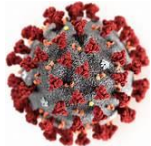


# National COVID-19 Science Task Force (NCS-TF)



Version of 8 April 2020

*This document gives essential information about the NCS-TF for members of the advisory board and expert groups*

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# 1 Background

In the pandemic of COVID-19, caused by SARS-CoV-2, Switzerland faces enormous challenges, like many countries worldwide. The Swiss state and its institutions need to find the best approach to cope with the epidemic. The Swiss scientific community has great potential to influence the outcome of this crisis positively. The Swiss scientific community has the ambition to contribute to a positive outcome by making its expertise in science and research available to the federal and cantonal authorities as efficiently as possible.

On March 31, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and the Federal Council's Crisis Committee for the management of the Corona crisis (Krisenstab des Bundesrates zur Bewältigung der Corona Krise, KSBC) mandated the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the ETH Council, swissuniversities, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (a+) to set up the "National COVID-19 Science Task Force" (NCS-TF or simply Task Force).

The Task Force will support and advise the Federal Council, the Head of the Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) and the relevant federal and cantonal authorities on the response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

## 2 Tasks

- Use the knowledge of Swiss scientists to advise politicians and authorities in their decision-making processes, in particular, at the federal level, the FDHA/FOPH, the KSBC crisis team and the WBF/SERI. In consultation and coordination with the federal authorities, the Task Force is also available to cantonal authorities for enquiries and consultations.
- Provide specific advice to the SERI for the preparation of particular measures in research funding.
- Identify research opportunities where Swiss scientists can quickly make an important contribution to understanding and combating COVID-19.
- Identify innovation opportunities in which Swiss scientific know-how can rapidly generate products or services that can make a significant contribution to the fight against COVID-19.

## 3 Structure and leadership

The NCS-TF consists of a high-level **advisory board** and **expert groups** (Figure 1). The advisory board includes the chairpersons of each expert group and other experts. Members are listed in **Appendix 6.2 and 6.3**.

The chair of the Task Force is Professor Matthias Egger, President of the SNSF Research Council. Two deputy chairs (Professors Martin Ackermann and Ulrich Kihm) support the chair.

**Expert group** members of the Task Force are recognised experts in their fields from the Swiss academic landscape. The chair nominates the members of the Task Force in consultation with the commissioning (FOPH, SERI and KSBC) and mandated bodies (SNSF, ETH Council, swissuniversities, a+).

The **secretariat of NCS-TF** is managed by Myriam Cevallos, who was released from her duties as Scientific Advisor at the SERI (**Appendix 6.1**).

The email address of the NCS-TF secretariat is [covid19@snf.ch](mailto:covid19@snf.ch).

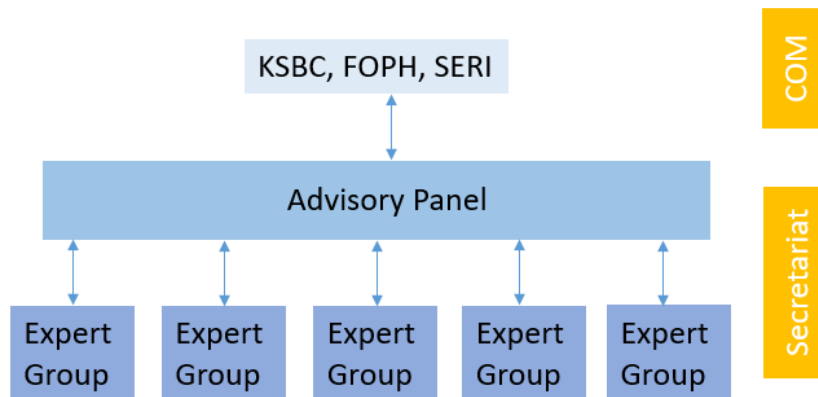


Figure 1. Structure of the Swiss National COVID-19 Science Task Force

The Task Force's **expert groups** will initially focus on the most urgent and time-critical issues in nine thematic areas. The expert groups and key objectives are listed below (in alphabetical order). Expert group members are in **Appendix 6.3**.

**Clinical care:** coordinate clinical research.

**\*Data and modelling:** improve access to essential data, statistical analysis and mathematical modelling of the epidemic, interventions and health care needs

**Diagnostics and testing:** coordinate and improve access to and promote PCR and serological testing, to develop evidence-based testing strategies

**Digital contact tracing:** develop and pilot digital contact tracing solutions, and support and evaluate their implementation

**\*Economics:** address macro-economic and health economic issues

**\*Ethics, legal, social:** address ethical, legal and social issues

**\*Exchange platform:** a hub to exchange expertise, material, equipment, personnel and international contacts

**Infection prevention and control:** evaluate best practices in the health care setting, advise on the role of personal protective equipment in other contexts, especially masks.

**\*Public health:** provide public health input into the design of strategies for prevention intervention, testing and transition, conduct rapid evidence reviews

**Vaccines and vaccine strategies:** review developments in the vaccine field, discuss and propose vaccination strategies

\* indicates cross-cutting groups. These groups work closely together and with the other expert groups. New expert groups may be set up according to emerging needs in close cooperation and consultation with the commissioning bodies and partners.

## 4 Contact with the media

Martin Fischer (SERI) will coordinate the media work required of the NCS-TF (martin.fischer@sbfi.admin.ch). Where communication on the Task Force is warranted, this is done in consultation with the contracting agencies (SERI, FOPH, KSBC). **The expert groups and advisory board of the Task Force do not communicate independently with the media.**

**In their interactions with the media, Task Force members must not speak on behalf of the Task Force, but as independent academics. Any questions regarding the Task Force must be deferred to the Chair of the Task Force (Matthias Egger).**

## 5 Internal communication

The expert groups meet regularly (**Appendix 6.4**) and report to the advisory board on their activities (Figure 1), start and end dates, and intermediate and final results.

The advisory board presents findings and recommendations from the expert groups to the KSBC on Fridays (**Appendix 6.4**). The advisory board informs the contracting authorities (SERI/WBF and FOPH/EDI) about the progress of the work at least once a month, as required. The relevant expert group will summarise the scientific justification in a suitable form for any work that leads to specific recommendations for further measures by the higher political authorities (WBF / FDHA).

A Sharepoint **exchange platform and workspace** allows the secure exchange of data and documents (with version control and audit trail) with the FOPH and other partners. The platform will provide workspaces for the advisory board and each expert group, and will allow the tracking of requests and the publication of outputs. Access will be by invitation only.

A simple **website** will inform the public about the brief and composition of the NCS-TF, including the advisory board and expert groups.

A NCS-TF **zoom business account** has been purchased.

## 6 Appendix

### 6.1 Secretariat

<b>Name</b>	<b>Roles</b>
Myriam Cevallos, SERI	Scientific assistant and coordinator

### 6.2 Advisory Board

<b>Name</b>	<b>Roles</b>
Matthias Egger, SNSF	Chair Expert Epidemiology, UniBE
Ulrich Kihm, Safoso	Vice-chair Expert Epidemic control, Safoso
Martin Ackermann	Vice-chair Expert Microbiology, ETH, Eawag
Chairs of expert groups*	Appendix 6.3
Annette Oxenius	Expert Immunology, ETHZ
Volker Thiel	Expert Coronaviruses, UniBE
Marcel Tanner	Expert Public Health, UniBas
Edouard Bugnion	Expert Computer Science, EPFL

\* Chairs and members of expert groups will be invited to meetings depending on the topics to be discussed.

### 6.3 Expert Groups

No.	Expert group	Chair	Members (provisional)
1	Clinical care	Manuel Battegay, UniBAS	Oriol Manuel, UniL Thierry Fumeaux, GHOL Alexandra Calmy, UniGE Nicola Müller, SGINF Jêrome Pugin, UniGE Felix Huber, Medix
2	Data and modelling	Sebastian Bonhoeffer, ETHZ	Christian Althaus, UniBE Tanja Stadler, ETH Melissa Penny, UniBas, SwissTPH Richard Neher, UniBas Olivia Keiser, UniGe Jacques Fellay, EPFL, CHUV
3	Diagnostics and testing	Didier Trono, EPFL	Markus Stoffel, ETHZ César Metzger, BABS Alexandra Trkola, UniZH Laurent Kaiser, UniGe
4	Digital epidemiology	Marcel Salathé, EPFL	Effy Vayena, ETHZ Edouard Bugnion, EPFL Matthias Egger, UniBE Viktor von Wyl, UniZH
5	Economics	Monika Bütler, UniSG	Jan-Egbert Sturm, KOF Beatrice Weder di Mauro, IHEID Marius Brülhart, UniL Rafael Lalive, UniL Luca Crivelli, SUPSI, USI
6	Ethics, legal, social	Samia Hurst, UniGe	Claudine Burton Jeangros, UniGE Sueri Moon, IHEID Eva Maria Belser, UniFR
7	Exchange platform	Roman Stocker, ETHZ	Felix Schürmann, EPFL Mirko Meboldt, ETH
8	Infection prevention and control	Sarah Tschudin Sutter, UniBAS	Peter Wick, Empa Jean-Romain Delaloye, KSW Daniel Candinas, UniBE Damien de Courten, INDEMA René Rossi, EMPA Andreas Mortensen, EPFL Danielle Vuichard Gysin, swissnoso Walter Zingg, UniGE Daniel Jordi, BABS
9	Public health	Marcel Tanner, UniBAS	Nicola Low, UniBE Suzanne Suggs, USI Milo Puhan, UniZH Nicole Probst-Hensch, UniBas, Swiss TPH Antonie Flahault, UniGE
10	Vaccines and vaccination strategies	Martin Bachmann, UniBE	Federica Sallusto, USI Volker Thiel, vetsuisse Daniel Speiser, UniL Manfred Kopf, ETHZ Urs Karrer, KSW

## 6.4 Abbreviations

COVID-19, Coronavirus Disease 2019

NCS-TF, National COVID-19 Science Task Force

SERI, State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation

FOPH, Federal Office of Public Health

KSBC, Krisenstab des Bundesrates zur Bewältigung der Corona Krise, the Federal Council's Crisis Committee for the management of the Corona crisis

SNSF, Swiss National Science Foundation

a+, Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (a+) to set up the

FDHA, Federal Department of Home Affairs