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Switzerland: Green Light for a Proton Collision Course

By DENNIS OVERBYE

After spending \$10 billion and making preparations for 16 years, scientists hope to start the world's biggest physics experiment next Tuesday. Beginning that morning, engineers will try to collide protons in the [Large Hadron Collider](#), a 17-mile underground racetrack, in the hopes of recreating primordial particles and forces beneath the French and Swiss countryside outside Geneva, [CERN](#), the European Organization for Nuclear Research, said Tuesday. The collider was designed to accelerate protons to energies of seven trillion electron volts and then smash them together, [but design flaws will keep the collider running at only half power for the first two years of its operation](#). A long shutdown to bring the collider up to its full potential is planned for 2012.