The Impact of Switzerland's Participation in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation | Summary

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On behalf of the Swiss Parliament, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) carried out an impact study on Switzerland's participation in the EU framework programmes for research and innovation (referred to in this report as the EU framework programmes or FPs). The Federal Chancellery included the study in the 2025 list of key effectiveness reviews relating to the Federal Council's objectives. The aim of the study is to examine the impact of this participation on research promotion, knowledge and skills generation, scientific cooperation networks, the economy and employment, and wider society.

The main data source was an October 2025 online survey of Swiss stakeholders involved in funded Horizon 2020 projects, as well as a control group of stakeholders whose project applications were unsuccessful and whose projects did not receive funding. Including this control group allows for a more nuanced assessment of the impacts of participation in the FPs. The study also draws on data from eCORDA (the data portal for the FPs) and findings from two series of interviews with researchers, higher education institutions and companies.

The results of the impact study suggest that the EU framework programmes have made substantial contributions to the performance and international integration of the Swiss research and innovation system. This nevertheless does not allow for a comparison with other funding approaches or for the observed effects to be attributed exclusively to these programmes. The key findings can be summarised as follows:

- The EU framework programmes strengthen Switzerland's competitiveness as a centre of excellence for research and innovation. They promote international knowledge exchange, broaden scientific perspectives and make a significant contribution to the generation of new knowledge. They enhance the visibility and networking of Swiss stakeholders within the European Research Area.

- International partnerships provide access to critical infrastructure and complementary expertise. Collaboration opens up infrastructure, test environments and specialist expertise that are not always available in Switzerland. This plugs structural gaps and boosts Switzerland's long-term performance.

- The EU framework programmes create added value beyond financial support. They enable the development of long-term partnerships, stable networks and access to new markets. These collaborations are a key factor in scientific progress, innovation and international integration.

- EU funding is a key driver of innovation, particularly for start-ups. The funding enables feasibility studies, data collection and entry into international markets. Without this support, many innovations, including new technologies, would not have been implemented, or would have taken longer.

- Continuous participation in the EU framework programmes is crucial to sustaining these benefits in the long term. Steady involvement safeguards expertise, visibility and innovation capacity. Interruptions undermine competitiveness and make positioning more difficult in strategically important future sectors.

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