



Press release

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Energy Competence Centres (SCCER): two applications receive go-ahead

The Federal Council's 'Coordinated Energy Research Switzerland' action plan aims to promote energy research in the years 2013-2016. Central to the action plan is the creation of research competence centres or networks between higher education institutions, to be known as Swiss Competence Centres for Energy Research (SCCERs). These centres will be active in seven action areas. Two applications in the areas Storage and Electricity Supply have already been approved by the Steering Committee. The two competence centres can already start operating this year.

The steering committee composed of members of the CTI and the Swiss National Science Foundation SNSF and which is headed by CTI President Walter Steinlin is acting on the recommendation of its Evaluation Panel, an international board headed by Andreas Umbach (President and Chief Executive Officer of Landis+Gyr AG). Following the call for proposals, this group of experts evaluated the applications submitted and at the beginning of September interviewed representatives from the proposed SCCERs. Walter Steinmann, the Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy SFOE, acts in an advisory role to the Steering Committee.

A total of eight potential competence centres applied for the seven available action areas between 23 May and the deadline for proposals on 9 July. The two approved competence centres are expected to be able to start operating in their action areas, Storage and Electricity Supply, from mid-November of this year. The SCCER in the field of *Electricity Supply* will be mainly concentrating on hydropower, geothermal energy and CO₂ capture and storage. In order to ensure the continuous supply of energy from renewable sources, the SCCER on *storage will over the next few years develop competencies in the areas of heat storage*, battery technologies and synthetic fuels such as hydrogen or hydrocarbon compounds.

In addition to these two action areas, there are five more to be filled: 'Efficiency', 'Grids and their components, energy systems', 'Economics, environment, law, behaviour', 'Efficient concepts, processes and components in mobility' and 'Biomass'. Promising applications were submitted in most of these areas. The dossiers display a high degree of interest in expanding competences and considerable innovative potential. Two applications were received in the area 'Economics, environment, law, behaviour'. In October the Evaluation Panel will conduct a second round of hearings for those applications which are not yet sufficiently comprehensive and detailed. Another call for the action area 'Efficiency' will be launched in November.

The aim of the SCCERs is to promote the innovation necessary to implement the Energy Strategy 2050 sustainably, both on a technical level and on a socio-political level. The developments extend from basic research and applied research and development, through to the transfer of research results to the market. The SCCERs should build up the necessary capacity and pursue the potentially most effective ideas and approaches. In the selection of the first two SCCERs, the main criteria to be met included solid coverage of the key topics, composition and proven abilities of the teams, planned cooperation with the private sector and a high degree of maturity.



CHF 72 million has been earmarked to establish the competence centres over the three-year period 2013 to 2016. The SCCERs' operations will be constantly reviewed and monitored during this period by the Evaluation Panel. The SCCERs will continue to operate in the next ERI Dispatch period (2017 to 2020), provided they meet the expectations according to the stated objectives. The competence centres represent a new approach by the CTI to promoting innovation and addressing the problems posed by the energy revolution. At the same time, the CTI continues to apply its proven funding instrument: An additional CHF 46 million is available for the conventional promotion of research and development projects in the energy sector. Institutions that are not involved in an SCCER can also apply for this funding. Furthermore, there is still sufficient money available for regular funding in other areas.

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