



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

Information as of 13 July 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.

Summary:

- The European Commission (EC) has informed the 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 will now apply for all calls in 2021.
- Switzerland will be treated as a non-associated third country in Horizon Europe, the Euratom programme and the Digital Europe Programme. Furthermore, the EU no longer considers Switzerland a state contributing to the construction of ITER. 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 in the year 2021 as participants from a non-associated third country as of now.
- 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 the SERI.
- The participation in mono-beneficiary instruments (individual ERC grants, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, MSCA COFUND and the 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.
- Based on the Federal Decree on the Horizon Package 2021–2027 and the revised 'Ordinance on the measures for Switzerland's participation in European Union programmes in research and innovation', in force since 1 March 2021, SERI prepares the direct funding of Swiss researchers in collaborative projects and positively evaluated ERC grants.
- In addition, SERI prepares proposals for suitable measures for those programme parts that are no longer accessible in view of the Confederation's credit and budget process (notably for ERC Advanced Grants and for the field of quantum and space technologies).

¹ Please note that according to EU nomenclature, all non-EU Member States are referred to as third countries. In the context of Horizon Europe and other EU programmes, a distinction is made between (i) associated countries and (ii) non-associated third countries. Among the latter category (non-associated third countries), participants from certain low- to middle-income countries are eligible for EC funding. Participants from high-income countries such as Switzerland are normally not eligible for EC funding. Detailed information by the EC is available in [this document](#).

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A. GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

<p>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/initiatives on its website.</p>
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A.1 Collaborative projects

- SERI recommends institutions based in Switzerland (including companies and notably SMEs) 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 und 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:
 - 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 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 advice when submitting projects.

- SERI prepares proposals for 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.

A.2 Mono-beneficiary projects

- As a non-associated 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.
- As a non-associated third country, a number of limitations apply that need to be taken into account:
 - Researchers with Swiss citizenship will remain eligible for the ERC StG, CoG and AdG in any case as long as at least half of their research related to the ERC grant is performed in an institution from an EU Member State or an associated country.
 - MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to researchers of all nationalities, including non-associated third countries. Researchers with Swiss citizenship can apply as long as their host institution is located in an EU Member State or an associated country. For Swiss institutions, the participation in mono-beneficiary MSCA instruments (i.e. hosting incoming MSCA fellows) is restricted.
 - 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 advice when submitting projects.
- SERI prepares proposals for suitable measures for the mono-beneficiary instruments that are not accessible as a non-associated third country (notably ERC Advanced Grants) and will inform accordingly.

B. SWISS PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON EUROPE: 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.
- The timely association to Horizon Europe and other related programmes 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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