



## UK Science & Innovation Network Summary

# Switzerland

### 1. Science and Innovation Landscape

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Switzerland is a serious player on the international Science and Innovation scene. In 2023, for the 13<sup>th</sup> year running, Switzerland was top of the [Global Innovation Index](#). On the wider [European Innovation Scoreboard](#) in 2023 the country confirmed its top position as the overall Innovation Leader for the Europe region. In terms of the number of patent applications per capita, Switzerland occupies a leading position worldwide. Switzerland [invests over CHF 23 billion \(£20.7bn\) in research and development \(R&D\) annually](#), which equates to 3.15% of its gross domestic product. This makes Switzerland one of the highest investors in Research & Development in the world. The private sector is a major contributor to Research & Development in Switzerland, making up more than 70% of Swiss research expenditure and investing a total of CHF 15.5 billion (2.1% of GDP) in 2019.

Higher education is diversified in Switzerland and powers are shared between the cantons and the Confederation. Comprising ten Cantonal universities and two Federal institutes of technology (ETHZ and EPFL, plus four affiliated national research institutes: PSI, EMPA, EAWAG and WSL) and universities of applied sciences, geared towards practical training and applied research. Switzerland hosts two (ETHZ 9<sup>th</sup> and EPFL 16<sup>th</sup> in [QS WUR 2023](#)) of the top ten universities in Europe – seven are located in the UK. In 2023, Switzerland's scientific publications had the ninth highest global impact according to the [nature index](#).

#### **Federal strategy and funding for Education, Research, and Innovation 2021-2024**

The Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), headed by State Secretary Martina Hirayama, publishes a white paper every 4 years "[Message on promotion of education, research and innovation](#)". This defines the strategy and policy priorities. In 2021-2024 priorities focus on: Digital transformation; Fostering apprenticeships; Support life-long learning; Positioning the ETH Domain as major innovation driver in Switzerland.



Education, research, and innovation (ERI) enjoys a budget of some £24bn (CHF 28bn) for the period 2021-2024. The budget helps maintain the high level of public grant funding awarded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to fundamental research on a competitive basis. Its budget for 2021-2024 is ~GBP 4bn (CHF 4.6bn). Calls for proposals are advertised on [SNSF website](#).

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## 2. UK partnership with Switzerland on ST&I

Switzerland is a key partner for the UK given the excellence in innovation and our complementary approaches to science and innovation. Our respective Science Ministries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Collaboration in Science and Innovation in November 2022 with 3 focuses. 1. collaboration in deep science & technology, 2. innovation and 3. collaboration over international R&I policy. It is a testament to our desire to foster more collaboration between our scientific and innovation communities. The MOU has identified several areas of focus such as life sciences, energy and cleantech, climate, artificial intelligence, data, space, and quantum. However, collaboration is encouraged across all fields.

The Science & Innovation Network (SIN) in Switzerland works to support UK science excellence and innovation policy objectives. SIN Switzerland contributes towards the delivery of the MOU priorities by working closely with Swiss government and its S&I actors.

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## 3. SIN Switzerland contact

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