

**prohelvetia**

**PRO HELVETIA  
SWISS PAVILION**

**TWO-PHASE COMPETITION ON A SELECTIVE PROCEDURE BASIS**

**18th INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA, 2023**

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## A. Introduction

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The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia promotes Swiss art and culture while keeping in mind variety and ensuring quality. As per the Arts and Culture Promotion Act and its message on culture, one of the responsibilities includes the Swiss contribution to the art and architecture biennials in Venice. Pro Helvetia would like to invite architects, researchers, critics and other active followers of architecture to participate in a two-phase selective procedure competition for the Swiss Pavilion at the 2023 Biennale.

Submissions should present an exhibition concept based on a theme pertinent to contemporary architectural discourse. All submissions must have a specific connection to Swiss architectural discourse. Due to the timeline, the selected theme for the Swiss Pavilion will be independent of that of the Biennale of 2023, which is as yet unknown.

The competition is open to persons who either hold Swiss nationality, reside permanently in Switzerland, or work very frequently in Switzerland. The competition is based on a two-phase selective process. The budget provided by Pro Helvetia is CHF 260,000 and must be respected.

The exhibition will take place in the Swiss Pavilion located in the «Giardini della Biennale» in Venice. It will remain open for the duration of the Architecture Biennale (usually from May to November). The precise dates of 2023 will be announced by Biennale organisers approximately one year prior to opening.

For more than a century, the Venice Biennale has been one of the most prestigious exhibitions worldwide. Ever since its foundation in 1895, it has been at the avant-garde, promoting new artistic trends and organising international events in contemporary arts. The Architecture Biennale first took place in 1980.

The Swiss Pavilion in Venice, situated directly at the main entrance to the «Giardini Pubblici», was created by the architect Bruno Giacometti in 1951/52 and is in the possession of the Swiss Confederation. The design is based on the original and functional division of a space for sculpture, graphic design and painting. As per its legal mandate, Pro Helvetia has been responsible for organising Swiss contributions to both the art and architecture Biennales in the Swiss Pavilion.

## B. Regulations

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### Organiser

Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

### Address of Project Head and organiser

Team Swiss participation Venice Biennale, Visual Arts, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Hirschengraben 22, CH-8024 Zurich. Email: [swisspavilion23@prohelvetia.ch](mailto:swisspavilion23@prohelvetia.ch)

### Type of competition and objective

Project design and realisation of the Swiss Pavilion for the Venice Architecture Biennale of 2023. This is a selective procedure competition conducted in two phases.

### Participation

By entering the competition, the jury and the participants confirm their acceptance of current regulations and procedures.

The competition is open to persons who either hold Swiss nationality, reside permanently in Switzerland, or work very frequently in Switzerland. The interdisciplinary teams must be comprised of architects or persons active in fields related to architecture, as well as of a curator or persons working in the field of artistic outreach, with experience in the development, organisation and production of exhibitions. The Swiss aspect or a connection with Switzerland is the basic prerequisite for the composition of the team. Especially welcome are submissions by interdisciplinary teams and/or team characterised by diversity. Irrespective of their composition, teams must always designate one person who is responsible for the team. Applications by individuals are also possible.

### Replies to questions

Questions can be sent to [swisspavilion23@prohelvetia.ch](mailto:swisspavilion23@prohelvetia.ch) until Sunday, 11 July 2021 at midnight (CET). Replies to all questions will be published in PDF form on Friday, 16 July 2021 from 12pm (CET) on [www.myprohelvetia.ch](http://www.myprohelvetia.ch) and will be visible to all participants.

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## Composition of the jury

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| President:            | Anna Hohler (Architecture critic and performing arts professional, Lausanne)   |
| Professional members: | Verena Konrad (Architecture curator, Vorarlberg AT)<br>Lukas Meyer (Architect ETH, FAS, Bellinzona)<br>Madeleine Schuppli (Head of Visual Arts Pro Helvetia, Zurich)<br>Rob Wilson (Architecture editor, The architects' journal, London UK) |

## Specialist advice:

The jury reserves the right to ask questions to specialist advisors and additional consultants if necessary.

## Deadlines and due dates

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|---|--|
| Call for applications   | Tuesday, 29 June 2021  |
| Questions   | Sunday, 11 July 2021, until midnight (CET)<br>by e-mail to: <a href="mailto:swisspavilion23@prohelvetia.ch">swisspavilion23@prohelvetia.ch</a> |
| Replies   | Friday, 16 July 2021, from 12pm (CET)<br>(will be published as a PDF on <a href="http://myprohelvetia.ch">myprohelvetia.ch</a> )               |
| Submission of dossiers for the competition  | Wednesday, 22 September 2021<br>online until midnight (CET)  |
| Information to selected teams   | Monday, 1 November 2021  |
| First Round: Presentation to jury<br>Feedback of the jury and selection of 3 projects for<br>the Second Round         | Thursday, Friday, 2 - 3 December 2021  |
| Second Round: Presentation to jury  | Monday, 17 January 2022  |
| Nomination of the selected project<br>for the Swiss Pavilion  | February 2022  |
| Publication of all the projects from the First and<br>Second Rounds on <a href="http://biennials.ch">biennials.ch</a> | March 2022   |
| Development and production of the project<br>with Pro Helvetia  | February 2022 - March 2023   |

## Documents issued

The following documents are available on the platform [myprohelvetia.ch](http://myprohelvetia.ch)

- Regulations and specifications of the competition
- Plan of the Giardini Pubblici
- Vector DWG plan and PDF of the Swiss Pavilion
- Documentation of the Swiss Pavilion
- Orthophoto of the site
- Photos of the site

## Documents to be delivered

### Competition

A concise and expressive presentation of the theme, the concept of the exhibition, the composition and qualifications of the team. The dossier must be presented online in PDF form, a maximum of two A3 landscape format pages, containing the following information:

- The working title of the exhibition
- An explanatory text on the theme and the concept of the exhibition (max. 500 words), including a short summary of few sentences resuming the idea in English
- An illustration (sketch, drawing, collage, etc.) showing the potential of the concept for transposition into a quality exhibition in the Swiss Pavilion
- Team composition and short biography of each person
- List of work experience, as well as a list of realised projects

### Presentation First Round

- A maximum of 4 × A1 horizontals as presentation aids
- 1 × A4 document containing a synthesis of the project
- Models are welcome
- Presentation with visual aid is possible

### Presentation Second Round

- Development of the exhibition concept with reviewed material
- (The guidelines for material are the same as for the First Round)

## Assessment criteria

- Clarity, contemporary pertinence of the theme chosen
- Visual potential of the exhibition concept
- Potential of the theme chosen in curatorial and spatial terms
- Capacity of the team to reflect, in a clear and innovative manner, a contemporary architectural issue
- Representation of the Swiss scene and its present architectural reality
- Integration of the concept in the architecture of the Swiss Pavilion
- Communication, legibility and capacity to address a wide international audience
- Compliance with the budget of CHF 260,000, including fees, production, visual support and communication

## Prizes

A total lump sum of CHF 2,000 will be offered to teams selected for the First and Second Round to cover all expenses incurred.

## Communication

Once the final decision by Pro Helvetia has been made following the jury's recommendation, all participants will be informed about the result in writing. All project submissions of the First and Second Rounds will be visible online at [www.biennials.ch](http://www.biennials.ch).

## Continuation of the study

The selected team will work in close collaboration with the Biennale team of Pro Helvetia, which will assist with the management and production part of the exhibition.

## Place

The place of jurisdiction is in Zurich.

## Language

The official languages of the competition are the national languages, German, French, Italian and English.

## C. Specifications

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The choice of theme is free. (The selected Swiss theme will be independent from that of the 2023 Biennale, as the latter has not yet been defined).

The projects are expected to include the following aspects in an outstanding manner:

- An exhibition concept based on a themes pertinent to contemporary architectural discourse
- Direct links to Swiss architectural discourse
- Strong position in and an innovative approach to Swiss architecture
- Original and unique propositions that stimulate reflexion on Swiss architecture
- Reflexion on changing life styles and requirements in terms of architecture and environment
- Impact of architecture on society and environment
- Reflexion on problems or changes in the urban and architectural characteristics of Swiss towns, cities and agglomerations and their residents
- Reflexion on the role that architecture plays or should play in our living and working spaces

The Swiss Pavilion in Venice is the perimeter for the competition. The exterior amenities are limited to the grounds of the Swiss Pavilion. The implementation and execution of the project will be carried out in collaboration with Pro Helvetia.

The budget of the undertaking is limited to a total amount of CHF 260,000, which forms an integral part of the project specifications. The budget includes fees, the cost of implementation and all the visual support and catalogues necessary for the execution of the project. If necessary, this amount can be increased through sponsorship, etc., on the initiative of individual participants. The whole financial strategy should be presented clearly in the Second Round.