

NeI-CH (142-013)

National e-Infrastructure link for Switzerland

NeI-CH seeks to connect Swiss e-Infrastructure efforts to the EU-sponsored, Pan-European computing e-Infrastructures, EGI. The EU seeks to form a common European Research Area (ERA) to facilitate international research and increase European research competitiveness. EGI is an important element of this, a large-scale computational infrastructure and set of supporting technical and coordination services. Originally built out of the grid computing efforts connected to the LHC (Large Hadron Collider), EGI has expanded in scope, serving numerous communities from life sciences to digital cultural heritage. It also moved beyond 'grid' to focus on new technologies such as cloud computing and data management. EGI now offers a technology-neutral management, coordination and support platform to which different technologies can be connected. EGI provides the commodity-computing layer of the EU e-Infrastructure, working with other layers such as GEANT for networks and PRACE for supercomputing, and offering services to groups such as EUDAT and ESFRI clusters.

As Swiss researchers rely on these EU e-Infrastructures, SwiNG (Swiss National Grid Association) was founded with the support of the directors and rectors of its 18 member institutions in 2007 to represent Swiss in this field and to be the required national partner for EGI. SwiNG has been supported by SERI, which provided funds to support SwiNG in 2010-2012 and directed funds to SUC for 2013-2016 according to the roadmap for research infrastructures.

EGI has evolved to support nearly all scientific domains but the physics community in Switzerland has still largely carried the burden of supporting EGI interaction. This puts the other research domains at disadvantage as their interests may not be represented and the physics community in Switzerland cannot sustain supporting other communities. In order to support this essential EU e-Infrastructure interaction for all research domains for truly national representation it is essential for national support as recognized in the SERI Roadmap for Research Infrastructures.