

FAQ Swiss Digital Initiative

1. *What is the Swiss Digital Initiative?*

The Swiss Digital Initiative (SDI) is a long-term process aimed at developing and pioneering guidelines, tools and mechanisms for the implementation of ethical standards in the field of data-driven applications and algorithmic processes. In particular, it seeks to strengthen trust in digital technologies as well as in the actors of the ongoing digital transformation.

2. *What is the added-value of the Swiss Digital Initiative?*

There are numerous digital declarations, value charters, and principle statements elaborated by state or non-state actors around the globe. Time has come to focus on the actual implementation of commonly shared values and principles that aim at strengthening the digital society and giving every human the opportunity to live a better life. Aimed at amplifying the impact of these initiatives and becoming a front runner in creating implementation-oriented practices, the objective of the Swiss Digital Initiative, as a private-sector driven initiative, is to foster the potential of digital technologies to advance flourishing human societies. The approach is based on the conviction that the ethical challenges of digitization must be met by joining forces with diverse stakeholders and initiatives from private, public-private or fully public sectors.

3. *When will the Swiss Digital Initiative be launched and what happens on September 2nd?*

The Swiss Digital Initiative will be formally launched on the occasion of the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2020. After setting the initiative's starting point on September 2nd in Geneva, participants will meet again at the time of WEF 2020 to formalize their commitment to the initiative. Furthermore, work procedures for the initiative will be determined and a first set of projects ("work package"), to be carried out through the Swiss Digital Initiative Foundation, will be launched. These projects will be determined by the participants before WEF 2020 through an inclusive, participatory multi-stakeholder process, bound – as is the entire initiative – to the procedural principles agreed upon in the statement discussed on September 2nd.

4. *Who will be the participating institutions of the Swiss Digital Initiative?*

The Swiss Digital Initiative is primarily, but not exclusively aimed at companies acting globally. Projects will be elaborated and implemented through broad participation from the economy, academia, and actors from civil society.

5. *How will the Swiss Digital Initiative be implemented by its signatories?*

The Swiss Digital Initiative will be realized through projects that are identified and developed through an inclusive, participatory multi-stakeholder process, bound – as is the entire initiative – to the procedural principles agreed upon in the statement discussed on September 2nd. Projects may have targeted technology- or sector-specific relevance. In such cases, active participation may be limited to those concerned. Instruments developed within the initiative are geared towards ethical standards upon which

stakeholders of the Swiss Digital Initiative will commit to act in their specific fields (e.g. in the form of codes of conduct).

6. How does the Swiss Digital Initiative relate to other similar initiatives?

The Swiss Digital Initiative builds on the numerous initiatives and statements released by States, international organizations, as well as the private sector. Instead of re-stating another digital declaration, the Swiss Digital Initiative seeks to contribute to the operationalization of the principles put forth in these documents, as, for instance, the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel report on digital cooperation entitled "The Age of Global Interdependence" (in particular the "key principles of global digital cooperation" highlighted by this Report), but also the EU Guidelines for Trustworthy AI, the recent OECD Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence, but also the many recent Swiss documents commissioned by the Federal Government and non-state actors. Guidelines, tools and mechanisms elaborated through the Swiss Digital Initiative will be publicly shared to contribute to a global dialogue on the ethics of digitization.

7. How does the Swiss Digital Initiative relate to digitalswitzerland?

The Swiss Digital Initiative will be sponsored and administered by the Swiss Digital Initiative Foundation, to be established in Geneva. The Foundation aims at seeking synergies with the „Genève Internationale.“ Digitalswitzerland will fund the initiative in the initial phase and will be represented by two members of its executive committee in the Foundation Board. The Foundation acts under the following mission:

"The purpose of the "Swiss Digital Initiative" Foundation is to promote ethical standards and conduct in the handling of digital information and technologies on a global level. It supports all activities that serve the implementation of this initiative.

The Foundation carries out its activities through its own projects, grants and the financing or co-financing of selected third-party projects. To promote the Foundation's purpose, it may cooperate with third parties and delegate tasks to third parties. It can also carry out other tasks relating to the topic of "Ethics in the Age of Digital Transformation.

The Foundation does not pursue any profit-making purposes and does not strive for profit."

While the Foundation will focus on implementing ethics in times of digital transformation, digitalswitzerland remains entirely committed to its overarching mission as a Swiss-wide, multi-stakeholder initiative, created from the shared vision of its over 150 members to strengthen Switzerland's position as a leading innovation hub.

8. Will the Swiss Digital Initiative be legally binding?

The Swiss Digital Initiative will enable the development, improvement, and diffusion of guidelines, tools and mechanisms upon which signatories will commit to act and that work towards a human rights-based, fair, sustainable, and thus flourishing digital society. It focuses on the commitment by the participating actors and not on legally binding instruments.

9. How will the Swiss Digital Initiative be funded?

In the initial phase, the Swiss Digital Initiative will be funded by digitalswitzerland. Long-term funding schemes will be determined by the Foundation together with the stakeholders of the Swiss Digital Initiative.

10. Who are the members of the Foundation Board?

The designated president of the Foundation Board is Doris Leuthard, former Federal Councillor. Designated Board members are Yves Flückiger (Rector of the University of Geneva), Joël Mesot (President ETH Zurich), as well as Ivo Furrer and Marc Walder (representing digitalswitzerland). Additional Board members are under discussion.