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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**

International Research and Innovation Programmes

Horizon Europe – Guide for Swiss participants on how to apply for direct funding for mono-beneficiary grants

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1 Introduction

As outlined on www.horizon-europe.ch, the status of Switzerland has changed with respect to the predecessor framework programme Horizon 2020 to which Switzerland was partially and, from 2016 on, fully associated. In Horizon Europe (HEU), Switzerland currently has the status of a non-EU-member state not associated to HEU. Informal wording uses the term “third country” (TC) for such a country that is also said to participate “in TC mode” or “as a non-associated TC”. Figure 1 gives an overview over the accessibility of HEU-programme parts for Swiss participants.

Eligibility and funding of Swiss participants in the Horizon Package (based on available budget in the 2023 Work Programmes)

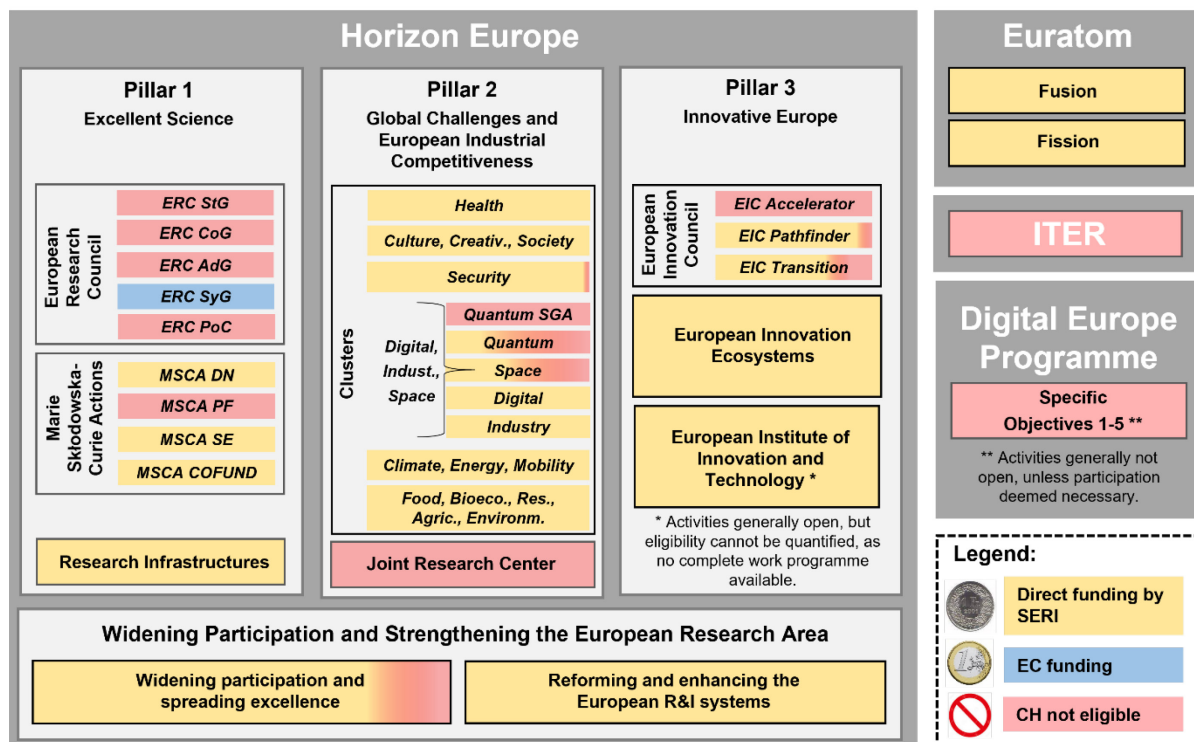


Figure 1: Eligibility and funding of Swiss participants in Horizon Europe and Euratom.

In principle, it is not possible for participants from a non-associated third country to take part in mono-beneficiary projects. However, project proposals submitted by researchers and innovation actors from Switzerland were evaluated by the European Commission (EC) within the frame of the 2021 calls (mentioned in the Call identifier) for ERC Starting Grants (StG), ERC Consolidator Grants (CoG) and EIC Accelerator (first cut-off). Research and innovation actors with a positively evaluated 2021 ERC StG or CoG application (an application on the so-called “main list”, selected for funding if the institution were eligible for EU-funding) and EIC Accelerator application (an application receiving a full ‘GO’ in the evaluation of the full proposal) will be funded directly by SERI. This accounts for projects implemented with an institution in Switzerland as beneficiary.

This direct funding is already provided for in the Federal Decree on the Horizon Package 2021-2027 and the necessary credit reallocations were approved by the Federal Council on 20 October 2021. A Financial Guarantee for Swiss Participants in the 2021 ERC StG and ERC CoG Calls, signed by State Secretary Martina Hirayama, is available [here](#).

2 How to apply for direct funding: submission to SERI for mono-beneficiary grants

We assume that you have applied for a mono-beneficiary grant and have received a positive evaluation from the EC under the conditions cited in the introduction. If this is the case, in general, all you need to do is complete the IT platform that will be published soon. It is highly recommended to contact Euresearch for proposal submission. For University or ETH domain participants, please contact your [Regional Office](#). For companies, please refer directly to Euresearch's [Network Office](#).

Direct funding from SERI will also be used to finance so-called transfer grants. Thus, researchers who have obtained project funding under Horizon Europe from an institution in an EU Member State or an Associated Country and accept a call to a Swiss institution will be directly funded by SERI as long as Switzerland is considered a non-associated third country.

2.1 Required information and documents for ERC grant substitution

To get the IT platform completed swiftly, please be prepared to provide the contact data of:

- host institution (HI)
- authorised signatory (“Vertragsperson”): Person of the HI that signs the contract with SERI,
- principal investigator (PI),
- contact person of the HI

Furthermore, the following documents need to be uploaded as pdf-files:

- Full Proposal,
- filled out “Ethics Issue table” as submitted to the ERC,
- evaluation summary report (ESR),
- supplementary agreement (SA) signed by the HI and the PI (you can use the template provided by ERC or your own agreement) or support letter by the Swiss HI or equal document.

2.2 Required information and documents for EIC Accelerator grant substitution

To get the web form completed swiftly, please be prepared to provide the contact data of:

- your company (including legal name and PIC),
- authorised signatory (“Vertragsperson”): person to sign the contract with SERI, often this is the CEO
- principal investigator (the person managing the project)
- contact person (for general enquiries and administration).

Furthermore, the following documents need to be uploaded as pdf-files:

- Full Proposal (meaning full business plan including ideation, development, go2 market as extract from AI platform),
- evaluation results (feedback on the full proposal certifying 'GO' decision),
- results of the analysis on the freedom to operate (FTO),
- financial information,
- pitch deck,
- data management plan (DMP),
- ethics and security self-assessment,
- if available: full proposal as a single document,
- if available: further annexes as submitted, including letters of intent.

2.3 Enter data and submit

When completing the IT platform, you have the option to pause the procedure at any time and to resume it later. Do not forget to save your progress regularly, as otherwise changes may be lost.

Only once you hit the "submit"- button in the web form, your request will be submitted to SERI where it will be checked for consistency and completeness.

Should there be any missing information or ambiguities in your request, we will get back to you. Close collaboration and communication are essential at this stage.

By submitting the request, you state that you have checked and approved the final version of the request and that you accept being legally responsible for the submission to SERI. Please note that this also implies that you have secured the consent of your institution's hierarchy.

2.4 Timeline and further steps

As soon as your application has been submitted to SERI and does not require further corrections as would be indicated by SERI after your submission, you should normally receive an email from the responsible scientific advisor within a maximum of 30 working days, informing you of the next steps leading to the conclusion of the funding contract with SERI¹.

2.5 Important rules

The [financial guidelines](#) indicate which specific financial aspects need to be taken into account to ensure that the project funding complies with Swiss national legislation.

¹ i.e. you will receive a subvention contract signed by SERI which you need to counter-sign to receive the first funding installment.

In what follows, citations via “Art” or “par” refer to [FIPBV](#) (“Verordnung über die Massnahmen für die Beteiligung der Schweiz an den Programmen der Europäischen Union im Bereich Forschung und Innovation”).

We compile and explain some rules and conditions of participation that the submission procedure is based on and that we consider particularly relevant for you to be aware of when submitting a funding request to SERI.

2.5.1 Who can be funded

On request, SERI funding can be provided to higher education research centres, non-commercial research centres outside the higher education sector and further non-commercial institutions as well as companies that are based in Switzerland (Art. 11 par 1 [FIPBV](#)).

2.5.2 Formal conditions for SERI funding

- (i) You need to be a research or innovation actor with a positively evaluated 2021 ERC StG application, 2021 ERC CoG application (an application on the so-called “main list”, selected for funding if the institution was eligible for EU-funding), or 2021 EIC Accelerator application (an application receiving a full ‘GO’ in the evaluation of the full proposal) who decides to carry out the project at an entity (see 2.5.1) based in Switzerland.
- (ii) Your participation is not exceptionally funded by the EC (Art. 11 par 7 [FIPBV](#)).

2.5.3 General financial rules

The Grant is intended to finance the costs incurred by the recipient for its implementation of the Project. The grant may only be claimed in accordance with the project application and its technical annexes, as well as the legal aspects mentioned in the Art. 12 and Art. 12b [FIPBV](#), and in accordance with the actual needs of the project. The rules set out in the Model Grant Agreement of the European Commission will be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Specific financial aspects as well as relevant templates for the financial reporting are indicated in the [financial guidelines](#). More subtleties may apply in special situations that are not covered here and below. Should you need more detailed information, please refer to the [financial guidelines](#), the [Q&A](#) or contact us directly.

2.5.3.1 ERC

In order to give more flexibility, the budget categories for ERC grants are simplified in comparison to the EC model. The categories A “Personnel cost” and C.3 “Other goods, works and services” do not have any sub-categories with the national funding. You can directly enter the total amount in these sections.

Please note that the PI time commitment throughout the full course of the project will be checked during the final audit. The minimal PI time commitment for StG is 50% and for CoG 40%. However, the PI must comply with the statement on working time on the project set out in the proposal.

2.5.3.2 EIC

For the project based on applications for the EIC Accelerator, please note that SERI can and will only replace the Grant part of the funding requested. Nevertheless, please hand in your complete application as submitted to the European Commission.

2.5.4 Subcontracts

If you intend to involve subcontractors, these need to be based in Switzerland except if there are no Swiss subcontractors available who are capable of performing the task. Please see the [financial guidelines](#) for more details.

2.5.5 Personnel costs

Please indicate your budgeted costs according to the ones indicated in the proposal. When indicating direct personnel costs, please use the usual salary rates of your institution. Private companies should comply with the maximum salary rates indicated in Section 3.1 of the financial guidelines. These maximum salary rates are based on Art. 12 par 2 FIPBV and are listed in Table 1 for convenience.

| staff category | CHF/a | CHF/h |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Principal investigator / project leader | 220'500 | 119 |
| research assistant | 126'000 | 68 |
| specialist staff member | 113'400 | 61 |
| doctoral student / assistant | 85'100 | 46 |

Table 1: Staff categories and their maximum gross annual and hourly salary rates for companies and non-higher education institutions. Note that employer's social contributions are not included and that these can be claimed on top.

2.5.6 Be aware of reporting obligations

The use of funds must be fully documented by the grantee. You or your financial department will be requested by SERI to provide detailed financial reports. Audits will be requested in line with the contract with SERI for your project. The rules for this will generally follow the ones of the EC.

2.5.7 Within reason!

SERI reserves the right to impose funding cuts should the costs of the project be unproportionally and unreasonably high or if the original objectives are not fully achieved. This includes the right to mandate an external expert panel to review the project.

2.5.8 Exchange rate

Please provide all your costs in EUR when submitting your request. SERI will convert the requested amount into CHF, applying the average exchange rate of the month of the call deadline as published by the Swiss National Bank. For more details, please refer to Section 2.4 of the [financial guidelines](#).

2.5.9 Payments

SERI funding will be based on a contract between the beneficiary and SERI (Art.13 par 4 FIPBV). 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.

2.5.10 Open science and acknowledgement

Research results or other scientific findings should in principle be published with Open Access. As defined in the subsidy contract between SERI and the Swiss project partner, project partners and start-ups funded by SERI undertake to mention the funding in all written publications, reports and scientific publications as well as in all public documents (print/digital) associated with the results of the funded project.

The following reference should be made: "This work has received funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)".

In addition to the reference in the text, the SERI logo can be displayed in publications, on websites or in social media. The logos are available for print (.eps, .jpg) and digital applications (.jpg, .svg, .png) and are accessible on the following website: sbfi.admin.ch/logos_en. Please also read the manual for recipients of SERI funding published there.

2.5.11 How to report

You will be asked by email to submit financial and scientific reports when they are due.

Within 60 days after completion of the project, the grantee submits a final scientific report and a final financial report for approval. All reports must be submitted in electronic form only. SERI then carries out a final financial audit and checks the scientific report. If necessary, it will have the scientific reports evaluated by external experts.

These reports must be prepared by the grantee, if available, using the forms and templates provided by SERI. SERI reserves the right to request additional documents documenting the progress of the work and relevant to the assessment of the project, in particular those listed in the Model Grant Agreement.

Interim financial reporting after 2 years (for projects lasting at least 36 months, generally applies to projects submitted to the ERC), or after 1 year for shorter projects (generally applies to projects submitted to the EIC Accelerator). Invoice for max 30% of the grant.

Final financial report at the end of the project. Invoice: remaining eligible costs up to 20% of the grant.

2.5.12 Change of affiliation (applies only for ERC)

If the participant changes his or her affiliation, SERI must be informed immediately by email to the scientific advisor assigned to the project. Note that if you decide to carry out the project at an institution based outside of Switzerland the funding will be stopped.

2.5.13 Confidentiality

SERI is the funding agency and therefore needs to be provided with appropriate project related information to meet its financial controlling obligations. Of course, all information submitted to SERI will be treated confidentially.

2.5.14 Further information and assistance

Should you encounter any problems or ambiguities, please feel free to contact us or have a look at the [Q&A](#). Please let us know about hooks and pitfalls in the text and within the application procedure. Any recommendation for improvement is most welcome!