



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

Information as of 23 February 2022

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:

Main changes have been made in the sections marked with .

- The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) informed the European Commission (EC) about the developments regarding Switzerland's second contribution, in view of opening association negotiations. In a response letter, the EC stated that at this point in time they are not in a position to discuss the next steps towards association exploratory talks and negotiations.
- In this context and following the information received from the EC, Switzerland will continue to be considered a non-associated third country for the submission of project proposals in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives. This applies to Horizon Europe, the Euratom programme and the Digital Europe Programme. As far as the construction of ITER is concerned, the EU no longer considers Switzerland a participating state for the time being. However, a change of status of Switzerland by the EC remains possible. The association to Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives as soon as possible remains the declared goal of the Federal Council.
- Applicants based in Switzerland must submit their project proposals on the [Funding & tenders portal](#) as participants from a non-associated third country ('associated partner') until further notice. This applies not only to the calls with call identifier 2021, but also to the 2022 calls (meaning 2021 or 2022 is included in the call ID) until further notice.
- As a non-associated third country, project participants based in Switzerland can still participate in most collaborative projects. The Swiss project partner will not be funded by the EC but by SERI. (For units of the central federal administration [special conditions](#) apply.)
- According to new guidance by the European Commission from January 2022, entities from non-associated third countries are now eligible to participate in Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) as 'associated partners' (unless the work programme or the grant agreement lays down additional conditions, which must be met to participate in the action).
- Please be aware that 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.
- 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, an exception applies to the 2021 calls for ERC Starting Grants (StG), ERC Consolidator Grants (CoG) and the first cut-off of the EIC Accelerator. These were evaluated by the EC on an exceptional basis, as Switzerland was still classified as a 'country to be associated' by the EC at the time of the call deadline.

Researchers and innovators with a successfully evaluated ERC StG or, ERC CoG or EIC Accelerator (after two evaluation stages) are awarded a ‘SERI-funded ERC Starting Grant’, ‘SERI-funded ERC Consolidator Grant’ or ‘SERI funded-EIC Accelerator Grant’ if they carry out their project in Switzerland.

- ➔ On September 17 2021, the Federal Council instructed SERI to initiate transitional measures, which the Parliament approved in December 2021. As a substitute for participation in the 2021 ERC Advanced Grants (AdG), 2021 MSCA PF calls and the 2022 ERC StG, SERI has mandated the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to implement transitional solutions. Furthermore, SERI will initiate additional transitional measures in cooperation with Innosuisse, the European Space Agency (ESA) and other stakeholders.
- ➔ In addition, SERI has mandated the SNSF to implement a transitional solution for the 2022 ERC CoG call. This will be based as far as possible on the EC's ERC CoG call, but with its own deadlines for project submission. In addition, SERI is currently examining possible transitional measures for the 2022 ERC AdG to be initiated if Switzerland's status in Horizon Europe will not have changed by the end of April 2022. The corresponding measure would be foreseen for the second half of 2022. SERI will provide further information in due time.
- ➔ SERI is also currently examining possible transitional measures for further 2022 calls and will provide information in due time.
- ➔ Furthermore, the Federal Council has instructed SERI to examine suitable complementary measures, namely for programme parts that are no longer accessible (including for the calls in the Quantum and Space areas), such as replacement measures, which should only take effect if no association is possible in the long term.

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](#).


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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.
 -  According to [new guidance](#) by the European Commission from January 2022, entities from non-associated third countries are eligible to participate in Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) as ‘associated partners’ (unless the work programme or the grant agreement lays down additional conditions which must be met to participate in the action). This rule is fully applicable under the current work programme. After the call deadline, Swiss partners can join projects as ‘associated partners’ at the discretion of the consortium and subject to approval by the granting authority (via an amendment if the grant was already signed), on a case-by-case basis.
 - 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. Corresponding financial guarantees for the calls 2021 and 2022, which can be shared with the consortium partners, are 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 in collaborative projects 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 (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 will be 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 Grant' or 'SERI-funded ERC Consolidator Grant' from SERI if they carry out their project at an institution in Switzerland.
- [-] Researchers and innovators with a positively evaluated project proposals of 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, 2021 MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships calls and the 2022 ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants, SERI has assigned the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to implement transitional solutions (see [section B.2](#)).
- [-] In addition, SERI is currently examining possible transitional measures for the 2022 ERC AdG to be initiated if Switzerland's status in Horizon Europe will not have changed by the end of April 2022. The corresponding measure would be foreseen for the second half of 2022. SERI will provide further information in due time.
- 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 and corresponding funding from the ECs long as they spend in addition to their affiliation and time at 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 2022](#)).
 - 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 for a mono-beneficiary grant (namely ERC StG, CoG, AdG) 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).

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.
- The European Commission (EC) informed SERI on June 22nd that Switzerland will be treated as a non-associated third country for the submission of project proposals in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives (see Horizon Europe [Programme Guide](#)).
- According to information provided by the EC in November 2021, this status will also apply to the calls in 2022 until further notice. In a response letter, the EC stated that at this point in time they are not in a position to discuss the next steps towards association exploratory talks and negotiations.
- 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. Planned transitional measures outside SERI were submitted to the Parliament with a subsequent notification for the 2022 budget and approved in December 2021. As a substitute for participation in the 2021 ERC Advanced Grants (AdG), 2021 MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) calls and the 2022 ERC Starting (StG) and Consolidator Grants (CoG), SERI has assigned the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to implement transitional solutions. These are based on the ERC StG, ERC AdG, ERC CoG and MSCA PF calls as far as possible. However, they have their own deadlines for project submission. Further information about the specific calls are available on the [SNSF website](#).
- Additional transitional measures will be initiated by SERI with Innosuisse, the European Space Agency (ESA) and other actors. As part of the transitional measures Innosuisse will engage in the Eureka clusters [ITEA-4](#) and [Xecs](#), whose calls for proposals will close at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 respectively. In addition, innovation projects and systemic innovation in the framework of the Flagship Initiative will be strengthened at Innosuisse, as well as the [BRIDGE programme](#). At ESA, the funds will be available from 2022 and will be used within the already running programmes Prodex and Artes.
 - Innosuisse: [International opportunities](#)
 - Innosuisse: [Innovation projects](#)
 - Innosuisse: [Flagship Initiative](#)
 - Swiss Space Office: [PRODEX](#)
 - Swiss Space Office: [ARTES](#)
- SERI is also currently examining possible transitional measures for the 2022 calls and will provide information in due course.
- As a transitional measure, the Federal Council on 20 October 2021 approved the direct funding by SERI, of collaborative projects and accessible individual projects that have been positively evaluated by the EC. This measure was already included in the federal decree on the Horizon package and does not require any further consideration by the Parliament. It is therefore applicable with immediate effect. Switzerland's rapid association to Horizon Europe 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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