

Annex: Models of relationship with the European Research Area

There are three broad mechanisms by which non-member states access research funds:

- Associated Country status where countries contribute to the Framework Programme proportionally to their GDP to get the same status as EU Member States but this is only open to countries that are members of the European Free Trade Association and current EU candidate nations. The terms of their association differ slightly by country but they do not have a role in the negotiations that shape EU research funding
- Non-associated third countries – institutions and researchers from other countries can apply to Framework Programmes under the ‘openness’ strategy and in some circumstances receive direct funding. Depending on the exact scheme, third countries might have to provide matched funds
- The EU has international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation with 20 countries to have a framework for participation in joint projects, sharing of facilities, staff exchanges and organising specific events

There are currently 13 Associated Countries including Norway, Iceland, Israel and Switzerland. These countries are not members of the EU but participate in EU Framework Programme funding schemes. Bilateral agreements are in place with each Associate and terms of association vary from one country to another. Associated Countries generally contribute to EU budgets based on GDP and researchers can apply for funding as those in Member States do. Where funding is awarded on the basis of excellence it is therefore possible to see a net gain.

A recent Swiss referendum voted for a policy to limit immigration through quotas and allow allocation of job preferentially to Swiss over foreigners.

This has effectively removed freedom-of-movement agreements with the EU. Switzerland was therefore downgraded to ‘third country’ status and subsequently negotiated ‘partially associated’ status. This allows Swiss-based researchers to access the excellence science pillar (pillar 1) of Horizon 2020 so receive European Research Council funds and the Marie Curie mobility schemes

Norway has Associate Member status and the agreement it has secured means that terms do not need to be renegotiated with each new Framework programme.

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