



Swiss participation in the Horizon package 2021–2027

Q&A on Horizon Europe, Digital Europe Programme, Euratom programme, ITER and other related EU programmes

Information as of 20 December 2024

Main changes have been made in chapters [1](#), [2](#) and [3](#).

The Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) updates this Q&A according to developments in Switzerland and the European Union (EU) with regard to the Horizon package.

This document is structured along the following contents. The detailed questions are listed below.

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1 Horizon Europe (from 2025 programme year onwards)

1.1 Generally applicable

1	Q	Is the transitional arrangement activated and what does it contain?
	A	<p>Yes, the transitional arrangement is fully activated. This allows researchers and innovators in Switzerland to participate as ‘beneficiaries’ in Horizon Europe and Euratom programme calls for proposals from the programme year 2025 onwards (including mono-beneficiary calls). This means that researchers and innovators in Switzerland can submit project proposals in the role of the coordinator (see question 5). Switzerland's participation in calls in areas considered strategic by the EU (e.g. quantum and space) will be the subject of further technical discussions with the EU.</p> <p>Under the transitional arrangement, researchers and innovators in Switzerland now also have the opportunity to participate as ‘beneficiaries’ in calls for proposals of the Digital Europe Programme, from the 2025 programme year onwards. This means that they can submit their project applications in the role of coordinator (see question 5). Specific Objectives 3 (Cybersecurity) and 6 (Semiconductors) are exceptions to this; they are only accessible to EU member states and, to a limited extent, to countries in the European Economic Area (EEA). For questions about the Digital Europe Programme: digital-europe@sbfi.admin.ch and see question 12.</p>
2	Q	How will the positively evaluated projects of the transitional arrangement be funded?
	A	<p>Swiss participants prepare their project proposals as ‘beneficiaries’ and apply for funding from the EU. This means that their budget must be included in the total grant amount requested by the consortium from the EU.</p> <p>If, at the time of signing the grant agreement with the European Commission (EC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an association agreement is applied, funding for the participation of the Swiss project partners is provided by the EU (status of ‘beneficiary’ remains). ▪ no association agreement is in place, funding is provided by SERI (status changes from ‘beneficiary’ to ‘associated partner’) within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament. The contribution requested in the project proposal will be relevant for the funding. <p>A corresponding ‘Financial guarantee Horizon Europe and Euratom programme calls 2025’ can be found on the SERI website. It is also applicable for the mono-beneficiary calls, e.g. ERC, MSCA and EIC.</p>
3	Q	How should project participants in Switzerland prepare their budgets for future calls for proposals?
	A	<p>For calls for proposals from the programme year 2025 onwards, Swiss participants prepare their project proposals respectively their budgets on the assumption that they will apply for funding directly from the EU (i.e. preparation and project submission as ‘beneficiary’). This means that the budget of the Swiss partner must be included in the total amount of project funding requested by the consortium from the EU (see question 2).</p>
4	Q	Who can support me as a researcher or innovator in my application for research and innovation funding in Horizon Europe?
	A	<p>The Euresearch network, which is mandated by SERI, supports applicants in the preparation of proposals, either individually or by offering courses and webinars, for free.</p>

		For University or ETH domain participants, please refer to your Euresearch Regional Office and/or your institution's research office. For participants from other institutions or companies, please refer directly to the Euresearch Network Office .
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1.2 Collaborative projects (from 2025 programme year onwards)

Please also take note of section [1.1 Generally applicable](#).

5	Q	Are participants based in Switzerland allowed to submit a project proposal as coordinator under the transitional arrangement for calls for proposals from the programme year 2025 onwards?
	A	Yes. However, they will only be able to fulfil this coordinating role if the association agreement is applied at the time of the signature of the grant agreement. If this is not the case, they will lose their coordinating role and become 'associated partners'. This means that an existing or new partner must take over the role of coordinator. The Swiss partner's budget must be adjusted as all funds associated with the coordination function will be deducted.
6	Q	Can Swiss entities participate as beneficiaries in the calls of the Institutionalised Partnerships under Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe Programme (DEP)?
	A	Currently, technical discussions are ongoing to determine the participation possibilities of Swiss entities in the Institutionalised Partnership calls 2025 under Horizon Europe and the DEP. An update will be provided as soon as possible.

1.3 European Research Council (ERC) (from 2025 programme year onwards)

Please also take note of section [1.1 Generally applicable](#).

7	Q	Do researchers in Switzerland have access to the ERC calls for proposals from the programme year 2025 onwards?
	A	Yes, researchers in Switzerland can participate in the ERC calls for proposals from the programme year 2025 onwards. Thus, proposals of researchers who apply to these calls with a host institution located in Switzerland will be evaluated by the ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA) and interviews will take place. Furthermore, these researchers will be informed about the Step 2 evaluation results. Please also see the news of the ERC .
8	Q	How will these ERC grants 2025 and onwards be funded?
	A	If recommended for funding after step 2 (or step 3 for SyG respectively) of the evaluation process and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an association agreement is in place, Principal Investigators from a host institution located in Switzerland will be funded by the EU. an association agreement is not in place, Principal Investigators from a host institution located in Switzerland will be granted the possibility to maintain the eligibility of their proposal by transferring it to a new, eligible entity. <p>SERI will directly fund Principal Investigators with positively evaluated 2025 and onwards ERC StG, SyG, CoG and PoC proposals, within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament, if these Principal Investigators decide to stay at a Swiss host institution.</p>

		<p>This possibility applies to proposals that are recommended for funding by the ERCEA after the evaluation process; the funding amount will correspond to the amount requested from the ERC, also in terms of overhead costs.</p> <p>The 'Financial guarantee Horizon Europe and Euratom programme calls 2025' published on the SERI website also applies to these ERC calls.</p> <p>Specific to the ERC SyG call in the absence of an association agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Swiss Principal Investigator is the only Principal Investigator from a non-associated third country, the Swiss Principal Investigator will be funded by the EU. • If, in addition to the Swiss Principal Investigator, there is another Principal Investigator from a non-associated third country, the Swiss Principal Investigator will be funded by SERI. • In both cases described above, it is a prerequisite that at least 1 of the Principal Investigators is placed at a host institution in the EU or an associated country.
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1.4 European Innovation Council (EIC) (from 2025 programme year onwards)

Please also take note of sections [1.1 Generally applicable](#)

9	Q	Can Swiss start-ups and SMEs apply to the EIC Accelerator 2025?
	A	<p>Yes, Swiss start-ups and SMEs can submit short applications for the EIC Accelerator call 2025 (Step 1).</p> <p>Due to the activation of the transitional arrangement, admission to Step 2, which involves the submission of a full proposal until 12 March 2025, is possible.</p>
10	Q	How will positively evaluated proposals of Swiss start-ups and SMEs be funded?
	A	<p>If, at the time of signing the grant agreement with the European Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an association agreement is applied: funding for the participation of the Swiss project partners is provided by the EU (status of 'beneficiary' remains). • no association agreement is in place: funding for the grant portion of the award (not the equity award) is provided by SERI within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament The contribution requested in the project proposal will be relevant for the funding. <p>The 'Financial guarantee Horizon Europe and Euratom programme calls 2025' published on the SERI website also applies to the EIC Accelerator.</p>
11	Q	Are Swiss entities able to apply for the EIC Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) Scale Up Call?
	A	<p>Yes, Swiss companies are eligible to participate in relevant calls for proposals for STEP equity investments under the same eligibility conditions as if Switzerland were an associated country.</p> <p>Note that no company will be able to finalize any equity agreement with the EIC Fund before the association agreement is signed. SERI will not be able to guarantee national funding for the equity portion of the EIC award in case of non-association.</p> <p>Furthermore, as with other parts of the Horizon Europe work programme, some STEP calls may restrict eligibility conditions in order to safeguard the EU's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security and accordingly Swiss companies may be excluded.</p>

2 Digital Europe Programme (DEP) (from 2025 programme year onwards)

12	Q	Can Swiss institutions participate in the Digital Europe Programme (DEP)?
	A	<p>Yes, the transitional arrangement is fully activated (see question 1). This allows researchers and innovators in Switzerland to participate as 'beneficiaries' in the calls for proposals of the DEP, from the 2025 programme year onwards. This means that they can submit their project applications in the role of coordinator (see question 5). Specific Objectives 3 (Cybersecurity) and 6 (Semiconductors) are exceptions to this; they are only accessible to EU member states and, to a limited extent, to countries in the European Economic Area (EEA). For questions about the Digital Europe Programme: digital-europe@sbfi.admin.ch.</p> <p>Swiss participants prepare their project proposals as 'beneficiaries' and apply for funding from the EU, up to the amount defined by the funding rate in the specific call. This means that their budget must be included in the total grant amount requested by the consortium from the EU.</p> <p>If, at the time of signing the grant agreement with the European Commission (EC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an association agreement is applied, funding for the participation of the Swiss project partners is provided by the EU (status of 'beneficiary' remains). ▪ no association agreement is in place, funding is provided by SERI (status changes from 'beneficiary' to 'associated partner') within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament. The contribution requested in the project proposal will be relevant for the funding.

3 Euratom programme & ITER (from 2025 programme year onwards)

13	Q	Can researchers and innovators in Switzerland participate in the current generation of the Euratom Research and Training Programme?
	A	Yes, the transitional arrangement is fully activated. This allows researchers and innovators in Switzerland to participate as 'beneficiary' in the calls for proposals of the Euratom programme from the 2025 programme year onwards (see questions 1 , 2 and 3).
14	Q	Can Swiss entities answer to calls for tenders of Fusion for Energy (F4E) and ITER Organisation?
	A	<p>A transitional solution for 2025 has proved to be unsuitable for ITER. Switzerland will therefore resume its participation in the construction of ITER as a member of F4E from 2026 onwards, under the same conditions that applied to Switzerland until 2020.</p> <p>This means that from 2026 onwards Swiss entities will have the same conditions as entities in the EU with regards to access to ITER opportunities (see SERI website).</p>

4 Horizon Europe (programme years 2021–2024)

4.1 Generally applicable

15	Q	What happens to projects of the 2021–2024 calls for proposals (in view of the full activation of the transitional arrangement)?
	A	<p>SERI will fund these projects for their entire duration, regardless of Switzerland's status and subject to parliamentary budget decisions (see question 20).</p> <p>The Federal Decree on the Financing of the Horizon package 2021-2027 allows for funding of entities based in Switzerland, even if Switzerland is not or only partially associated to Horizon Europe. Swiss partners in projects, which have been positively evaluated by the European Commission (EC), but are not financed by the EC, can receive funding from SERI within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament. (For units of the central federal administration special conditions apply.)</p> <p>Corresponding financial guarantees for the 2021–2024 calls for proposal can be found on the SERI website.</p>
16	Q	Calls 2021–2024: What are the rules of SERI to approve the budget of participants based in Switzerland?
	A	<p>The 'Guidelines for financial reporting' for participants based in Switzerland (including companies and SME) are accessible on the SERI website.</p> <p>Rules on funding and financial reporting that apply to beneficiaries (project partners from EU member states or associated countries) in principle also apply to participants based in Switzerland. However, there are some specific rules according to the legal base for funding of Swiss participations in Horizon Europe projects.</p> <p>Based on the ordinance FIPBV (available in German, French & Italian) there are maximum salary rates for companies, including SME, as well as non-commercial research centres and institutions outside the university sector (Article 7). Also, funding can generally only be provided for costs that are incurred in Switzerland (exceptions laid out in Article 11 paragraph 6).</p> <p>SERI reserves the right to impose funding cuts should the costs of the Swiss participant be disproportionately high. This includes the right to mandate an external expert panel to review the Swiss project part.</p>
17	Q	Calls 2021–2024: How can researchers and innovators, whose projects were positively evaluated by the European Commission, submit their funding request to SERI?
	A	<p>To submit your funding request for a collaborative project, please check the SERI website on transitional measures and direct funding. All the necessary information and steps for preparing and submitting a funding application and the corresponding financial reports to SERI are provided there.</p> <p>In general, SERI recommends that funding requests be submitted promptly (usually within 3 months after conclusion of the Grant Agreement) so that they can be reviewed as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Special conditions applying to units of the central federal administration are also indicated on the website, as well as instruction on how to apply for funding for certain mono-beneficiary projects 2021.</p>

4.2 Collaborative projects (programme years 2021–2024)

Please also take note of section [4.1 Generally applicable](#).

18	Q	Calls 2021–2024: Can Swiss entities participate in Horizon Europe collaborative projects funded according to the lump sum mechanism?
	A	Yes, organisations based in Switzerland can participate in lump sum projects and receive direct funding by SERI. However, note that SERI does not use the lump-sum funding model and will only cover the actual eligible and reported project costs. Funding (i.e. payment tranches of 50%, 30% and 20%) and reporting (in accordance with SERI Guidelines for financial reporting) will therefore be carried out in the same way as for other collaborative projects. For further information please refer to the website of Euresearch .
19	Q	Calls 2021–2024: Can participants based in Switzerland sign the grant agreement?
	A	No, ‘associated partners’ do not sign the grant agreement. The former legal status ‘beneficiaries not receiving EU funding’ does not exist anymore in the Model Grant Agreement . Participants from non-associated third countries (not eligible for funding from the European Commission) are thus no longer classified as ‘beneficiaries not receiving EU funding’, but as ‘associated partners’.
20	Q	What happens to partners based in Switzerland in projects of the 2021–2024 calls for proposals if the status changes from non-associated third country mode to Switzerland being an associated country?
	A	Project partners based in Switzerland who participate in a collaborative projects with call identifiers 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 (meaning 2021, 2022, 2023 or 2024 is included in the call ID on the Funding & Tenders Portal) will continue to receive funding from SERI for the entire duration of the project within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament. Even in the event of a retroactive provisional application of the Association Agreement, funding of projects with these call identifiers will be carried out directly by SERI (see question 15).
21	Q	What happens if a Swiss project partner wants to join a project of the 2021–2024 calls for proposals?
	A	Swiss participants can join ongoing projects as long as the general eligibility criteria are fulfilled. This requires an invitation by the consortium and is subject to approval of the granting authority. The same applies for redistributing tasks among the consortium members. If tasks are transferred to a Swiss ‘associated partner’ (AP), the costs to perform these tasks (as defined in the grant agreement) can be considered for direct funding by SERI. This applies to both Swiss partners who are already part of the consortium or who join it. The tasks transferred to the Swiss AP must be evaluated and their costs must be defined either in the grant agreement or in a corresponding amendment issued by the European Commission.
22	Q	Can researchers and innovators based in Switzerland participate in COST Actions?
	A	Yes, Switzerland continues to be a COST Member and participation in COST Actions is open to researchers and innovators based in Switzerland. For further information please refer to the website of the Swiss National Science Foundation .

4.3 European Research Council (ERC) (programme years 2021–2024)

Please also take note of section [4.1 Generally applicable](#).

23	Q	What is the evaluation and funding process for the ERC Advanced Grants 2024 under the transitional arrangement 2024?
	A	<p>Proposals of researchers who applied to the ERC Advanced Grants 2024 with a host institution located in Switzerland are evaluated by the ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA) and interviews will take place. If recommended for funding by the ERCEA after step 2 of the evaluation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SERI will directly fund the Principal Investigators with positively evaluated proposals of the ERC Advanced Grants 2024, provided they decide to remain at a Swiss host institution. A corresponding financial guarantee can be found on the SERI website. Principal Investigators from a host institution located in Switzerland will be granted the possibility to maintain the eligibility of their proposal by transferring it to a new, eligible entity. This treatment is linked to the portability of these grants: The host institution for these projects can be changed at the moment when the grant agreement is established (granting stage).
24	Q	Will applications that are positively evaluated under the ERC Advanced Grants 2024 be funded by SERI according to the lump sum principle?
	A	No. A first payment instalment of 50% of the grant will be paid readily after contract signature. The next tranche of 30% after approval of the interim financial report and the last one (remaining costs up to 20%) after approval of the final financial report. The 'beneficiary' has to issue an invoice to SERI for each payment.
25	Q	Calls 2021–2024: What happens if researchers and innovators at an institution based in an EU member state or associated country who have been awarded an ERC grant in response to a 2021–2024 call for proposals transfer it to Switzerland (as the Grantee is appointed to a Swiss institution)?
	A	<p>SERI will directly cover the (remaining) cost under the same conditions as for other projects (e.g. 25% overhead costs) within the limits of the budget allocated by the Federal Council and Parliament.</p> <p>This applies both to positively evaluated projects for which no grant agreement has been signed yet as well as for projects with an existing grant agreement which are transferred from an EU member state or an associated country. However, direct funding by SERI terminates in case a grant is transferred to an institution outside of Switzerland.</p>

4.4 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) (programme years 2021–2024)

Please also take note of sections [4.1 Generally applicable](#) and [4.2 Collaborative projects](#).

26	Q	Calls 2021–2024: How are the MSCA fellows who complement an MSCA action and are funded by SERI officially called?
	A	<p>Doctoral or postdoctoral fellows in MSCA COFUND or Doctoral Networks based at Swiss institutions and not funded by the European Commission but by SERI can call themselves 'SERI-funded MSCA DN Grantees' or 'SERI-funded MSCA COFUND Grantees'. They have acquired a 'SERI-funded MSCA DN Grant' or 'SERI-funded MSCA COFUND Grant' and should be employed with the same conditions and rights as the official MSCA fellows.</p>

		The doctoral and postdoctoral candidates employed at Swiss institutions are not official MSCA fellows but can benefit from the training and research opportunities of the Doctoral Network and COFUND programmes.
27	Q	Calls 2021–2024: What happens to MSCA collaborative projects if Switzerland’s status changes from non-associated third country mode to Switzerland being an associated country?
	A	Please see question 15 & 20 .
28	Q	Calls 2021–2024: What would happen to a MSCA Global Fellowship submitted from an EU member state or associated country with an outgoing phase to Switzerland being a non-associated third country, if Switzerland would become associated?
	A	In the 2021–2024 calls for proposals Switzerland is considered a non-associated third country and can therefore be the place of a host institution for MSCA Global Fellows. This fellowship also continues if Switzerland becomes associated to Horizon Europe.

4.5 European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) (programme years 2021–2024)

Please also take note of sections [4.1 Generally applicable](#) and [4.2 Collaborative projects](#).

29	Q	Calls 2021–2024: What further information on the budget does SERI need from the Swiss partner upon submission of an EIT project for direct funding? How will the funding rate be determined?
	A	Upon submitting a funding request for EIT projects, SERI requires confirmation on which part of the costs would have been covered by EIT funding, if Switzerland were associated. Ideally, this should be confirmed directly by the KIC. SERI will then apply the same funding rate.

5 Other EU programmes

30	Q	Can Switzerland participate in the European Defence Fund (EDF) programme?
	A	No, the European Defence Fund is open for association only to members of the European Economic Area.