non-associated third country, a number of limitations apply that need to be taken into account:
 - For researchers and innovators based in Switzerland, including companies and SME, the funding in collaborative projects is secured if the project is funded under Horizon Europe or related programmes and initiatives. In this case, funding to the Swiss entities will be provided directly by SERI. (For units of the central federal administration special conditions apply.)
 - Any proposal needs to fulfil the general eligibility criteria. Any consortium needs a minimum of 3 independent partners from 3 different Member States or associated countries, of which

at least one is based in a Member State. Any participants from non-associated third countries would only be possible as addition to these 3.

- Participants from non-associated third countries cannot coordinate projects. They can however lead work packages as any other participant.
 - Participants from non-associated third countries cannot participate in Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) except where there is an explicit reference to non-associated third countries in the eligibility criteria of the specific topic.
 - For collaborative projects of the European Research Council (ERC), namely ERC Synergy Grants, participants from non-associated third countries (e.g. Switzerland) can apply as part of a consortium. However, only one Principal Investigator linked to an institution based in a non-associated third country is permitted per project.
 - European project partners should be assured that taking a Swiss partner aboard would not have a negative impact on the evaluation of the 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, Swiss researchers and innovators would need to explain at project submission how funding for their contribution will be secured. A corresponding financial guarantee, which can be shared with the consortium partners, is provided by SERI on its [website](#).
 - 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. We advise to seek their support when submitting projects.
- In addition, SERI is preparing suitable measures for collaborative projects that are not accessible as a non-associated third country (notably in the field of quantum and space technologies) and will inform accordingly (see [section B.2](#)).
 - If researchers and innovators have obtained Horizon Europe project funding from an institution in an EU Member State or associated country and have accepted an appointment to an institution in Switzerland, as long as Switzerland is a non-associated third country, SERI will directly fund these researchers and innovators (through so-called transfer grants).

A.2 Mono-beneficiary projects

- As a non-associated third country, a participation in mono-beneficiary instruments (namely ERC, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, MSCA COFUND and EIC Accelerator) is no longer possible. This also applies to proposals already submitted that will not necessarily be evaluated.
- However, exceptional rules apply to the 2021 calls of the ERC Starting Grants (StG) and the ERC 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 will be evaluated. SERI will provide national funding for those researchers based at a Swiss host institution whose proposals for an ERC StG or CoG were positively evaluated.
- In addition, positively evaluated project proposals of the EIC Accelerator call 2021 (after two evaluation stages) will receive direct funding from SERI.
- As a substitute for the participation in the ERC Advanced Grants and MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 calls, SERI will mandate the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to implement transitional solutions (see [section B.2](#)). As a non-associated third country, a number of limitations apply that need to be taken into account:
 - Researchers based in Switzerland remain eligible for the ERC StG, CoG and AdG in any case as long as they spend alongside their affiliation to a Swiss institution, at least half of their working time in an institution in a EU Member State or an associated country and implement their ERC project at said institution (for more details see [ERC work programme 2021](#)). For researchers who have submitted their ERC proposal with a Swiss institution, a "Financial Guarantee for Swiss Participants in ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants 2021" (in English) is published on the [SERI website](#).

- Since MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships are mono-beneficiary instruments, the participation of non-associated third countries is restricted. Swiss institutions are not eligible to host European Postdoctoral Fellowships, but they can host researchers during the outgoing phase of Global Postdoctoral Fellowships.
- European Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to researchers of all nationalities. Swiss citizens are thus eligible to apply for European Postdoctoral Fellowships as long as their host institution is located in an EU Member State or associated country. In contrary, Global Postdoctoral Fellowships are restricted to citizens and long-term residents of an EU Member State or associated country.
- 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. We advise to seek their support when submitting projects.
- If researchers and innovators have obtained Horizon Europe project funding from an institution in an EU Member State or an associated country and have accepted an appointment to an institution in Switzerland, as long as Switzerland is a non-associated third country, SERI will directly fund these researchers and innovators (through so-called transfer grants). This applies notably to researchers and innovators in ERC projects.

B. SWISS PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON EUROPE

B.1 State of play

- The legal basis for Horizon Europe was adopted by the Council of the EU on 16 March 2021 and by the European Parliament on 27 April 2021. On 12 May 2021 the Horizon Europe Regulation officially entered into force. It is retroactively applied as of 1 January 2021.
- After the Federal Council took the decision not to sign the institutional agreement, and communicated this decision to the EU, the European Commission informed on 22 June in the Horizon Europe [Programme Guide](#) that Switzerland will be treated as a non-associated third country for the submission of project proposals in Horizon Europe and other related programmes and initiatives.
- According to the information published by the European Commission on its [website](#) on 12 July 2021, this status applies until further notice and applies to all calls for proposals in 2021.
- Hence, participants in Switzerland receive their funding directly from SERI, namely in all projects that were fully evaluated, for which a participation is possible and a positive result of the evaluation is available.

B.2 Transitional measures

- On September 17 2021, the Federal Council instructed SERI to introduce transitional measures. The planned transitional measures will be submitted to Parliament with a subsequent notification for the 2022 budget in the winter session 2021. Implementation is subject to the corresponding resolution. As a substitute for participation in the 2021 ERC Advanced Grants (AdG) and MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) 2021 calls, SERI will mandate the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to implement transitional solutions. These will be based on the ERC AdG and MSCA PF calls as far as possible. However, they will have their own deadlines for project submission. SERI will provide further information in a timely manner. Additional transitional measures will be initiated by SERI with Innosuisse, the European Space Agency (ESA) and other actors.
- If association to the program is not possible early enough, the SNSF will additionally be mandated to develop transitional solutions for the ERC Starting Grant and ERC Consolidator Grant 2022 calls under the new funding instrument. SERI will provide information on the remaining 2022 calls in due course. Switzerland's association to Horizon Europe as soon as possible remains the Federal Council's declared goal.

C. PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON 2020

- The bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the EU on Swiss association to Horizon 2020 remains fully valid until all projects under the programme are effectively concluded.
- The European Commission will continue to fund Swiss participants in projects, in which they were eligible for EU funding, until these projects are effectively concluded
- SERI will continue to fund all projects linked to partial association (2014–2016).
- The Swiss status in Horizon Europe has no implications for projects funded under Horizon 2020.

D. CONTACT

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