

Focus

Big Opportunities for Applied Research and Innovation

Today, a number of universities of applied sciences (UAS) take part in joint international research projects. Some of them have already spread an international approach through all their activities. Boosting their successful participation in EU research, development and innovation opportunities would further strengthen Switzerland's position as a centre of innovation.



Horizon 2020 has a strong focus on applied research. “Horizon 2020 will fund not just the best fundamental research, but also applied research and innovation, bringing in small and large companies”, pointed out European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, in her speech at the Swiss Horizon 2020 Launch Event at the beginning of the year. She considers research and innovation to be the foundation for sustained growth and job creation.

Boosting participation

Applied research is certainly what the UAS offer. They play an active role in transferring knowledge between science and its practical application, and strive to develop the competences in applied research and innovation. Moreover, they serve the needs of innovation promotion and technology transfer, highly applicable to Horizon 2020 targets, which strongly support market take-up of innovation. The UAS are valuable partners for SMEs because of their research. They enable SMEs to increase their substantial potential for innovation and enhance the development of new products, services and innovations.

In order to boost UAS participation in EU research, development and innovation opportunities, Euresearch has newly extended its network. All 7 Swiss UAS are represented by Euresearch Regional Offices or their own Euresearch Contact Points since the beginning of 2014.

Swiss UAS have been very successful in establishing research groups that have gained national and international recognition. There is no doubt that they are an essential part of the current international research scene.

Optimised Support for Zurich UAS Researchers



Several "Euresearch Contact Points UAS" were recently established to promote the participation of the Swiss universities of applied sciences (UAS) in European research programmes. The Contact Office Zürcher Fachhochschule (ZFH) is located in the Research & Development Unit in Winterthur, where the new Euresearch Contact Point ZFH, Suzana Atanasoski, took up her work in April.

The focus of the Euresearch Contact Point ZFH is on ensuring timely and adequate assistance for researchers at the ZFH who are interested in EU funding schemes, in particular the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 'Horizon 2020'. The Euresearch Contact Point ZFH is part of the Euresearch network and works in close cooperation with the Regional Office Zurich (EU Grants Access) and the Head Office in Bern.

Tailor-made consulting

The ZFH was keen to host a Euresearch Contact Point. This in-house counseling service is an important addition to the external advice provided by the Regional Office Zurich. It allows tailor-made consulting for ZFH research groups interested in EU funding schemes.

In addition, this service is key to identifying ZFH researchers working on topics that are suitable for third-party funding via EU programmes. On-site dissemination of project-relevant information is likely to have an important impact on the participation of the ZFH in EU research programmes and substantially contribute to the successful positioning of the ZFH within the European research landscape.

Demand for detailed advice

The last few weeks have shown that the demand for in-house counseling is very high. Initial meetings on the services available within the Euresearch network and the possibilities for grant submissions under Horizon 2020 have taken place at different departments of the ZFH.

As a result, many researchers have asked for further, more detailed advice and expressed their satisfaction with the newly established Euresearch Contact Point. The service is regarded as necessary and has proved to be very helpful in clarifying the many uncertainties about the current situation of Switzerland after the acceptance of the initiative against mass immigration.

[Read more](#) about collaborating with the ZFH.

Your Point of View



Benefiting from Strong Collaboration

Kilian Stoffel is Project Manager at Ganser CRS, which develops and manufactures common rail injection systems, a technology that significantly reduces fuel consumption and emissions of diesel engines. In cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), Ganser CRS has successfully developed a common rail injector for the upgrade of their single-cylinder test bench engine.

What are the advantages of the UAS cooperation?

The project started 2 years ago and both our company and the university profit; we have the knowledge and experience, and they have more resources on specific research topics. It is all about sharing the knowledge and technology – and networking, of course!

What are the cornerstones of such a cooperation?

Strong collaboration is essential. Typically, the researchers give their input and we help further with our experience and manufacturing knowledge. Once the cooperation was established, there were several small projects using the single-cylinder engine: one person working on his Doctor's thesis at the university and other students on their Master's and Bachelor's theses. These small projects build up the bigger picture.

- Kilian Stoffel, Project Manager

[Further information](#)



For SMEs

Bringing Together SMEs and Universities

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up more than 99% of the active companies in Switzerland, employing around 70% of the total workforce. It is extremely important to involve them more in research and innovation processes and projects to enhance the competitiveness of this backbone of our economy. This could be improved by facilitating their collaboration with universities.

Two main obstacles discourage early technology adoption and innovation in SMEs. First, they experience a general shortage of time and funds for something else than their main raison d'être. This could be solved by setting up special incentives, such as the CTI Innovation Voucher, which commits federal funding to cover a research institute's costs in an approved SME R&D project.

Secondly, a lack of knowledge and resources sometimes prevents universities from involving more SMEs in research and innovation processes. This obstacle was addressed in Switzerland by the creation of the universities of applied sciences. The idea was to exploit their geographical proximity to local SMEs and a market-oriented mentality to enhance collaboration with small companies.

In general, policies that focus on enabling the competitiveness of SMEs are a way to increase employment and create a more favourable economic landscape in the long term.

- [Emile Dupont and Ernst-Jan van Hattum, EEN](#)

[Further information](#)



The Rector's Conference of the Swiss UAS

Research at Universities of Applied Sciences

The Rector's Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences website presents all 7 of Switzerland's UAS. The website provides a great overview of the programmes and includes interesting documents on, for instance, internationalisation.

Most importantly, the [document](#) 'Research at universities of applied sciences and arts – evolution, significance and potential' introduces the characteristics and significance of research at the universities of applied sciences. It also highlights their potential and future.

- [Minna Däpp](#), Communications Officer

[Further Information](#)



Events

25 SEP
2014

[IFIB 2014 - Biotech and Bioeconomy Partnering Event](#)

Organiser: Enterprise Europe Network

25 SEP
2014

[9th micro & nanotechnologies brokerage event at Micronora](#)

Organiser: Enterprise Europe Network

19 NOV
2014

[EUREKA Innovation Event](#)

Organiser: Enterprise Europe Network / SERI State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation

[All events](#)

Impressum

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