

# The Swissuniversities EnhanceR Project

## Final Content Report – a summary

The EnhanceR project was conducted from 2017 - 2019 by a consortium of eight partners. The consortium consisted of the research IT units from the EPFL, ETHZ, University of Basel, Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics, Friedrich Miescher Institute, HES-SO, University of Bern and the University of Zurich. The project met most of its objectives, superseded expectations in several areas and was closed successfully. 93% of the total budget of 2.4 MCHF was exhausted. Remaining federal funds were returned to Swissuniversities. EnhanceR continues as a legal entity (association) with extended and open memberships.

The background for the EnhanceR project was the dramatically increasing amount of available data in many research domains, due to an enormous growth in the number and the resolution of sensors and the technological possibilities for sharing data. Consequently, larger research institutions had established expert groups to support researchers in exploiting the new situation. The typical support ranges from the design of data acquisition, computation, storage, software work flow and training to the analysis of data with techniques such as machine learning. The research IT units of the EnhanceR partners recognised the need for a collaboration platform which enabled the sharing of expertise, infrastructure and common access to a Swiss wide set of services and solutions. In the long term, the funding agencies and policy makers would also have a single point of access to this community.

The research IT units of the eight EnhanceR partners have during the project, and the predecessor project eSCT, produced **an unprecedented catalogue of more than 100 completed research IT support projects and established a sustained collaboration platform for research IT support units in Swiss higher education and research institutions.** This platform is an association according to Swiss law which takes represents its members and acts as the instrument of interest towards policy makers and funding agencies. EnhanceR provides a single point of contact to the Swiss research IT expertise and can be accessed as a service on [www.enhancer.ch](http://www.enhancer.ch). In 2020, EnhanceR has 11 members and according to the articles of the association is open for further members.

The project was initially planned to run for two years from 2017-03-01 to 2019-02-28. However, in 2019 and in agreement with Swissuniversities, it was cost neutrally extended till 2019-12-31. As several activities were still running and remaining funds were available, the extension made sense. In the extension process the leading house was transferred to the University of Bern as the previous lead decided to stay within its original planning. Milestones achieved and assessments have been documented in yearly reports. Here we provide only a summary of the aims formulated in the original project proposal :

- To maintain a team of eScience and Research IT experts as a national coordination service.
- To refine and extend processes and procedures for better support of efficient service delivery.
- To maintain and manage the EnhanceR service portfolio in alignment with evolving customer needs.

- To grow a broader network of support expertise by engaging with eScience and Research IT experts beyond the core team, in other teams, projects and institutions.
- To facilitate greater cooperation in the sector by engaging with representatives or liaisons of research groups and other customers.
- To promote EnhanceR services to the eScience and Research IT communities.
- To work with swissuniversities and other stakeholders towards creation of a structure for the National research ecosystem and National Organisation that will support sustainability for EnhanceR and other service providers.

### **Where do we stand with respect to the original project planning?**

At the end of the project, research IT units in Swiss higher education and research institutions now have a sustained platform for collaboration, sharing of knowledge and solutions. The more than hundred conducted support projects represent a unprecedented database of experience and procedures for continued operation. The EnhanceR members also have a common legal entity for engagement and representation in international projects and organisations. For Swiss funding agencies, EnhanceR is a sustained entity for inputs from and interests of the research IT community. Research and its institutions have a single point of access to a national wide expertise in a service based manner. Cross institutional and cantonal support services in the academic domain remain a challenge without dedicated federal funding. Institutions and funding agencies will need to acknowledge such services when supporting research.