

# **RSE community buildup in Switzerland**

**Uwe Schmitt, ETH Zurich  
12 Feb 2025**

# About me / us

- Uwe Schmitt
- I work as an RSE for <https://sis.id.ethz.ch>
- We are around 50 people meanwhile.
- "First contact": Visited UK conference in 2023



# RSE community @ ETH: first steps

- Mail campaign on the 23rd of November 2023
  - Emails to both research and technical staff
  - Incredible response
- Announced 1st online information event on 12th of December 2023

# 1st online information event

- Around 120 participants
- 2 parts:
  1. Talk by Prof. Simon Hettrick (Software Sustainability Institute UK)
  2. Information on community building @ ETH
    - RSE community survey
    - Q&A

# First on-site event: 1st of February 2024

- **Part 1: Lightning talks**
- **Part 2: Talk by Mr. Peter Schmidt from the UK RSESoc**
- **Part 3: Discussion rounds in small groups:**
  - What do you expect from the RSE community?
  - What kind of role do you imagine for yourself in this community?
  - How can we build the community?







# Reactions:

- **EPFL Lausanne:** we also want to do something!
- **KOF Swiss Economic Institute:** We were just about to set up something of our own!
- >300 members on mailing list
- ~100 on matrix chat
- ~65 at first on-site event
- Website <https://rse.ethz.ch> (could be <https://rse.swiss> soon)

# What happened since then?

- Zoom calls, Lightning talks in person
- Small working group at ETH Zurich
- Panel discussion about “Hiring RSEs”
  - [https://rse.ethz.ch/blog/2024\\_10\\_26\\_rse\\_job\\_panel/](https://rse.ethz.ch/blog/2024_10_26_rse_job_panel/)
- Got funding!





# ETH Domain



# Funding: RSE4ORD

(<https://open-research-data-portal.ch/services-projects/rse4ord-building-a-research-software-engineering-community-to-promote-open-science/>)

- Building a research software engineering community to promote FAIR principles for research software.
- With all institutes from ETH domain:
  - ETH Zurich, EPFL + 4 RIs (EAWAG, EMPA, WSL, PSI)
- 250k CHF in total for 2 years for 9 people

# RSE4ORD

- Build up local communities
- Promote FAIR principles for research software
- RSE Survey
- Evaluate options for a Swiss RSE association
- Final event / workshop
- State as of now:
  - Initial communities at ETHZ, EPFL, EMPA and EAWAG
  - First meetup at WSL last week
  - PSI in planning



# Upcoming call for RSE ambassadors

- Sponsored by EnhanceR (<https://www.enhancer.ch/>)
  - Association / Network of Swiss Research IT groups
- 5-10k for one year
- Goal: build RSE communities beyond RSE4ORD
- Details:  
[https://rse.ethz.ch/blog/2025\\_02\\_21\\_call\\_for\\_ambassadors/](https://rse.ethz.ch/blog/2025_02_21_call_for_ambassadors/)

# In the pipeline

- Lighting talks / meetup
- Zoom presentations
- Hackathon with <https://opendata.ch> and other stake holders
- Ideas:
  - Panel discussion “RSE education”
  - international online Book club?

# Summary

- We are very pleased with what we have accomplished so far.
- But also challenges:
  - Could need more funding
  - Keep the community engaged

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