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# **International Cooperation in Vocational and Professional Education and Training (IC-VPET)**

Vocational and professional education and  
training: a consolidation of Switzerland's  
international ERI strategy

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Approved by the Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research on 11 March 2014

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 Introduction

The present strategy paper is intended as a concrete follow-up to *Switzerland's International Strategy for Education, Research and Innovation* which was drafted on 30 June 2010 (short form: *international ERI strategy*). It deals specifically with *international cooperation in vocational education and training (IC-VPET)*. The general objectives and priorities of the international ERI strategy that relate specifically to IC-VPET are expressed here in the form of objectives, concrete measures, criteria and specific priority countries. This should enable other activities in this area to be carried out in a coherent manner, thereby ensuring a more efficient and targeted use of resources. The present strategy paper should enable priority setting, review, the launch of new measures and the structuring of existing ones.

This consolidated strategy paper has been drafted in response to the increasing importance of the VPET theme in various policy areas where Switzerland pursues bilateral or multilateral cooperation with partner countries and institutions. This paper is also a response to other factors such as the internationalisation of the labour market, its corresponding impact on the development of VPET and internationalisation trends within the VPET sector itself.

This strategy paper includes introductory comments on the Swiss VPET system as well as an analysis of relevant international developments:

1. Existing strategic, legal and financial aspects of IC-VPET in ERI will be clarified.
2. Given the Confederation's overarching strategic objectives in the area of international cooperation in vocational education and training, ERI-related objectives have been established along with a list of existing and planned measures. After this, we indicate the priority countries for bilateral cooperation, describe the criteria used to determine whether expertise is to be transferred, and if so, at what intensity level. We also clarify and explain the various priorities for multilateral cooperation.
3. For implementation of this strategy paper, basic action and coordination principles and concrete coordination measures will be proposed and discussed by the Confederation, the Cantons and professional organisations.
4. The medium-term need for adjustment of the legal and financial framework will be discussed and the means of verifying and adjusting the strategy will be presented.

In order to ensure greater understanding, a definition of the term "international cooperation in vocational education and training" (hereinafter also referred to as IC-VPET) has been introduced:

*"International cooperation in vocational education and training covers all activities pursued by federal agencies in their respective policy areas within bilateral and multilateral cooperation contexts for the purpose of:*

- 1) *Providing information about the Swiss VPET system and achieving greater recognition and appreciation for the Swiss VPET system abroad;*
- 2) *Taking part in European and international programmes, initiatives and processes that are relevant for the Swiss VPET system;*
- 3) *Pursuing exchange and coordination initiatives with strategic partner countries in the area of VPET and/or*
- 4) *Providing specific Swiss expertise in the area of VPET within the framework of cooperation activities or projects.*

*IC-VPET covers a broad spectrum of measures at various intensity levels, each aimed at furthering different strategic objectives of Switzerland.*

*IC-VPET differs from such notions as export of education, export of VPET programmes or VPET system export since there are no direct economic considerations associated with IC-VPET activities and no effort is made to achieve the unaltered transfer of the entire Swiss VPET system."*

## 1.2 Characteristics of the Swiss VPET system in international comparison

The strength of the Swiss VPET system comes from a specific combination of features: its prevailing **labour-market focus**, the great importance given to ensuring **quality** at all levels and the **public-private partnership** between the Confederation and the Cantons, on the one hand, and professional organisations and companies, on the other. In addition, the Swiss VPET system is an integral part of the Swiss education system, which in turn is characterised by **permeability** and **cost-efficiency**<sup>1</sup>. These strengths have sparked interest from countries seeking to reform or create their own VPET system. These five features are explained below:

**Labour-market focus:** The qualifications that may be acquired within the Swiss VPET system are based on occupational requirements of the labour market and the needs of companies. The professional competences to be acquired correspond to the actual activities that learners will be called upon to perform after their training is complete. For the most part, these professional competences are developed within real working contexts. The basic underlying principle is the dual-track approach to learning: apprenticeship training at host companies combined with classroom instruction at vocational schools. As a result, learners are already involved in the host company's working processes and carry out productive work for the company during their training. For this reason, learners may be hired as fully functional employees of the company upon completion of their training. Technological innovations and developments in the activity profiles of occupations are regularly and quickly included in the training plans for both the apprenticeship training and classroom instruction portions of VPET programmes.

**Quality:** Considerable importance is given to developing quality at all levels and in all parts of the system. The Confederation is responsible for ensuring the overall quality of the system as a whole and the Cantons and professional organisations each have their respective areas of responsibility. The Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) is an independent institution specialised in VPET. It provides basic and continuing training to teachers working at vocational schools as well as to trainers involved in the provision of apprenticeship training at host companies. SFIVET also lends support to professional organisations in the preparation of VPET ordinances and training plans for VPET programmes. Finally, SFIVET pursues research in the area of upper-secondary level vocational education and training (VET), tertiary-level professional education and training (PET) and Switzerland's entire system of vocational and professional education and training (VPET).

**Public-private partnership:** The Swiss VPET system is jointly managed and funded at the national level by partners from both the public sector (the Confederation and the Cantons) and the private sector (professional organisations and companies). The Confederation manages the system as a whole; the Cantons are responsible for implementation and supervision; professional organisations establish the content of VPET ordinances and training plans for VPET programmes; and companies create apprenticeship positions and assign staff to provide apprenticeship training to learners. The strong and long-term commitment of the private sector to this system is derived from the fact that companies have a vested interest in ensuring the transfer of professional competences to the next generation of workers and therefore wish to play an active role in this process.

**Permeability:** The Swiss VPET system is characterised by a high degree of permeability and offers recognised subsequent training opportunities to learners after completion of their initial training ("no dead-end qualifications"). Holders of upper-secondary level VET qualifications may take their training to the next level, either by pursuing professional education and training (PET, ISCED 5B) or seeking enrolment at a Swiss university of applied sciences (UAS, ISCED 5A). The latter option is available to learners who, in addition to obtaining the standard Federal VET Diploma, also obtain a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB). Learners may even seek enrolment in a Swiss tier-one university (i.e. cantonal universities and either of Switzerland's two federal institutes of technology: the ETHZ and the EPFL, ISCED 5A). In order to do so, learners must obtain the Federal VET Diploma, the Federal Vo-

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<sup>1</sup> For comparison: Hoeckel, Field and Grubb (2009): "Learning for Jobs - OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training Switzerland", Paris: OECD.

cational Baccalaureate and pass the University Aptitude Test (UAT). Learners therefore enjoy a considerable degree of flexibility in shaping their future career paths. As an integral part of the entire Swiss education system, the VPET system makes an active contribution to its further development.

**Cost-efficiency:** For professional organisations and companies, VET is not just a long-term investment in the next generation of workers: learners also perform productive tasks during their apprenticeship training. In most cases, the productive output of learners exceeds the company's apprenticeship training costs, making apprenticeship training an economically viable option for companies. In the long run, host companies are also able to save on recruitment and orientation costs by hiring apprentices at the end of the VET programme. Because companies are also involved in the training process, dual-track VET places less of a burden on public finances.

This combination of features – unique in international comparison – is based on Switzerland's long tradition of VET and PET as well as on the specific structure of the Swiss economic system. The idea of transposing the Swiss VPET system in its entirety within another VPET system is neither realistic nor likely to be successful. However, individual components of the VPET system may indeed be applied in other socioeconomic contexts and transferred within the framework of international cooperation in VPET (*transfer of expertise*, see explanations in Chapter 2.3.2).

### 1.3 Relevant international VPET trends and developments

In the area of international cooperation in VPET, there are a few general developments that are opening the way for Switzerland to pursue corresponding activities. These are mainly economic, social and political trends, which have an influence at various levels (global, European and national).<sup>2</sup>

**Need for skilled workers for competence-based economies<sup>3</sup>:** All over the world, we find that technological change, new economic branches and globalisation are paving the way for competence-based economies. This trend is associated with a strong demand for skilled workers. In order to remain competitive, many countries are investing more heavily in education, research and innovation. Countries that are unable to satisfy their internal demand for skilled workers seek to recruit abroad, which leads to greater international mobility of skilled workers. The Swiss economy needs workers who possess balanced VPET qualifications and competences. With a certain amount of support, Swiss companies can establish training programmes based on Switzerland's dual-track VPET model as a means of satisfying their need for skilled workers at production sites in foreign markets.

**Economic crisis and (youth) unemployment:** The recent economic and financial crisis led to very high levels of youth unemployment worldwide, particularly in individual European countries. Within this context, greater attention is now being given to VPET, which can sustainably improve the youth employment situation in two ways: by facilitating the integration of young people who do less well in school and by providing good students with training options that are viable alternatives to academic pathways. Switzerland has therefore received numerous requests from other countries for more information about its well-functioning VPET system.

**Demographic change and labour migration:** Young people in developing countries and emerging countries alike are often faced with very limited employment and personal development prospects in their countries of origin, making them more willing to emigrate. In these countries, the competences of workers must be developed in order to improve the employment situation of individuals and foster economic and social development. For their part, industrialised countries face the problem of an aging population. This situation has created labour market shortages which are only partly compensated by the labour migration. Industrialised countries therefore have a vested interest in developing the potential of young people in their own countries to the fullest possible extent. VPET is therefore increasingly being perceived as good option in both contexts.

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<sup>2</sup> A detailed explanation of trends and developments can be found in the annex to the present document.

<sup>3</sup> In the present strategy paper, we do not use the widely adopted term "knowledge-based economy" but rather "competence-based economy". This is because, within the context of VPET, the first term places heavy emphasis on theoretical knowledge and too little emphasis on practical skills. In contrast, the term "competence-based economy" refers to the right combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and cross-cutting personal skills.

**Internationalisation and harmonisation of education, pressure for more academic content:** The noticeable trend towards a competence-based economy and the increased mobility of pupils, learners, teaching staff as well as workers and employers are expressions of an irreversible trend towards the internationalisation of education. The internationalisation of education is heavily influenced by English-speaking education systems, where academic studies and general education receive more importance and value than practical, labour-market-oriented training. VPET systems, particularly at tertiary level, are under increasing pressure to become more academic in order to achieve greater social prestige. In addition, it becomes difficult to achieve international recognition for VET and PET qualifications. Given its strategically important and highly structured PET sector, the Swiss VPET system is particularly at risk.

The above-mentioned global, European and national developments, and in particular the need for skilled workers in the private sector, have created opportunities and risks for the Swiss VPET system, which require proactive measures to be taken. At the same time, these trends have created considerable interest overall in Switzerland's dual-track approach to VPET and have led to an increase in demand for Swiss excellence in the area of VPET. A suitable and coherent response to this demand is needed.

#### 1.4 Analysis of opportunities and risks of IC-VPET for Swiss VPET system and resulting areas of action

The described trends and developments *in themselves* offer both opportunities and risks for the Swiss VPET system<sup>4</sup>. However, there are also specific opportunities and risks associated with Switzerland playing an *active role in IC-VPET*.

From an ERI policy standpoint, these *opportunities and risks of strengthening and expanding IC-VET activities* may be summarised as follows:

<b>IC-VPET opportunities</b>
The surge of interest in this topic can be used in a targeted fashion to position the Swiss VPET system at the international level. Through an active presence, Switzerland can exert a positive influence over the international context and VPET-related developments.
Switzerland can reinforce VPET pathways both in Switzerland and abroad. This will consolidate and reinforce the already broad level of acceptance of VPET in Switzerland. It can also help to raise the profile of the Swiss VPET system and create greater awareness of its strengths.
The openness of the VPET system to relevant international technologies as well as to economic and VPET-specific developments can be encouraged.
The opportunities of workers on the internationalised labour market can be improved through the international recognition Swiss VET and PET qualifications.
Improving the international mobility and international competences of individuals can help to cover labour needs both in and outside of Switzerland. The appeal of VPET for international employers can be enhanced.
Greater cooperation with other countries that have similar VPET systems offers the potential for the exchange of experiences and knowledge. This leads to further development of VPET and enables strategic alliances to be formed to encourage greater understanding and acceptance of VPET within international organisations.

<sup>4</sup> A detailed analysis of the opportunities and risks associated with these trends as well as a presentation of the proposed action steps for the Swiss VPET system can be found in the appendix of this document.

IC-VPET risks
The reputation of the Swiss VPET system for high-quality training may be undermined by the transfer of aspects under the Swiss VPET label because major compromises on quality may be needed in order to adapt VPET programmes to local conditions. IC-VPET measures and projects fail or lack long-term prospects simply because the basic criteria for success are not met.
The need for the international comparability of VET and PET qualifications from different countries can lead to a levelling out and downgrading of qualifications to the smallest common denominator, which can distort perceptions of the quality of the Swiss VPET system.
The necessary expertise for IC-VPET is not yet fully developed and/or the capacities and cooperative willingness of Swiss VPET partners may be exceeded.
The expectations of foreign partners taking part in a cooperation initiative with Switzerland may not be met (e.g. quick results from introduction of VPET programmes).

A comparison of opportunities and risks shows that Switzerland should take advantage of international developments and international cooperation in vocational education and training to bring benefits to its VPET system and minimise the risks as much as possible. We have identified *four areas of action* where the Confederation – in coordination with VPET partners – must take in order to establish the required structure and achieve the level of coherence of measures needed. In international developments where Switzerland can choose whether to become involved or not (e.g. participation in European coordination and development processes), we can nevertheless assume that the risks are more controllable when Switzerland plays an active role.

The first area of action is to *encourage openness within the VPET system and among its main stakeholders* in relation to international VPET-specific developments and to *encourage openness of individuals* to seek international competences (intercultural, linguistic and occupational) through greater mobility.

The second area of action is the *international transfer of Swiss VPET expertise to other countries*. Adopting a coherent policy is the only way to enable Switzerland to address the increasing demand of partner countries and Swiss companies abroad for expertise and support in the area of VPET. At the same time, this demand is a *means to position and consolidate the Swiss VPET system as an asset at the international level*. It is therefore essential that clear criteria and priorities be used to assess which measures offer advantages for both partner countries and for Switzerland. VPET partners and Swiss companies abroad must be involved in the process of clarifying, planning and implementing particularly resource-intensive measures.

A third area of action is *securing recognition and greater familiarity with Swiss VET and PET qualifications*: on the international labour market, Swiss VET and PET qualifications must be seen as representing high-quality training that closely matches the needs of employers.

The fourth area of action focuses on *quality*: the international positioning and strengthening of the Swiss VPET system through various measures must always retain the association with high quality. When *Swiss expertise* is used to develop VPET options in partner countries that are based on aspects of the Swiss VPET system, quality must be maintained.

In order to ensure that these four areas of action have the greatest possible impact and efficiency on Swiss IC-VPET measures, transversal measures should be taken through existing multilateral initiatives, European-wide processes and programmes and in international organisations. Switzerland also has a special role to play in other countries that have dual-track VET systems. Such countries have common interests in strengthening dual-track VET at the international level and in exchanging experiences and technical expertise. With these strategic partners, efforts should be made to deepen targeted cooperation in order to make use of existing synergies and form alliances to reach common objectives.

A consistent, structured and coherent approach to these four areas of action will help Switzerland to raise greater international awareness of the strengths and features of the Swiss VPET system, exert influence on international developments that may have an impact on the Swiss VPET system and use potential opportunities to strengthen and develop it. The identified areas of action provide a framework for the formulation and structuring of concrete IC-VPET objectives and measures in light of existing political-strategic considerations of Switzerland international ERI strategy. Based on a detailed analysis of opportunities and risks, the content of identified areas of action will match and confirm the priorities of the international ERI strategy established in 2010.

## 1.5 Existing strategic policymaking, legal and financial frameworks

### 1.5.1 Strategic policymaking framework

**Switzerland's International strategy for Education, Research and Innovation** (adopted by the Federal Council on 30 June 2010, short form: *international ERI strategy*) established the overarching priorities, objectives and priority countries for international cooperation within the entire ERI sector. Based on this vision,<sup>5</sup> three priorities were established for international cooperation within the ERI sector: 1) *strengthening and expanding international networking ties*; 2) *supporting education exports and talent imports as a means of strengthening Switzerland's position*; 3) *promoting international recognition*.

For each of these priorities, Switzerland has established implicitly or even explicitly VPET-related objectives in the international ERI strategy. The objectives that specifically relate to VET include *encouraging the mobility of learners enrolled in VPET programmes, helping Swiss stakeholders to provide VPET-related services abroad, achieving international recognition of VET and PET qualifications and positioning Switzerland as a leader in the setting VPET qualification standards worldwide*.

In the present strategy paper, these VPET-related international ERI strategy objectives have been adopted, structured according to the identified areas of action and made more concrete through various measures.

The **Federal Council Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2013–2016** (dated 22 February 2012) establishes the Confederation's objectives for the budgetary period 2013–2016 that have an international dimension and relate to VPET: 1) *National and international positioning of VPET* and 2) *achieving an education system that is open to the rest of the world by encouraging international mobility*<sup>6</sup>. The Federal Council Dispatch also refers to Switzerland's international strategy of Switzerland for education, research and innovation.

Another important document used as the basis for the political-strategic framework of SERI's present strategy is the **Confederation's strategy paper entitled "International cooperation in vocational and professional education and training (IC-VPET)"** (see Chapter 1.6).

### 1.5.2 Legal and financial framework

#### 1.5.2.1 Overview

Measures taken by SERI in the area of IC-VPET are constitutionally anchored in Art. 54 Cst<sup>7</sup> (Foreign relations) in conjunction with Art. 63 Cst (Vocational and professional education and training). From a legal standpoint, there is also the possibility of obtaining federal subsidies for studies and pilot projects<sup>8</sup> as well as federal subsidies for specific activities that serve the public interest.<sup>9</sup> In both cases, it

<sup>5</sup> "Switzerland will establish itself worldwide as an appealing and privileged location for education, research and innovation. It will use its excellence in these areas to make Switzerland part of the worldwide education, research and innovation area. This will allow Switzerland to position itself as one of the world's most innovative countries." *Switzerland's International Strategy for Education, Research and Innovation*, 30 June 2010, p.16.

<sup>6</sup> *Federal Council Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2013–2016*, 22 February 2012, p. 3127.

<sup>7</sup> *Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation* (Cst; SR 101)

<sup>8</sup> (Art. 4 VPETA in conjunction with Art. 54 VPETA and Art. 63 VPETO)

<sup>9</sup> (Art. 55 VPETA in conjunction with Art. 64 VPETO)

is important to consider the fact that such subsidies are limited to no more than 5 years and that they may not exceed 60% or 80% respectively of the total costs. The focus is placed on providing support to services rendered by third parties. In order to qualify for these subsidies, a public-private partnership needs to be established to implement planned measures.

In addition, the Federal Act on International Cooperation in the Area of General Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Mobility offers the possibility of linkage with the ERI strategy. The current draft provides for financial support in the area of international cooperation in education. However, there is no direct mention of measures relating specifically to VPET, which may require a subsequent legislative amendment. In addition, it needs to be confirmed whether "participation in international programmes" gives the Federal Council authority to sign specific international agreements in the area of VET.

Currently, the following legal instruments contain provisions regarding measures in the area of **IC-VPET**:

- *Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation (Cst; SR 101)*
- *Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA, SR 412.10)*
- *Vocational and Professional Education and Training Ordinance (SR 412.101) (VPETO, SR 412.101)*
- *Federal Act on International Cooperation in the Area of General Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Mobility (SR 414.51)*
- *Ordinance on Contributions for Swiss participation in EU Education, Training and Youth Programmes as well as for the Swiss House in Paris (SR 414.513)*
- *Federal Council Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2013-2016 (ERI Dispatch for 2013-2016)*

Specific explanations regarding the legal anchoring of current or planned measures in the area of IC-VET are provided below.

#### 1.5.2.2 VPETA and VPETO

The *Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA, SR 412.10)* and the *Vocational and Professional Education and Training Ordinance (VPETO, SR 412.101)* offer a possible legal basis for certain IC-VPET measures in **Art. 4 VPETA in connection with Art. 54 VPETA and Art. 63 VPETO (Federal subsidies for projects to develop VET and PET programmes)**. Under these provisions, the Confederation is authorised to take measures for the development of VPET, among other things, and to provide support for studies and pilot projects. If necessary, and following consultation with the Cantons and professional organisations concerned, the Federal Council may also temporarily deviate from the provisions of VPETA for pilot projects. However, no explicit mention is made of the international context. The Federal Council Dispatch on the new Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act<sup>10</sup> only mentions the basic principles of federal action in Art. 4 para. 3 VPETA. This provision should provide the necessary flexibility to test innovations.

**Individual measures taken in relation to IC-VET may therefore be viewed as pilot projects** in the sense that **they may be established and partially funded**. This was the case, for instance, with the Swiss VET Initiative in India (SVETII), which received support from SERI.

For concrete measures, the corresponding provisions of VPETO must be taken into account. The amount of the federal contribution may not exceed 60% of the corresponding costs. In addition, **development contributions may only be granted for measures launched by third parties**. **Measures initiated and funded by SERI itself do not qualify for funding under Art. 54 VPETA.**

Generally speaking, it is important for planned measures under VPETA to first be discussed by VPET partners and that the proper procedures be followed. As a case in point, in order to launch pilot projects, **SERI's project support process must be adhered to**. This process entails a detailed, case-per-case verification of the corresponding application for funding on the basis of established criteria

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<sup>10</sup> BBI 2000 p. 5749

and a broad-based decision-making process, i.e. position of the Federal Commission for Vocational and Professional Education and Training (EBBK).

**Art. 55 VPETA in conjunction with Art. 64 VPETO (*Federal subsidies for specific activities that serve the public interest*) does not provide an adequate legal basis for the funding of measures in the area of IC-VPET**, since they are not included in the established list of activities. Nevertheless, the Federal Council can add additional activities that serve the public interest. Measures taken within an international context are therefore not excluded. Their implementation, however, requires an anchoring in VPETO and adherence to the corresponding legislative procedure.

### **1.5.2.3 Federal Act on International Cooperation in the Area of General Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Mobility and the Ordinance on Contributions for Swiss Participation in EU Education, Training and Youth Programmes as well as for the Swiss House in Paris**

SR 414.51 (a Federal Act) and 414.513 (an Ordinance) establish the legal basis for Swiss participation in European education programmes. The measures indicated in the Federal Act mainly involve the provision of support for training in specific subject areas. The Federal Act therefore focuses more on IC-VPET measures taken in support of individuals. Nevertheless, Art. 3 para. 1 let. d of the Federal Act provides for the strengthening and broadening of international cooperation in the area of education as well as for the possibility of financial aid. As established in the ERI Dispatch for 2013-2016, corresponding financial support in the area of education must be provided systematically in accordance with the strategic direction and objectives set forth in the ERI policy.<sup>11</sup> This direct reference to ERI policy enables IC-VPET measures to be considered as part of SERI's strategy. It is important to consider that the title of the Federal Act draws a distinction between general education and vocational training. This means that changes will need to be made to include VET in the Federal Act in preparation for the next ERI Dispatch for 2017-2020.

Moreover, the Federal Act empowers the Federal Council, to the extent of approved budgets, to sign international agreements on cooperation in the area of VPET of its own authority. For cases where participation in multilateral programmes in the area of IC-VPET or new membership in international organisations is still pending, it is possible to include these points in the next ERI Dispatch.

It can be said that the current legal and financial framework is in place for many of the following measures. However, the margin of manoeuvre for SERI's own activities, particularly with regards to transfers of expertise (see Objective 2 and corresponding measures), is still currently very limited. This includes measures that go beyond the sharing of information and the ability to receive delegations. In the short term, there is a need check on a case-to-case basis the possibilities to launch and fund such measures in order to determine whether the existing legal framework can be used or whether other funding possibilities exist. Alternative possibilities include coordination with other federal agencies in order to draw funding from other existing budgets (e.g. development cooperation, migration partnerships) and obtaining funding from outside the Federal Administration (e.g. funding provided by partner countries, EU or private contributions).

In the medium term, in preparation for the ERI Dispatch for 2017-2020, there is a need to make adjustments to the existing legal basis or to examine whether special legal provisions may be adopted and whether the required budget can be secured.

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<sup>11</sup> *Federal Council Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2013–2016*, 22 February 2012, p. 3128 – 3229.

## 1.6 Existing IC-VPET activities pursued by other federal agencies and limits of SERI's activities

International cooperation in vocational education and training is not only relevant for the policy area of education, research and Innovation in the strict sense: it also has implications for development policy, European policy, migration policy, economic policy and foreign policy. SERI and several other federal agencies pursue activities directly or indirectly related to international cooperation in vocational education and training.<sup>12</sup>

The SDC pursues **development cooperation** for the purpose of improving the economic and social situation in partner countries. It has conducted numerous bilateral VPET projects with partner countries and has many years of experience in this field. In addition to seeking results through individual projects, SDC activities relating to local VPET systems should be aimed at consolidating improvements to existing structures to make them more sustainable. In addition to these bilateral activities, the SDC pursues multilateral cooperation with other donors and international organisations. SECO is another Swiss agency involved in development cooperation. Its main objective is to promote employment in partner countries. However, SECO activities specifically relating to VPET are currently still in the pilot phase and are limited to two co-funded projects. The joint dispatch submitted by the SDC and SECO on Swiss international cooperation provides for a total of CHF 11.35 billion in funding for the period running from 2013 to 2016.

The SDC and SECO work in specific priority countries and regions that are listed in the joint dispatch. These partner countries are mainly located in the southern hemisphere and in the East.

The terms of eligibility for **funding under Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement** differ from SDC and SECO frameworks for other priority countries. Agreements have been signed with individual partner countries that establish the thematic priorities for projects that qualify for funding under Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement. When negotiating these thematic priorities for current cooperation initiatives, attention was not always given to VPET prospects in partner countries. For this reason, in the twelve partner countries, there are currently only four VPET-related projects (in Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Cyprus respectively). The approved funding (total of nearly CHF 1.26 billion) for the current round of Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement programme has already been awarded. Therefore no new VPET-related projects can be launched at present. It is worth mentioning that the legal basis for Switzerland's contribution to EU enlargement – the Federal Act of 24 March 2006 on Cooperation with Eastern European Countries (SR 974.1) – expires at the end of May 2017.

The FOM has various instruments at its disposal to implement its **foreign migration policy**. Of these, migration partnerships are the most intensive form of cooperation between Switzerland and a given country of origin. At present, there are possibilities for regulated migration in specific areas, e.g. exchanges for the purpose of undergoing vocational and professional education and training (VPET) or continuing education and training (CET). The FOM has signed agreements with eleven countries for the exchange of young trainees. Under the terms of this agreement, trainees apply for a work permit in Switzerland for the purpose of improving their occupational and linguistic skills. The FOM considers that additional VPET-related cooperation initiatives should be pursued in countries with which Switzerland has signed a migration agreement or entered into a migration partnership. The guarantee credit for international migration cooperation and return activities for 2012-2018 provides for a total of CHF 140 million to be allocated to return and reintegration programmes as well as to migration policy instruments established in the international migration cooperation report.

With regards, to **foreign economic policy**, Switzerland's pursuit of economic development in partner countries is a strategic priority. This is why SECO carries out economic development cooperation activities. A further priority is to open up markets for Swiss companies abroad. Within this context, new production sites may require corresponding support for training measures. Moreover, in the negotiation of free trade agreements with partner countries, IC-VPET is frequently raised, either as an incentive or in relation to the recognition of qualifications.

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<sup>12</sup> A map of priority countries in the various policy areas is provided in Appendix 6.7.

In 2012, **Swiss diplomatic/consular missions abroad** were instructed to draw greater attention in their host countries to the strengths of the Swiss VPET system. They were also asked to analyse corresponding interests and challenges and, where necessary, to organise events to present the Swiss VPET system and discuss its potential. These communication activities have created interest in the Swiss VPET model in numerous host countries. In Presence Switzerland promotional activities, priority is clearly given to education, research and innovation. Several successes have already been achieved thanks to various activities in the area of education. The choice of priority countries is mainly based on Switzerland's foreign policy strategy for 2012-2015.

In an interdepartmental process at the end of 2013/early 2014, federal agencies and stakeholders involved in "international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training" drafted a joint strategy paper entitled "International Cooperation in Vocational and Professional Education and Training (IC-VPET)". Commissioned by the heads of the FDFA, SECO and SERI, this document describes the Confederation's overarching strategic objectives for international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training for each corresponding policy area. The strategy paper also establishes common criteria for the launch of new measures and basic principles applying to cooperation among federal agencies as well as with relevant national partners. The present strategy paper also includes these aspects (see in particular Chapter 2.1). The process of preparing this strategic basis also serves to clarify existing activities and priorities of the federal agencies involved, enabling a better understanding of their respective areas of responsibility and highlighting potential synergies.

On this basis, SERI has established its own objectives and substantive priorities with regards to measures and partner countries. The objectives and measures presented in Chapter 2.2 are therefore intended to specify the overarching IC-VPET priorities in the ERI sector (*Strengthening the Swiss VPET system within an international context*). In the medium term, it would be advisable and cost-effective for SERI to choose priority countries that are also considered as such by the other federal agencies that pursue ERI-related activities (see Chapter 3.1). This list mainly includes countries that benefit from Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement. These countries also happen to be the only priority countries that the above-mentioned federal agencies share. While it is the SDC and SECO that pursue IC-VPET activities in these countries, there are cases where SERI could take the lead, providing and sharing specialised expertise where needed and upon request.

## 2 Objectives and measures

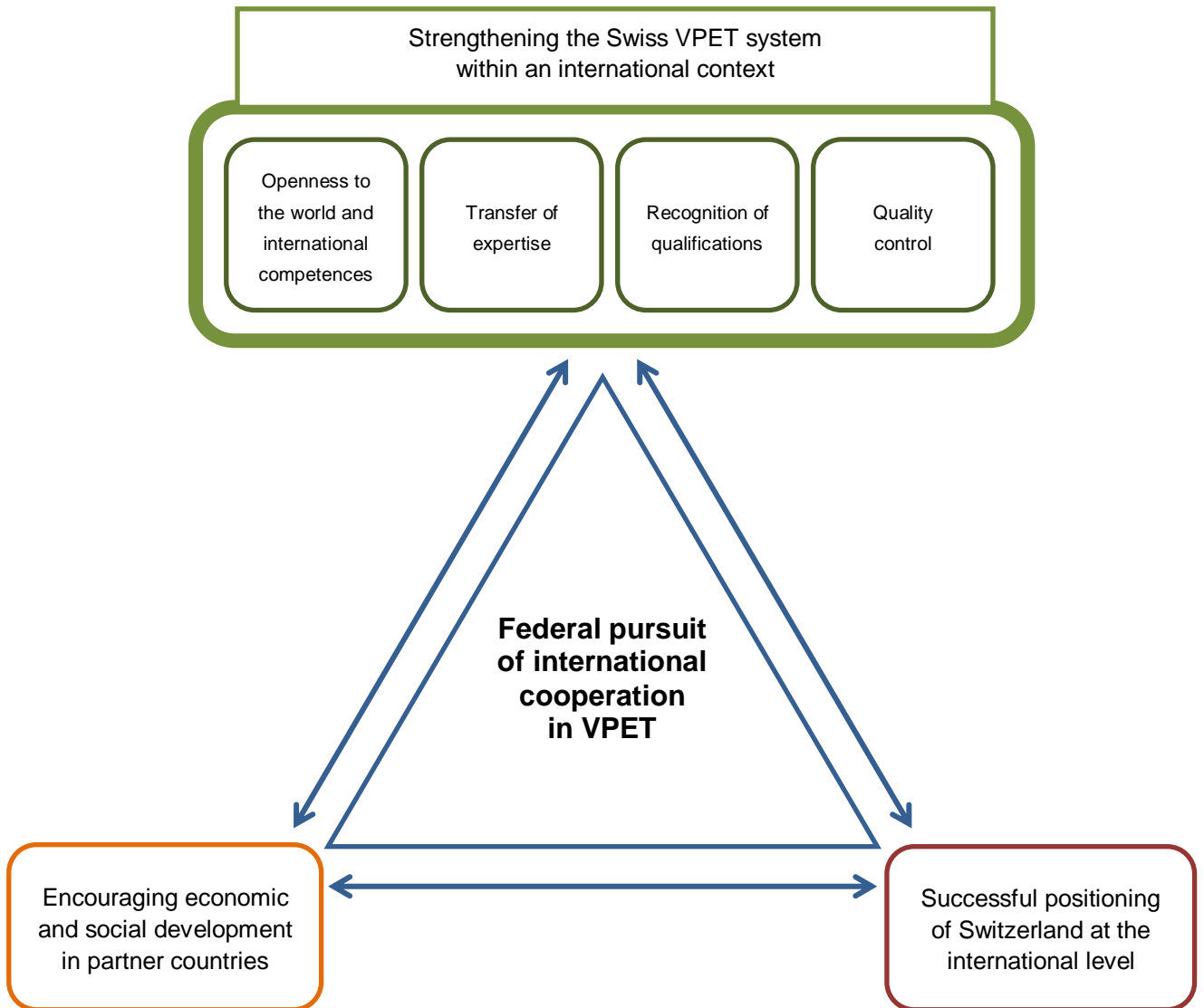
### 2.1 Overarching objectives of IC-VPET at federal level

Switzerland's overarching strategic objectives for international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training result from corresponding objectives in various policy areas: education policy, development policy, foreign policy, migration policy and economic policy, which are also affected by various trends. Based on the objectives and principles of these policy areas, the Confederation has identified three overarching strategic objectives for international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training: 1) *Strengthening the Swiss VPET system within an international context*, 2) *Encouraging economic and social growth in partner countries* and 3) *Successful positioning of Switzerland at the international level*. These overarching objectives may then be broken down into individual objectives for individual policy areas.

The overarching strategic objectives are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. For this reason, efforts are made to maximise their impact both individually and collectively. Economic policy objectives are also transversal and implicitly included in all overarching objectives: e.g. strengthening of VPET at the international level will also serve to consolidate and develop VPET at the national level, enabling countries to improve their economies by effectively training their own skilled workers in a sustainable manner; support to partner countries creates reliable economic partners and the successful international positioning of Switzerland creates a favourable context for Swiss exports.

The following Chapter explains the four strategic objectives for IC-VPET and how they relate to the ERI sector. These four objectives serve the overarching strategic objective of *strengthening the Swiss*

VPET system within an international context. They are based on VPET-relevant objectives established in the international ERI strategy and are structured according to four areas of action, which resulted from an analysis of opportunities and risks.



## 2.2 Specific IC-VPET objectives and measures in the area of ERI

**Objective 1: The Swiss VPET system is open to the world and VPET stakeholders have international competences.**

The Swiss VPET system is open to the world: Stakeholders within the Swiss VPET system are aware of international developments in the area of VPET and take advantage of opportunities offered by the internationalisation of VPET. In this manner, VPET remains open to technological and economic developments. International mobility enables Swiss learners, workers and VPET professionals to broaden their intercultural, linguistic and occupational competences; in exchange, foreign stakeholders benefit from the possibilities of the Swiss VPET system.

Objective and corresponding measures have been selected in pursuit of individual objectives set forth in the international ERI strategy. The objectives that relate specifically to VPET:

- *Objective 1a: Multilateral programmes and international organisations*
- *Objective 2c: Mobility of Swiss nationals*

### Measures for Objective 1:

- 1.1 Switzerland works with the European Union within the framework of EU education, training and youth programmes. Through this cooperation Switzerland encourages international mobility and cooperation in the area of VPET.

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
Revision of <i>Ordinance on Contributions for Swiss participation in EU Education, Training and Youth Programmes as well as for the Swiss House in Paris (SR 414.513)</i> (adding legal basis for current activities of international cooperation in research and education, establishing coherence with SR 414.51)	1st semester 2014
Signature of an agreement with the EU to secure Swiss associated country status in the new "Erasmus+" programme generation or agreement on indirect participation of Switzerland	1st semester 2014
Operative implementation of cooperation of ch Foundation within the framework of EU education, training and youth programmes	Ongoing
Renewal of mandates of the ch foundation for implementation of cooperation within the framework of European programmes starting in 2017	End of 2016

- 1.2 SERI creates the general conditions favouring the international mobility of learners, workers and VPET professionals.

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
Provision of information to national stakeholders and promotion of national and international mobility according to the established package of measures "Mobilisation of VET" (part of this mandate given to ch agency)	Ongoing
Review of MoUs with priority countries outside the EU to facilitate international mobility	End of 2015

1.3 Switzerland is a successful participant in EuroSkills and WorldSkills competitions.

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
Swiss participation in EuroSkills 2014 in Lille (organised by SwissSkills)	October 2014
Swiss participation in WorldSkills 2015 in Sao Paolo (organised by SwissSkills)	August 2015

1.4 Switzerland creates the general conditions needed for sustainable Swiss participation in EuroSkills and WorldSkills competitions.

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
<p>Review and renewal of subsidy agreement with the SwissSkills Foundation for 2016-2019 to take the following aspects into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarification of respective mandates and roles of the Confederation and SwissSkills Foundation</li> <li>- Long-term handling of knowledge management, sustainability of structures</li> <li>- Support from VPET partners and linguistic regions for marketing activities</li> </ul>	2015

**Objective 2: Swiss expertise in the area of VPET is recognised and in demand.**

Switzerland is internationally recognised as possessing specialised expertise in the area of VPET; partner countries seek Swiss expertise. The international position and value given to the Swiss VPET system benefits from this. Where possible, Switzerland uses opportunities for the transfer of expertise to foster the exchange of experiences and technical expertise.

**Example: SVETII cooperation project**

In 2008, Switzerland launched a bilateral VET cooperation initiative in India in the form of a pilot project. The Swiss VET Initiative India (SVETII) was intended to enable the positioning of Swiss dual-track VET programmes abroad and improve the competitiveness of Swiss companies in India. SVETII is an initiative of Swiss companies, the Confederation, the Cantons and professional organisations as well as representatives of the Indian VET system. The aim was to implement aspects of Swiss dual-track, labour market-oriented VET programmes in India. The experiences gained from this pilot project should prove useful in the design and planning of other bilateral cooperation activities.

Objective and corresponding measures have been selected in pursuit of individual objectives set forth in the international ERI strategy. The objectives that relate specifically to VPET:

- *Objective 1b: Country programmes*
- *Objective 1c: Encouraging ERI stakeholders to take initiative*
- *Objective 2d: Swiss excellence in education and training*
- *Objective 3a: Recognition of education and training pathways*
- *Objective 3b: VPET qualification standards*

## Measures for Objective 2:

2.1 Switzerland offers VPET-related information and expertise that is recognised and in demand worldwide.

2.1.1 *Each year, Switzerland organises an annual International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training, which serves as a platform for the exchange and transfer of expertise.*

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
Public-private partnership to organise and hold the International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training in Winterthur in 2014	September 2014
Public-private partnership to organise and hold the International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training in Winterthur in 2015	Autumn 2015
Public-private partnership to organise and hold the International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training in Winterthur in 2016	Autumn 2016

2.1.2 *Switzerland welcomes official and ministerial delegations from all countries interested in the Swiss VPET system.*

2.1.3 *In consultation with the countries concerned, Switzerland welcomes specialised delegations from priority countries interested in the Swiss VPET system.*

Activities/outputs for 2.1.2 and 2.1.3	Deadline/milestones
Review of queries and receiving of delegations from interested countries	Ongoing, upon request
Working with national partners and corresponding federal agencies to establish and implement a standard procedure for the handling of delegation queries; Giving SFIVET a mandate to organise delegation receptions	End of 2014

2.1.4 *Upon request from priority partner countries, in consultation with corresponding Swiss VPET partners and provided the necessary conditions are met, Switzerland provides suitable VPET-related advisory and other services (see Chapter 2.3.2)<sup>13</sup>.*

2.1.5 *Upon request from priority partner countries, in consultation with corresponding Swiss VPET partners and provided the necessary conditions are met, Switzerland conducts individual, long-term cooperation projects that match local needs (see Chapter 2.3.2).*

Activities/outputs for 2.1.4 and 2.1.5	Deadline/milestones
Review of Swiss opportunities to take part in European activities to encourage IC-VPET between partner countries	1st semester 2014
Review of adequate measures to ensure the quality of training programmes developed under the Swiss VET Initiative India (SVETII)	2014
Assistance to implementation partners involved in SVETII project in their efforts to achieve project sustainability (critical mass and visibility)	Starting in 2014

<sup>13</sup> VPET-specific themes where Switzerland can offer expertise include: development of competence-based occupational profiles and training plans; training of VET and PET professionals; organising dual-track VET programmes, etc.

Review of certification of SVETII implementation partners as Swiss VET-compliant education providers	2015/2016
Assistance to SVETII project sponsors in their efforts to obtain Indian government recognition of private diplomas issued upon completion of project-sponsored VET programme	2016
Review and possible planning of Swiss IC-VPET initiatives with Latvia (Latvian pilot project with participation of Bucher-Schörling AG)	2014
Review and possible planning of continuation of Swiss IC-VPET initiatives with South Africa in coordination with the SDC and SECO and within the framework of the Swiss-South African Co-operation Initiative (SSACI)	2014
Review and possible planning of Swiss IC-VPET initiatives with Spain (Catalonia/Madrid, follow-up on delegation visit of Xarxa FP network in 2013)	2014/2015

2.2 SERI creates the general conditions for the coordinated transfer of expertise and facilitated contacts between Swiss and foreign stakeholders.

2.3 SERI works with other federal agencies on VPET-related activities and projects (SECO, SDC etc.).

Activities/outputs for 2.2 and 2.3	Deadline/milestones
Implementation of agreed coordination measures at the national level with national partners and the federal agencies concerned (see federal strategy paper)	2nd semester 2014
Cooperation with SDC and SECO and provision of expertise to new EU-member states as needed in relation to VPET-specific projects sponsored by Switzerland's Contribution to EU enlargement (current projects in Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and Cyprus)	Ongoing, as needed

**Objective 3: Swiss VET and PET qualifications are recognised worldwide.**

The Swiss VET and PET qualifications are clear, understandable and comparable at the international level. Workers holding Swiss VET and PET qualifications enjoy better opportunities on the international labour market as a result.

**Example: Introduction of national qualifications framework NQF-CH-VPET**

The Swiss National Qualifications Framework for the VPET System (NQF-CH-VPET) and corresponding certificate supplements and diploma supplements are instruments used to improve the comparability of Swiss VET and PET qualifications. With the help of the EU's European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Swiss VET and PET qualifications referenced in the NQF-CH-VPET can be made comparable to qualifications in other countries. Other objectives of this instrument include achieving greater international recognition of PET and improving the level of social recognition and esteem for VET.

Objective and corresponding measures have been selected in pursuit of individual objectives set forth in the international ERI strategy. The objectives that relate specifically to VPET:

- *Objective 1b: Country programmes*
- *Objective 1c: Encouraging ERI stakeholders to take initiative*
- *Objective 2d: Swiss excellence in education and training*
- *Objective 3a: Recognition of education and training pathways*
- *Objective 3b: VPET qualification standards*

### Measures for Objective 3:

- 3.1 Switzerland introduces a Swiss National Qualifications Framework for the VPET System (NQF-CH-VPET) and references this to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
- 3.2 Switzerland introduces certificate supplements (VET) and diploma supplements (PET) to improve the international comparability of Swiss VET and PET qualifications.
- 3.3 Switzerland positions PET qualifications at the international level.

Activities/outputs for 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3	Deadline/milestones
Entry in force of NQF Ordinance	October 2014
Creation of the general conditions (mandates issued to external partners, drafting of guidelines, devising technical solutions, communication measures etc.) for the referencing of VET and PET qualifications to the NQF-CH-VPET	2014
Referencing of NQF-CH-VPET to EQF	1st semester 2015
Creation of general conditions (technical solutions, databases, communication measures, etc.) for the issuance of certificate supplements and diploma supplements	2014
Issuance of personalised diploma supplements for PET qualifications	Starting in 2015
Preparation of standardised certificate supplements for VET qualifications that may be downloaded from the Internet	Starting in 2015
Implementation of measures for the international positioning of PET qualifications	2015

- 3.4 Switzerland updates and further develops existing bilateral or multilateral agreements on the mutual recognition of VET and PET qualifications and looks for opportunities to enter into new agreements.

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
Signature of agreement with the Principality of Liechtenstein on the mutual recognition of VET and PET qualifications	End of 2014
Signature of agreement with Germany on the mutual recognition of the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB)	End of 2016
Updating of Annex III of the Free Movement of Persons Agreement (updating of automatically recognised qualifications; on the Swiss side, PET college degrees, UAS degrees and continuing education and training in the medical field are now listed in the Annex) <sup>14</sup>	Summer 2014
Updating of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications with the EU (updating of recognition rules) <sup>15</sup>	2015/2016

<sup>14</sup> This activity depends largely on policy developments relating to the free movement of persons agreement with the EU.

<sup>15</sup> See comment above.

**Objective 4: The quality of the Swiss VPET system is guaranteed worldwide.**

The high quality of Swiss VET and PET qualifications as well as key features of the Swiss VPET system must be maintained in IC-VET transfer projects worldwide. This will maintain the Swiss VPET system's outstanding reputation for quality.

Objective and corresponding measures have been selected in pursuit of individual objectives set forth in the international ERI strategy. The objectives that relate specifically to VET:

- *Objective 2d: Swiss excellence in education and training*
- *Objective 3b: VPET qualification standards*

**Measures for Objective 4:**

4.1 Switzerland considers introducing a "Swiss VET" quality label that takes Swiss principles into account when developing VET options for partner countries. This will maintain the Swiss VPET system's reputation for quality.

Activities/outputs	Deadline/milestones
In-depth analysis of opportunities and specific procedure for introduction and implementation of a quality label	2014/2015

**Transversal measures: Switzerland consolidates its international networking activities as well as its bilateral and multilateral cooperation activities.**

By consolidating its networking activities and working with other countries in both bilateral and multilateral contexts, Switzerland is able to create favourable conditions for achievement of the other strategic objectives. The exchange of experiences, expertise and good practices with partner countries that can contribute to further development and better quality of the Swiss VPET system will also be encouraged in this manner.

These transversal measures have been selected in pursuit of individual objectives set forth in the international ERI strategy. The objectives that relate specifically to VET:

- *Objective 1a: Multilateral Programme and International organisations*
- *Objective 1b: Country programmes*
- *Objective 3b: VPET qualification standards*

**Transversal measures:**

T.1 Switzerland works with the European Union through VPET-related programmes, initiatives and institutions.

*T.1.1 Switzerland works with the European Union within the framework of EU education, training and youth programmes, thereby encouraging the international mobility for those who pursue VET pathways (see Objective 1).*

*T.1.2 Switzerland monitors the development of the Copenhagen Process and considers whether corresponding instruments should be implemented within the Swiss VPET system.*

T.1.3 *Switzerland adopts open coordination methods to become involved in EU education cooperation processes (workgroups, peer reviews, etc.).*

<b>Activities/outputs for T.1.1, T.1.2 and T.1.3</b>	<b>Deadline/milestones</b>
Analysis of VET-related developments and instruments within the EU to determine relevance for Switzerland, particularly instruments within the Copenhagen Process	Ongoing
Signature of an agreement with the EU for the purpose of enabling Switzerland to take part in the new Erasmus+ programme generation either as an associated member or in an indirect capacity <sup>16</sup>	1st semester 2014
<i>(Where possible: holding a seat on the EU's Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, (ACVT))</i>	<i>Ongoing, where possible</i>
<i>(Where possible: holding a seat on EU "Technical Working Groups for VET")</i>	<i>Ongoing, where possible</i>
<i>(Where possible: representation of Swiss interests within "Erasmus+ Programme Committee")</i>	<i>Ongoing, where possible</i>
<i>(Where possible: holding a seat in specialised committees responsible for Copenhagen instruments: Priority 1: EQF Priority 2: ECVET Priority 3: EQAVET, Europass)</i>	<i>Ongoing, where possible, in order of priorities</i>

T.1.4 *Switzerland is an active participant in CEDEFOP.*

<b>Activities/outputs</b>	<b>Deadline/milestones</b>
Making the necessary arrangements for Swiss participation in CEDEFOP as an observer country	2014 (where possible)

T.2 Switzerland is a member of international organisations and institutions that pursue VPET-related activities and takes part in these activities

T.2.1 *Priority 1: Switzerland is an active member of the OECD.*

T.2.2 *Priority 2: Switzerland takes part in the activities of the following organisations on occasion, as needed and when it furthers Swiss objectives: UNESCO, UNECE, OIF, ASEM.*

<b>Activities/outputs for T.2.1 and T.2.2</b>	<b>Deadline/milestones</b>
Taking a stance on and actively cooperating in country comparison studies conducted by the OECD in the area of VPET	Ongoing
Taking part in peer-learning activities of the OECD	Ongoing

T.3 Switzerland intensifies cooperation with countries that also have a dual-track VET system: Germany, Austria, Principality of Liechtenstein, Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. Such cooperation will help to strengthen dual-track VET at the international level, maintain quality and foster the exchange of experiences and expertise. Switzerland works with these countries to transfer expertise and looks for ways in which cooperation initiatives may lead to synergies in partner countries (see Objective 2).

<sup>16</sup> Switzerland holds a seat in the following EU bodies, regardless of whether Switzerland is an associate member of the Erasmus+ programme.

<b>Activities/outputs</b>	<b>Dead- line/milestones</b>
Organising a meeting of education ministers from Germany, Austria, the Principality of Liechtenstein and Switzerland to explore possible options for closer cooperation between countries that have dual-track VET systems	June 2014
Swiss participation in technical discussions between countries that have dual-track VET systems	Ongoing

- T.4 At the request of priority partner countries, Switzerland considers possible options for the intensification of bilateral cooperation in VPET. Depending on the intensity of measures, Switzerland will pursue specific and adapted bilateral cooperation initiatives, if the necessary conditions for this are met (see Objective 2).

<b>Activities/outputs (<i>cursive script: already listed as measures in 2.1.4 and 2.1.5</i>)</b>	<b>Deadline/milestones</b>
<i>Review of Swiss opportunities to take part in European activities to encourage IC-VPET between partner countries</i>	<i>1st semester 2014</i>
<i>Review of adequate measures to ensure the quality of training programmes developed under the Swiss VET Initiative India (SVETII)</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Assistance to implementation partners involved in SVETII project in their efforts to achieve project sustainability (critical mass and visibility)</i>	<i>Starting in 2014</i>
<i>Review of certification of SVETII implementation partners as Swiss VET-compliant education providers</i>	<i>2015/2016</i>
<i>Assistance to SVETII project sponsors in their efforts to obtain Indian government recognition of private diplomas issued upon completion of project-sponsored VET programme</i>	<i>2016</i>
<i>Review and possible definition of Swiss IC-VPET initiatives with Latvia (Latvian pilot project with participation of Bucher-Schörling AG)</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Review and possible definition of further Swiss IC-VPET initiatives with South Africa in coordination with the SDC and SECO and within the framework of the Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI)</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Review and possible planning of Swiss IC-VPET initiatives with Spain (Catalonia/Madrid, follow-up on delegation visit of Xarxa FP network in 2013)</i>	<i>2014/2015</i>

- T.5 SERI uses the VPET expertise of SFIVET to lend support to international cooperation in vocational education and training in bilateral and multilateral contexts.

<b>Activities/outputs</b>	<b>Dead- line/milestones</b>
Issuance of mandate to SFIVET to provide certain expertise and carry out various coordination tasks	2nd semester 2014

## 3 SERI's priorities and criteria for IC-VPET

### 3.1 SERI's priority countries

SERI sets priorities for IC-VPET activities with individual partner countries on the basis of the list of countries and priorities set forth in Switzerland's international ERI strategy. As a result, SERI considers EU member states and the neighbouring countries of Switzerland to be the most important partners for IC-VPET activities. This is also a reflection of the importance of the European Area for multi-lateral IC-VPET activities (e.g. Copenhagen Process, European education programmes). The broad view of the international ERI strategy nevertheless requires fine tuning to take specific VPET perspectives into account. For this reason, other aspects relating to the choice of priority countries for bilateral IC-VPET are included.

**First of all**, the economic importance of partner countries for Switzerland is considered: given the close ties between VPET and the private sector, IC-VPET is becoming increasingly relevant in current contexts and enjoys favourable starting conditions in which close contacts between Swiss and foreign economic stakeholders can be established. This also applies in particular to countries where Swiss companies maintain a strong local presence.

**Secondly**, Swiss VPET policy priorities are considered in light of current economic developments in Europe: the latest economic crisis has resulted in high unemployment and a greater need for reform of education systems, particularly in southern and eastern European countries. These countries have expressed greater interest in receiving specific expertise in the area of VPET and are therefore potential partners for Swiss bilateral IC-VPET activities. Switzerland already has well-established contacts and close relations with these countries. Given the geographical proximity and intensity of economic ties, reform of VPET systems in these countries is particularly relevant for Switzerland (recognition of qualifications, immigration of skilled workers etc.).

**Third**, consideration is given to countries where SERI has already established nodes in its foreign network (swissnex, science and technology counsellors at Swiss embassies) for the purpose of developing contacts, facilitating information transfer and expanding networks as well as to countries where there are Swiss Schools abroad that can act as potential project sponsors. Other countries considered are those where cooperation projects in IC-VPET have already been launched and where Swiss VPET partners perceive their interests to be.<sup>17</sup>

**Fourth**, Switzerland feels that countries that also have a dual-track VPET system should play a particular role as a strategic partner within the context of IC-VPET: these countries share Swiss interests in terms of the international positioning of VPET, are able to share experiences that are of potential interest to Switzerland in the further development of its VPET system. These countries are also partly active as providers of expertise in the area of IC-VPET. A further group of English-speaking countries have heavily influenced the internationalisation of education (particularly in the academic field) and this has had a major impact on corresponding international education standards. Through bilateral activities with these countries, Switzerland seeks to leverage its contacts to bolster the image of dual-track VPET and influence education standards in favour of VPET.

These aspects were quantitatively and qualitatively assessed in response to interest expressed by countries considering possible VET cooperation with Switzerland. In order to separate IC-VPET priorities from the existing priorities of other federal agencies, a special category was created for countries that benefit from Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement (see Chapter 1.6)<sup>18</sup>. Based on available resources for IC-VPET, various priority levels were established so that increasing intensity of IC-VPET measures would reduce the range of potential partners.

<sup>17</sup> The ongoing revision of the Federal Act of 9 October 1987 on Promoting the Education of Young Swiss Abroad (SAEA, SR 418.0) establishes that Swiss Schools abroad should play a greater role in providing VET.

<sup>18</sup> With the exception of Latvia, which has expressed considerable interest in VET cooperation with Switzerland beyond the scope of Switzerland's contribution to EU enlargement programme.



This has led to the following categorisation of priority countries for bilateral IC-VET activities:

Strategic partner countries	Potential project countries (i.e. are currently considering pursuit of cooperation projects with Switzerland)	Potential countries that may benefit from Swiss expertise (i.e. are currently considering Swiss consulting and other services)	Contact countries (i.e. are currently maintaining contacts with Switzerland)	Countries benefiting from Swiss Contribution to EU Enlargement programme
<p><b>Close cooperation:</b> Germany Principality of Liechtenstein Austria</p> <p><b>Occasional cooperation:</b> Denmark Luxembourg Netherlands</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Activities involving the transfer of expertise will not be pursued with strategic partner countries. Instead the aim will be to intensify bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives for the purpose of achieving common objectives (see transversal measures).</p>	<p>India Latvia Spain South Africa</p>	<p>China France Greece Italy Portugal South Korea USA* United Kingdom (possibly)*</p>	<p><b>Contacts at technical and ministerial level:</b> Australia* Belgium Brazil Finland Ireland Iceland Israel Japan Canada Croatia Mexico Norway Russia Sweden Serbia Singapore Turkey</p> <p><b>Contacts at ministerial level:</b> Other countries</p>	<p>Bulgaria Estonia Lithuania Malta Poland Rumania Slovakia Slovenia Czech Republic Hungary Cyprus</p> <p><b>Note:</b> IC-VPET activities in countries benefiting from Switzerland's contribution to EU enlargement are generally handled by the SDC and SECO. SERI contributes its own expertise where needed and upon request.</p>
<p>* Countries that are very heavily involved in the internationalisation of education with a significant impact on education standards.</p>				



The fact that a country is not explicitly listed in the above categories does not mean that no activities may be pursued with that country: in principle, low-intensity contacts and exchanges are possible with all countries at the ministerial level (see following Chapter 2.3.2).

Moreover, the distinction between the various categories of priority partner countries does not mean that certain measures are reserved only for countries falling into a specific category. It also does not mean that corresponding measures may be initiated with all of the countries listed in the given category. The internal differentiation between partner countries is intended mainly for priority setting during initial ascertainment of potential cooperation. The actual decision on whether a given measure may be launched with a given priority partner country depends to a large extent on whether established, necessary and relevant criteria have been met. In addition, the categorisation is periodically reviewed and revised in response to changing relations with each partner country.

### **3.2 Criteria enabling SERI to initiate measures for the transfer of expertise**

The individual measures listed under Objective 2 "Transfer of expertise" are all activities carried out for the purpose of sharing information and expertise with partner countries. Nevertheless, various intensity levels have been established to determine resource requirements and the level of political commitment for Switzerland and partner countries. Lower-intensity measures (e.g. sharing information, receiving delegations) may be carried out on a case-per-case basis with relatively limited resources and political commitment. However, the total expenditure arising from the accumulation of such measures can be considerable. Higher-intensity measures (consulting and other services, cooperation projects) require greater resources and political commitment. They also require stable cooperation partnership ties between Switzerland and the corresponding partner country.

In the interests of creating a coherent framework for decision-making on whether the transfer of expertise should be pursued with a given partner country and to what extent, SERI has established **criteria to determine the level of intensity at which measures may be taken**.

As a rule, SERI divides measures for the transfer of expertise into **three intensity levels**:

#### **Contacts**

Measures at the lowest intensity level include all contacts with partner countries in various contexts that enable basic information about the Swiss VPET system to be provided and that facilitate the exchange of experiences. This includes preparation of information materials, receiving and sending delegations as well as organising and taking part in specialised conferences.

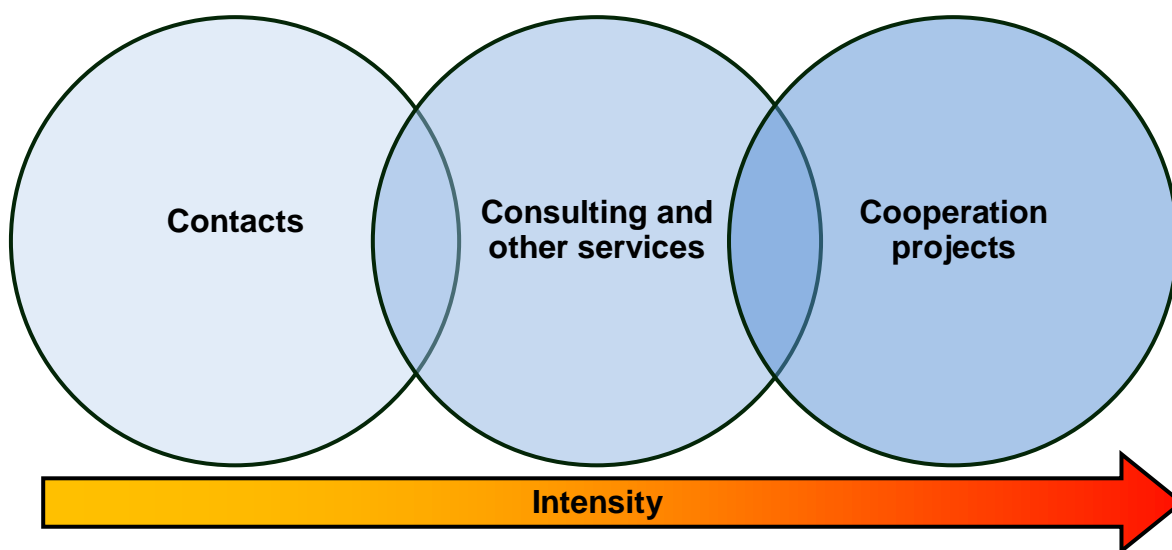
#### **Consulting and other services**

Medium-intensity measures involve the targeted sharing of specific Swiss expertise in the area of VPET with partner countries that have requested this expertise. Activities include such things as occasional advisory services covering individual technical aspects of dual-track VET, training of VPET professionals or technical guidance on individual development processes (preparation of training content/VPET ordinances, coordination between learning locations, further development of job profiles, making the necessary arrangements for work-based training at host companies, etc.). However, measures of this sort remain limited in terms of scope, duration and political commitment for Switzerland. Services are rendered by Swiss stakeholders who possess the requisite expertise.

### Cooperation projects

Cooperation projects with partner countries are long-term partnerships between Swiss and foreign stakeholders in the area of VPET. These projects receive both official and financial support from the governments of partner countries. These high-intensity activities involve the extensive sharing of Swiss expertise and support, enabling individual aspects of Swiss dual-track or labour market-oriented VET programmes to be adapted to local conditions in the partner country. In addition, cooperation projects seek to establish and expand viable VPET programmes and structures. The aim of such cooperation projects should be, among other things, to use the duration and scope of these projects to gain long-term inputs for the development of VPET systems in partner countries. Nonetheless, the complete and comprehensive transfer of the Swiss VPET system is not feasible. The visibility and political commitment of cooperation projects is high.

Transitions between measures in these three intensity levels are fluid: lower-intensity measures can lead to higher-intensity ones if the necessary criteria are met and if partnerships with other countries develop in a consolidated and positive manner.



In response to the Confederation strategy paper, "International Cooperation in Vocational and Professional Education and Training (IC-VPET)", several federal agencies that pursue IC-VPET activities (SERI, SECO, SDC, DEA, PD and FOM) have agreed on common overarching criteria that should be met in order to enable high-intensity transfer of expertise to take place.<sup>19</sup>

The set of criteria used by SERI matches these overarching criteria used by other federal agencies. At the same time, SERI applies additional specific criteria that are deemed essential from a VPET policy standpoint. Within this context, factors considered to be of particular importance include the level of support that these measures receive from VPET partners. This is a decisive factor since VPET partners will be the ones mainly involved in the transfer of expertise: the more intensive the measure, the greater the level of involvement and commitment required of the corresponding VPET partner. The following table shows the set of criteria used by SERI for the measures listed in Chapter 2.2:

<sup>19</sup> The Confederation's strategy paper entitled, "International Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (IC-VET)" establishes the following mandatory criteria for high-intensity measures: *compatibility with strategy, compatibility with objectives, priority country, interest and commitment felt by partner country, commitment from companies in the partner country and secured funding.*

**International Cooperation in  
Vocational and Professional Education and Training**

Criteria to be met	Contacts		Consulting and other services	Cooperation projects
	Receiving official delegations at ministerial level	Receiving delegations of experts in consultation with official state bodies in the partner country		
<p><b>Availability of resources on SERI side</b> SERI has the necessary financial, technical and human resources to carry out this measure in the partner country.</p>	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Friendly relations with Switzerland</b> The country maintains friendly relations with Switzerland.</p>	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Country is listed as a priority partner country in SERI's strategy paper</b> The country is listed as a priority partner country for IC-VPET in SERI's strategy paper.</p>		X	X	X
<p><b>An official request has been made by the partner country, which is also willing to commit to implementation through bilateral policy dialogue</b> The partner country has expressed official interest in cooperation in the area of VPET and has demonstrated the necessary commitment towards implementation of planned measures. The cooperation activities are coordinated through current policy dialogue with Switzerland.</p>		X	X	X
<p><b>Adequate level of funding has been secured</b> The funding for planned measures has been secured, either from the Confederation or from other sources (funding from the partner country, private contributors, funding from international institutions, etc.). The allocation of funding between Switzerland and the partner country is balanced considering the overall context of relations between the two countries.<sup>20</sup></p>			X	X
<p><b>Availability of expertise</b> The specific expertise required can be provided on the Swiss side: Swiss VPET stakeholders have expressed an interest in providing this expertise.</p>			X	X
<p><b>Involvement and commitment of the private sector in the partner country</b> The economic stakeholders in the partner country are involved in and committed to the measure. Depending on the state of economic development of a partner country, various economic stakeholders may be involved. However, in all cases, companies are key stakeholders and must therefore be involved in the planned measures. This will create the basis for sustainable anchoring of the measures and ensure that they are closely correlated with the actual needs of the labour market.</p>				X

<sup>20</sup> For example, Switzerland may make a major financial commitment within the framework of a given IC-VET project and the partner country makes a correspondingly high commitment in another policy area.

Criteria to be met	Contacts		Consulting and other services	Cooperation projects
	Receiving official delegations at ministerial level	Receiving delegations of experts in consultation with official state bodies in the partner country		
<p><b>VPET partners show commitment towards the project</b> VPET partners, particularly the corresponding professional organisations, support the cooperation project and are willing to contribute their expertise.</p>				X
<p><b>Quality control measures have been established</b> These include measures to ensure the quality of output of the cooperation project over the long-term.</p>				X
<p><b>Project is based on a long-term focus and sustainability</b> Cooperation projects are not just intended to further individual interests. Instead, they offer the potential of generating long-term inputs for the development of the VET system in the partner country. Ensuring that the project continues to have an impact after it has reached completion is an objective.</p>				X
<p><b>Reliable implementation partners and political stability in the partner country</b> Partners from both the private and public sectors are available in the partner country for the entire duration of the project and beyond to ensure reliable implementation. The political conditions in the partner country are stable enough to justify long-term cooperation.</p>				X

### 3.3 Setting of priorities for multilateral measures to be pursued by SERI

Among the multilateral measures of IC-VPET, Switzerland gives priority to playing an active role in technical and steering committees and taking part in programmes and activities sponsored by international and supranational organisations. In the area of VPET, certain organisations are particularly important from a strategic standpoint because they exert a major influence over the international context and developments in this area. They therefore serve as platforms enabling the exchange of knowledge and experience, the influencing of international regulations and developments and positioning of the Swiss VPET system. Other international organisations have less of a political impact and play a lesser role even if VPET holds a prominent position in their agenda.

The European Union is one of the main stakeholders involved in current developments in the area of education and VPET: from the perspective of the EU and its member states, future economic success of the EU depends to a large extent on whether the population is able to receive a good-quality education. The EU therefore supports its member states in the setting of common objectives, instruments as well as in the exchange of good practices for reforms. It also encourages programmes that enable young people to spend time in other countries for the purpose of pursuing studies, training, internships or volunteer work. Switzerland is involved in these European education programmes and where possible takes part in coordination processes relating to international cooperation in education, specifically the Copenhagen Process. In addition, Switzerland plans to become a member of the European Centre

for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). For Switzerland, these activities in particular are strategically important in furthering greater transparency, comparability and recognition of Swiss VET and PET qualifications as well as transnational mobility.

Among other things, the tasks of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) include the fostering of sustainable economic growth, achieving high employment, improving living standards and lending support to economic development in individual countries. The OECD gives considerable importance to education. Its activities in this area include the development of indicators, comparison of education systems, the pursuit of country studies and research on current education issues. Switzerland took part in a country study on VET systems and is represented in two VET-relevant bodies: the "Group of national experts on vocational education and training" (technical committee) and the "Education Policy Committee (EDPC)" (overarching steering committee). Switzerland actively takes part in these bodies to achieve a better understanding, greater visibility and an accurate depiction of the Swiss VPET system at the international level. Switzerland also gives priority to participation in other education-related analyses and studies.

SERI considers both of these organisations to be strategically important for multilateral cooperation in VPET. The corresponding multilateral activities carried out by SERI must therefore be as consistent and comprehensive as possible. Given the large number of individual relevant bodies within the EU, Switzerland gives priority first to participation in steering committees, then to participation in technical committees and finally to participation in informal bodies.

Other international organisations pursue extensive VPET-related activities. For this reason, they have a certain role to play in furthering SERI's IC-VPET objectives. These organisations include: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). Swiss participation in the activities of these organisations should be assessed on a case-per-case basis to determine their usefulness to VPET and action steps should be planned accordingly. Formal membership may also be beneficial. Consideration should also be given to establishing regular contacts with a third group of international organisations: the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank. There are other organisations that also deal with VPET-related topics. However, given SERI's specific perspectives and objectives, these organisations are not given high priority. For this reason, contacts with these organisations only take place when SERI has an explicit and concrete need in relation to a given topic.

SERI's list of priorities for multilateral cooperation with international organisations is as follows:

<b>Priority 1: Regular involvement in activities</b>	<b>Priority 2: Occasional involvement in specific activities</b>	<b>Priority 3: Consideration given to establishing regular official contacts</b>	<b>Priority 4: Contacts only as needed</b>
Relevant bodies and processes of the European Union (steering committees > technical committees > informal bodies)  OECD  CEDEFOP	UNESCO  UNECE  OIF  ASEM	ILO  World Bank	Council of Europe

## 4 Implementation

### 4.1 Principles of action and coordination of SERI

For implementation of the present strategy, SERI considers the following **principles of action**:

#### **IC-VPET must bring mutual benefits to Switzerland and partner countries**

The objectives to be pursued and the various measures to be implemented within the framework of IC-VPET should bring benefits to both the Swiss VPET system and the partner country. For Switzerland, the aim is to strengthen its VPET system and cater to the needs of VPET stakeholders. For the partner country, the aim should be to ensure that cooperation has a systemic impact and helps to increase acceptance of the dual-track VET model. These aspects should be taken into account when clarifying and planning of new measures.

#### **Quality concerns must be addressed in all IC-VPET activities**

All IC-VPET measures taken by SERI should be aimed at ensuring quality. At the international level, the Swiss VPET system should be known for high-quality, close correlation between training content and actual labour market needs as well as performance. In order to instil and reinforce this image, quality needs to be reflected in the definition and implementation of each measure. In particular, this means that aspects underpinning the strengths of the Swiss VPET system should be consistently considered in all instances of concrete bilateral or multilateral cooperation, and reinforced whenever possible.

#### **There must be coordination and cooperation among federal agencies as well as with VPET partners**

SERI should consistently involve the federal agencies and VPET partners concerned in the clarification, planning and implementation of IC-VPET measures and should coordinate the various activities. This should ensure the efficient and effective use of available resources as well as broad political support for the measures to be taken.

**For the coordination and cooperation** between the various stakeholders, the **following principles** shall apply:<sup>21</sup>

#### **Making use of potential synergies**

There are several factors that help to create synergies: the shared interests of stakeholders both in taking advantage of opportunities and avoiding risks associated with IC-VPET, the effective allocation of available resources (specific expertise, contacts etc.), avoiding the duplication of work and the transparency of information. Among other things, these factors should be used in the form of common instruments, bodies and processes.

#### **Preserving the freedom of action of individual stakeholders**

Wherever possible, improved coordination and cooperation between the various stakeholders should not impinge on their freedom to pursue their own strategic objectives and priorities.

#### **Maintaining simplicity in coordination activities**

Coordination instruments, bodies and processes should be as simple, transparent and resource-efficient as possible. Efforts should be made to avoid a situation where coordination between stakeholders adds considerable workload. Existing bodies and coordination levels between VPET partners should always be used whenever reasonable and possible. Within this context, the strategic role of the Federal Commission for Vocational and Professional Education and Training (EBBK) is worth mentioning.

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<sup>21</sup> The basic principles that SERI applies to its coordination and cooperation activities match the principles that federal agencies involved in IC-VET have jointly established for themselves.

## 4.2 Coordination measures between VPET partners

In order to improve and reinforce coordination between VPET partners in the area of IC-VPET, SERI intends to take a series of concrete coordination measures (instruments, bodies and processes). These will be similar, or even identical, to the ones jointly adopted by the federal agencies involved in IC-VPET. The proposed measures were presented to and approved by VPET partners.

### **Mutual exchange of information and experiences**

The ongoing exchange of information and experiences should continue. Existing contacts and coordination bodies of VPET partners should ensure that information is shared on a regular basis and used as needed for coordination of IC-VPET activities. If necessary, working groups may be set up to handle operational matters.

### **Annual meeting of all stakeholders**

All national stakeholders involved in Swiss international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training in various capacities (experts, providers of contacts, policymakers and decision-makers, stakeholders, implementation partners, etc.), should be informed of current activities and developments on a regular basis. They should also be provided with a platform that can be used for the sharing of information and the coordination of activities. For this reason, federal agencies involved in IC-VPET activities organise an annual meeting for all interested stakeholders.

### **Preparing and maintaining a general overview of Switzerland's current IC-VPET activities and requests received from foreign partners**

A general and regularly updated overview of Swiss activities in the area of international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training and current requests from foreign partners are needed in order to coordinate the activities of stakeholders. This overview should serve as an internal coordination instrument for federal agencies and their national partners. At the same time, it should serve as a basis for public bulletins aimed at improving the visibility of current IC-VPET activities.

### **Creating and using common information tools**

In order to provide information to foreign partners regarding the Swiss VPET system and Swiss international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training, the Confederation has developed various standardised information tools that may be adapted and periodically updated as needed (standard presentations, small brochures, etc.). These information tools should be made available to VPET partners.

### **Establishing and maintaining a common contact point for the handling of requests**

In order to channel and bundle international and national requests relating to IC-VPET, there should be a single shared contact point. This should prevent duplication of efforts and enable requests to be forwarded to the specific federal agencies concerned (triage function). It should also serve as a means of coordinating the activities of federal agencies as well as those of their national partners.

### **Standardised process for receiving delegations**

Given the surge in interest of foreign partners in the Swiss VPET system and resulting increase in delegation queries, the Confederation wishes to introduce a standardised process for organising receptions to welcome official delegations. This will lead to greater efficiency and coherence. The implementation of logistical aspects of receptions should be delegated to SFIVET. Decisions on whether to receive a delegation should be made by the corresponding federal agencies, which will be responsible for political representation of Switzerland. The corresponding criteria used by SERI and by the other federal agencies in their decisions to organise delegation receptions should be conveyed to VPET partners. The VPET partners should then be free to decide whether they have an interest in receiving foreign delegations at their own initiative.

### **Establishing and maintaining a network of expert organisations**

Expertise in international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training (i.e. the combination of expertise in both VPET and international cooperation) is a resource that should be managed and maintained by expert organisations that pursue IC-VPET activities. The role of the Confederation will be limited to establishing relations with these organisations, which would then be able to contact the experts concerned. The Confederation nevertheless wishes to lend support to these expert organisations in their efforts to maintain and build expertise over the long term. Specifically, consideration will be given to the possibility of providing federal funding for the development of continuing training courses for experts.

### **4.3 Transfer of tasks to SFIVET**

As the Confederation's competence centre for teaching and research in vocational pedagogy, VET and occupational development, SFIVET has expertise that is in demand at the international level. SFIVET has already begun work to internationalise its activities and is currently working on a general international strategy. This process is aligned with current strategic processes taking place within the Confederation in this area (i.e. the present strategy paper for IC-VPET as well as the Confederation's strategy paper entitled, "International Cooperation in Vocational and Professional Education and Training (IC-VPET)").

SFIVET already provides specific expertise for various international projects and activities: examples include the pilot project in India (SVETII) and other VET projects pursued within the framework of Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement programme ("Dual-track VET" in Bulgaria and Slovakia). Every two years, SFIVET also organises an international research day devoted to VET topics and receives delegations of foreign VET professionals.

The role of SFIVET in the area of IC-VPET should be strengthened. SFIVET should leverage its knowledge and national network to provide expertise and coordination services on behalf of the Confederation:

#### **Handling of delegation receptions according to a standardised process**

SFIVET can relieve the burden of federal agencies that pursue IC-VPET activities by taking over the task of organising delegation receptions. The decision on whether to receive a given delegation should be made by the federal agencies concerned on the basis of their own criteria. They will also retain their role as political representatives of Switzerland at these delegation receptions. SFIVET cannot represent Switzerland on a political level. However, if the decision is reached to accept a given delegation, then SFIVET will have a standardised process to organise the delegation reception and invite participants from its broad network of contacts. The services to be rendered by SFIVET in this area and the resulting financial contributions that it will receive from the Confederation must be contractually formalised in a performance agreement between the Confederation and SFIVET. This agreement will be subject to the Confederation's rules on the issuance of service contracts.

#### **Offering VET expertise in selected fields**

Federal agencies that pursue IC-VPET activities may involve SFIVET as an expert organisation in bilateral measures and projects. According to the rules established by federal agencies for issuance of project mandates to experts (e.g. in development cooperation), SFIVET cannot be the Confederation's sole provider of expertise for such measures and projects. In cases where a public call for tenders must be issued, then SFIVET will have to compete with other potential bidders as part of the usual tendering procedure.

### **Support to Swiss delegations in international technical bodies and specialised conferences**

SFIVET representatives should be part of official Swiss delegations to international technical bodies and specialised conferences whenever VET issues are to be discussed and when specific expertise is required. In all cases, this should take place under the terms of a federal mandate and exclude any political representation of Switzerland. If invited, SFIVET should also be free to take part in international bodies and conferences as an independent expert organisation but not as a technical representative of Switzerland.

### **Upon request, provision of other services on behalf of individual federal agencies**

As needed and in accordance with tendering procedures established by individual federal agencies, SFIVET should also be able to provide other services falling within the scope of IC-VPET.

The above-mentioned points include all tasks of a general nature that SFIVET may render on behalf of the Confederation in the area of IC-VPET. Part of the operative follow-up work that SERI will do in coordination with other federal agencies that pursue IC-VPET activities is the detailed definition of SFIVET's tasks and the specific process enabling SFIVET involvement. Tasks that are to be delegated to SFIVET under a longer-term mandate, must be contractually formalised in a performance agreement between the Confederation and SFIVET.

## **5 Necessary action steps for the medium term**

### **5.1 Adaptation of legal and financial frameworks**

Chapter 1.5.2 provides a list of existing legal bases that affect SERI's ability to carry out IC-VPET activities and obtain corresponding funding. A comparison of this legislation with SERI's current objectives and measures reveals gaps that limit its freedom of action.

- SERI currently lacks the legal basis and funding to use its own resources for high-intensity IC-VPET measures with countries deemed to be priority partner countries. It is only able to provide funding for pilot projects aimed at developing VPET systems. Under the terms of VPETA and VPETO, the amount of federal funding for such pilot projects is limited, which means that other sources of funding must be obtained and that the usual procedure for requesting national project funding for VPET must be followed.
- The existing budgets of other federal agencies (SECO, SDC, FOM) may only be used for IC-VPET measures with priority partner countries listed by these three agencies. This opens the possibility for interdepartmental coordination of new IC-VPET measures. The range of priority countries is nevertheless limited from an education policy, development policy and migration policy standpoint. In addition, the current budget approved for Switzerland's Contribution to EU Enlargement has already been fully used up for the new EU member states.

In light of the foregoing, there is a medium-term need for a legal basis and funding possibilities (timeframe: next ERI period 2017-2020) to enable SERI to pursue activities in the area of IC-VPET in the future and enjoy the required freedom of action.

As stated in Chapter 5.1.1, legislative amendments must be made to the *Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (SR 412.10)*, the *Federal Act on International Cooperation in the Area of General Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Mobility* and corresponding ordinances. At the same time, consideration should be given to the possible enactment of new legislation in preparation for the next ERI Dispatch for 2017-2020.

At the same time, an effort should be made to determine whether the *Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (SR 412.10)* should explicitly mention international cooperation in vocational education and training and whether IC-VPET may qualify for funding as a specific activity serving the public interest under the terms of the *Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Ordinance (VPETO, SR 412.101)*. In addition, a decision should be made on whether to explicitly mention VET funding in the *Federal Act on International Cooperation in the Area of General Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Mobility* as a potential means of strengthening and broadening international cooperation. Finally, consideration should be given to whether a special legislative instrument should be drafted specifically to cover SERI's IC-VPET activities. The new legislation would be either an alternative to existing legislation or complementary to it.

Over the medium term, the broadening of SFIVET's federal mandate in the area of IC-VPET should be taken into account in the next ERI Dispatch. When doing so, basic principles of public-private partnerships in support of measures and projects as well as the possibility of bottom-up initiatives should be maintained.

The corresponding budgets must be requested in the ERI Dispatch. Conditions for these processes include political support from national VPET partners and approval of IC-VPET as a means of furthering Switzerland's ERI strategy.

## **5.2 Verification and adaptation of SERI strategy**

The use of IC-VPET to further Switzerland's ERI strategy should be seen as a practical means enabling the positioning of VPET in response to both national and international developments. For this reason, activities must be periodically reviewed and adapted as needed. This process should take place in coordination with other federal agencies that also pursue IC-VPET activities and with the involvement of VPET partners. The first review should take place two years after approval of the current draft of this strategy paper.

In addition, specific measures for the period starting from 2017 should be decided and included in the ERI Dispatch for 2017-2020.

## 6 Annex

### 6.1 Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
ERI	Education, research and innovation
FOM	Federal Office for Migration
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SFIVET	Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
IC-VPET	International cooperation in vocational and professional education and training
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQFs	National qualifications frameworks
NQF-CH-VPET	National Qualifications Framework for the VPET System
POs	Professional organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SSACI	Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative
SVETII	Swiss VET Initiative India
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

### 6.2 Clarification of terms

#### **International cooperation in vocational and professional education and training (IC-VPET)**

International cooperation in vocational and professional education and training covers all activities pursued by federal agencies in their respective policy areas within bilateral and multilateral cooperation contexts for the purpose of:

- 1) Providing information about the Swiss VPET system and achieving greater recognition and appreciation for the Swiss VPET system abroad;
- 2) Taking part in European and international programmes, initiatives, processes that are relevant for the Swiss VPET system;
- 3) Pursuing exchange and coordination initiatives with strategic partner countries in the area of VPET and/or
- 4) Providing specific Swiss expertise in the area of VPET within the framework of cooperation activities or projects.

IC-VPET covers a broad spectrum of measures at various intensity levels, each aimed at furthering different strategic objectives of Switzerland.

IC-VPET differs from such notions as export of education, export of VPET programmes or VPET system export since there are no direct economic considerations associated with IC-VPET activities and no effort is made to achieve the unaltered transfer of the entire Swiss VPET system.

### **Transfer of expertise**

Activities carried out at various intensity levels. These activities can help to disseminate information and expertise about the Swiss VPET system to interested partner countries (see: *contacts, consulting and other services, cooperation projects*).

### **Contacts**

Contacts are a low-intensity means of transferring expertise within the context of IC-VPET. Contacts with partner countries in various contexts serve to provide basic information regarding the Swiss VPET system and enable the exchange of experiences. This includes preparation of information materials, receiving and sending delegations as well as organising and taking part in specialised conferences.

### **Consulting and other services**

Consulting and other services are a medium-intensity means of transferring expertise within the context of IC-VPET. They include the targeted sharing of specific Swiss expertise in the area of VPET to partner countries that have requested this expertise. Activities include such things as occasional advisory services covering individual technical aspects of dual-track VET, training of VET professionals or technical guidance on individual development processes (training content, forms of learning, etc.).

### **Cooperation projects**

Cooperation projects with partner countries are long-term partnerships between Swiss and foreign stakeholders in the area of VET. These projects receive both official and financial support from the governments of partner countries. The coordination of cooperation projects therefore falls into the category of high-intensity transfer of expertise. The aim is to provide extensive Swiss expertise and support enabling individual aspects of Swiss dual-track or labour market-oriented VET programmes to be adapted to local conditions in the partner country. In addition, cooperation projects seek to establish and expand viable VET programmes and structures. The aim of such cooperation projects should be, among other things, to use the duration and scope of these projects to generate long-term inputs for the development of VET systems in partner countries. Nonetheless, the complete and comprehensive transfer of the Swiss VPET system is not feasible.

### **VPET system export**

VPET system export is understood as the theoretical possibility of gradually developing a dual-track VET system modelled after the Swiss system in a given partner country. This type of complete and comprehensive transfer of the systemic aspects of the Swiss VPET system is neither feasible nor likely to succeed. For this reasons, no such measures are planned in the present strategy paper.

## 6.3 Clarification of the main features of the Swiss VPET system

**Labour-market focus:** The qualifications that may be acquired within the Swiss VPET system are based on occupational requirements of the labour market and the needs of companies. The professional competences to be acquired correspond to the actual activities that learners will be called upon to perform after their training is complete. For the most part, these professional competences are developed within real working contexts. The basic underlying principle is the dual-track approach to learning: apprenticeship training at host companies combined with classroom instruction at vocational schools. As a result, learners are already involved in the host company's working processes and carry out productive work for the company during their training. For this reason, learners may be hired as fully functional employees of the company upon completion of their training. Technological innovations and developments in the activity profiles of occupations are regularly and quickly included in the training plans for both the apprenticeship training and classroom instruction portions of VET programmes.

**Quality:** Considerable importance is given to developing quality at all levels and in all parts of the system. The Confederation is responsible for ensuring the overall quality of the system as a whole and the Cantons and professional organisations each have their respective areas of responsibility. The Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) is an independent institution specialised in VET. It provides basic and continuing training to teachers working at vocational schools as well as to trainers involved in the provision of apprenticeship training at host companies. SFIVET also lends support to professional organisations in the preparation of VET ordinances and training plans for VET programmes. Finally, SFIVET pursues research in the area of upper-secondary level vocational education and training (VET), tertiary-level professional education and training (PET) and Switzerland's entire system of vocational and professional education and training (VPET).

**Public-private partnership:** The Swiss VPET system is jointly managed and funded at the national level by partners from both the public sector (the Confederation and the Cantons) and the private sector (professional organisations and companies). The Confederation manages the system as a whole; the Cantons are responsible for implementation and supervision; professional organisations establish the content of VET ordinances and training plans for VET programmes; and companies create apprenticeship positions and assign staff to provide apprenticeship training to learners. The strong and long-term commitment of the private sector to this system is derived from the fact that companies have a vested interest in ensuring the transfer of professional competences to the next generation of workers and therefore wish to play an active role in this process.

**Permeability:** The Swiss VPET system is characterised by a high degree of permeability and offers recognised subsequent training opportunities to learners after completion of their initial training ("no dead-end qualifications"). Holders of upper-secondary level VET qualifications may take their training to the next level, either by pursuing professional education and training (PET, ISCED 5B) or seeking enrolment at a Swiss university of applied sciences (UAS, ISCED 5A). The latter option is available to learners who, in addition to obtaining the standard Federal VET Diploma, also obtain a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB). Learners may even seek enrolment in a Swiss tier-one university (i.e. cantonal universities and either of Switzerland's two federal institutes of technology: the ETHZ and the EPFL, ISCED 5A). In order to do so, learners must obtain the Federal VET Diploma, the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate and pass the University Aptitude Test (UAT). Learners therefore enjoy a considerable degree of flexibility in shaping their future career paths. As an integral part of the entire Swiss education system, the VPET system makes an active contribution to its further development.

**Cost-efficiency:** For professional organisations and companies, VET is not just a long-term investment in the next generation of workers: learners also perform productive tasks during their apprenticeship training. In most cases, the productive output of learners exceeds the company's apprenticeship training costs, making apprenticeship training an economically viable option for companies. In the long run, host companies are also able to save on recruitment and orientation costs by hiring apprentices at the end of the VET programme. Because companies are also involved in the training process, dual-track VET places less of a burden on public finances.

## 6.4 Clarification of relevant international VPET trends and developments

**Need for skilled workers for competence-based economies<sup>22</sup>:** All over the world, we find that technological change, new economic branches and globalisation are paving the way for competence-based economies. This trend is associated with a strong demand for skilled workers who possess the capacity to innovate, to adopt a systems perspective and to apply their knowledge and know-how effectively. In order to remain competitive, many countries are investing more heavily in education, research and innovation. Countries that are unable to satisfy their internal demand for skilled workers seek to recruit abroad, which leads to greater international mobility of skilled workers.

There is broad support for the EU's policy of establishing a Single European Market. One of the pillars of this policy is the creation of a European Education Area. And it is here where VET has an important role to play: cooperation among member states in this area should be developed and deepened. At the forefront are measures to encourage lifelong learning and mobility, to improve quality and efficiency and encourage innovation<sup>23</sup>. These developments also have an impact on the Swiss VPET system: they offer opportunities for improvement and better positioning as well as challenges that can have major far-reaching consequences.

Swiss companies focus on providing specialised goods and services of high-quality. For this reason, they require workers with the right balance of occupational skills and competences - both in Switzerland and at production sites in foreign markets. Swiss companies in foreign markets wish to establish VPET programmes in order to satisfy their need for local skilled workers. However, this requires a certain amount of assistance from the Confederation and/or their branch specific organisations.

**Economic crisis and (youth) unemployment:** The recent economic and financial crisis led to very high levels of youth unemployment worldwide, particularly in individual European countries.

Countries whose VPET systems are primarily classroom-based and/or whose education systems place greater emphasis on academic skills have been particularly affected by this problem. This is because the competences acquired by learners do not (adequately) reflect the actual needs of the labour market. These countries feel increasing pressure to reform their education systems because comparable countries with a tradition of well-structured VPET systems with a labour-market focus have been less affected by the economic and financial crisis.

Within this context, greater attention is now being given to VEPT, which can help to sustainably improve the youth employment situation in two ways: by facilitating the integration of young people who do less well in school and providing good students with training options that are viable alternatives to academic pathways. An efficient VPET system in itself, however, does not guarantee that all of the problems arising on the labour market will be solved. A sustainably effective response to youth unemployment also requires measures to be taken in other policy areas.

**Demographic change and labour migration:** Young people in developing countries and emerging countries alike are often faced with too few employment and personal development prospects in their countries of origin, making them more willing to emigrate.<sup>24</sup> In these countries, the competences of workers must be developed in order to improve the employment situation of individuals and foster economic and social development. For their part, industrialised countries face the problem of an aging population. This situation has created labour market shortages which are only partly compensated by the labour migration. Industrialised countries therefore have a vested interest in developing the potential of young people in their own countries to the fullest possible extent.

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<sup>22</sup> In the present strategy, we do not use the widely adopted term "knowledge-based economy" but rather "competence-based economy". This is because, within the context of VET, the first term places heavy emphasis on theoretical knowledge and too little emphasis on practical skills. In contrast, the term "competence-based economy" refers to the right combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and transversal personal competences.

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, website (2013): "Education and Training 2020", [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/framework\\_de.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/framework_de.htm), link checked on 16 December 2013.

<sup>24</sup> For comparison, see: United Nations (2013): "World Population Ageing 2013" and "International Migration Report 2013", New York: United Nations.

At the European level, a group of countries (new EU member states, southern European countries) are affected twice as much: labour shortages resulting from aging populations will become even more acute with the exodus of skilled workers to countries offering higher earning prospects.

In these countries, VPET is gaining importance as a possible solution. This can be seen in cooperation initiatives between Switzerland and new EU member states within the framework of Switzerland's contribution to EU enlargement (and possible extensions of this contribution) as well as in initiatives falling under the scope of development cooperation.

**Internationalisation and harmonisation of education, pressure for more academic content:** The noticeable trend towards a competence-based economy and the increased mobility of pupils, learners, teaching staff as well as workers and employers are expressions of an irreversible internationalisation of education. English-, French- and Spanish-speaking countries are using this trend to provide education services abroad or to generate export income on domestic markets from foreign visitors. The terms education export and VPET export are generally used in these contexts.

At tertiary A level, the Bologna process has led to a harmonisation of systems used to award credits towards higher education qualifications. In the area of VPET, the European Union has launched the Copenhagen Process to enable the comparability of VET and PET qualifications of various countries.

Many of these international trends are heavily influenced by education systems in English-speaking countries. In such systems, academic and general education is more highly valued than practical, labour market-based training. VPET tends to be given less importance, which has a negative impact on social status. VPET systems that include tertiary level are under pressure to adopt a more academic approach in order to gain greater social prestige. There are also difficulties with regards to achieving international recognition of VET and PET qualifications. With its strategically important and highly developed PET sector, the Swiss VPET system is particularly exposed to these risks.



## 6.5 Analysis of opportunities and risks associated with relevant international trends

Partial aspect of a trend	Opportunities	Risks	Proposed action steps
Technological change and development of new economic branches	The Swiss VPET system embraces change and adapts training content accordingly. It remains an appealing training option for both individuals and companies and continues to play a strategic role in the Swiss economy.	The Swiss VPET system may not respond quickly enough to changes and therefore lose its appeal.	Steps must be taken to ensure that the VPET system continues to respond rapidly to technological change and the development of new economic branches. This will require greater openness on the part of relevant stakeholders to international developments in the area of VPET (e.g. new Job profiles, new qualification standards, new methods etc.).
Globalisation of the economy	The Swiss VPET system provides Switzerland with highly skilled workers who possess the right blend of competences and qualifications. The Swiss VPET system helps to strengthen Switzerland's position as an economic location.	The role of international, foreign companies is becoming increasingly important. When such companies lack awareness and understanding of the relevance of Swiss VET and PET qualifications, this can have an impact on recruitment policies or choice of location for company operations, thereby weakening the Swiss VPET system in favour of general education and more academic pathways.	International recognition and familiarity with Swiss VET and PET qualifications – particularly at PET level – must be achieved.  The strengths and features of the Swiss VPET system must be promoted at the international level.
Rising demand for skilled workers possessing a blend of practical and theoretical competences in increasingly competence-based economies	The social recognition and economic value of the Swiss VPET system for individuals and companies can be promoted at both the national and international: the VPET system trains workers for competence-based economies.		The strengths and features of the Swiss VPET system must be promoted at the international level.

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<p>Greater international mobility of workers and demand for individuals with international competences</p>	<p>The Swiss VPET system encourages the mobility and international competences of workers. Its appeal for internationally minded individuals and companies will increase. At the same time, mobility will help to raise the international profile of the Swiss VPET system.</p>	<p>The Swiss VPET system does not impart an adequate level of international competences, does not adequately encourage mobility and fails to achieve international recognition of its qualifications. For more internationally minded individuals and companies, the Swiss VPET system loses appeal with respect to general education and more academic pathways.</p> <p>The need for the international comparability of VET and PET qualifications among different countries can lead to a levelling out and downgrading of qualifications to the smallest common denominator, which can distort perceptions of the quality of the Swiss VPET system.</p>	<p>Steps must be taken to provide learners with competences needed for mobility or prepare them for later employment.</p> <p>International recognition and familiarity with Swiss VET and PET qualifications – particularly at PET level – must be achieved.</p> <p>The high standards and quality of Swiss VET and PET must be maintained so as to better position VET and PET qualifications.</p>
<p>Coordination of development of VPET at European level through EU processes/increasing importance in international organisations</p>	<p>The Swiss VPET system can be positioned and its interests represented in the current processes taking place at European level as well as in other international organisations. This will enable the European VPET context to affect the international VPET context and vice versa.</p> <p>European processes and international institutions will facilitate strategic alliances with other countries that have dual-track VET systems and share similar interests.</p> <p>EU promotion of VPET prompts individuals and companies to give greater social recognition and economic value to the Swiss VPET system both at the national and international level.</p>	<p><u>If Switzerland does not play an active role:</u></p> <p>The Swiss VPET system will be surpassed by European processes and will have to accept decisions that it will have no influence over: important aspects for the Swiss VPET system (e.g. high qualification standards, occupation principle, importance of the tertiary-level PET, etc.) are not adequately taken into account at European level.</p> <p>Switzerland will lose the opportunity for greater mobility and the international recognition of VET and PET qualifications.</p> <p><u>If Switzerland plays an active role:</u></p> <p>Despite its participation, Switzerland may be unable to adequately promote aspects that are important for the Swiss VPET system.</p>	<p>Active participation in European coordination and development processes in relevant international institutions and promotion of important aspects for the Swiss VPET system are essential</p> <p>Swiss participation in European education programmes must be secured.</p> <p>As needed, strategic alliances must be formed. At the same time, there is general need for greater coordination and cooperation with other countries that have dual-track VET systems. This will enable defence of common interests in the area of VPET (Germany, Austria, Principality of Liechtenstein, and to a lesser extent Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxembourg).</p> <p>The high standards and quality of Swiss VET</p>

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		<p>The need for the international comparability of VET and PET qualifications among different countries can lead to a levelling out and down-grading of qualifications to the smallest common denominator, which can distort perceptions of the quality of the Swiss VPET system.</p>	<p>and PET must be maintained.</p>
<p>Increased demand of Swiss companies for assistance with development of Swiss-style VPET programmes at production sites abroad</p>	<p>The Swiss VPET system can be positioned in economically important partner countries. This will raise the profile of the Swiss VPET system and enable Switzerland to influence the international VPET context.</p>	<p><u>If Switzerland does not provide support to companies:</u></p> <p>Swiss companies will try to find solutions either on their own or with support from their economic branches. This will result in an uncoordinated dissemination of the Swiss VPET model. This would have an impact on quality control and could undermine the image of the Swiss VPET system and lead to uncoordinated use of limited resources available to VPET partners.</p> <p>Over the long-term, the possible international relevance of the Swiss VPET system and its international profile will be weakened.</p> <p><u>If Switzerland provides support to companies:</u></p> <p>VPET programmes may be used as a means of relocating Swiss production facilities to other countries.</p> <p>Foreign VPET programmes produced with Swiss expertise or support may develop a level of quality that is lower than that achieved within the Swiss VPET system. The reputation of the Swiss VPET system for high-quality training will be compromised by this.</p>	<p>Clear priorities and criteria must be conveyed in order for Switzerland to make an official commitment in the area of international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training. Measures to be taken must be of varying intensities.</p> <p>The roles of VPET partners and coordination between them must be established.</p> <p>VPET partners must be extensively involved in the consideration, planning and execution of measures to be taken.</p> <p>Swiss companies with production sites abroad must also be involved. of the own interests of one or more companies do however not suffice as a condition for a commitment by the Confederation.</p> <p>Quality control measures must be implemented in transfer and cooperation projects relating to international cooperation in vocational education and training.</p>

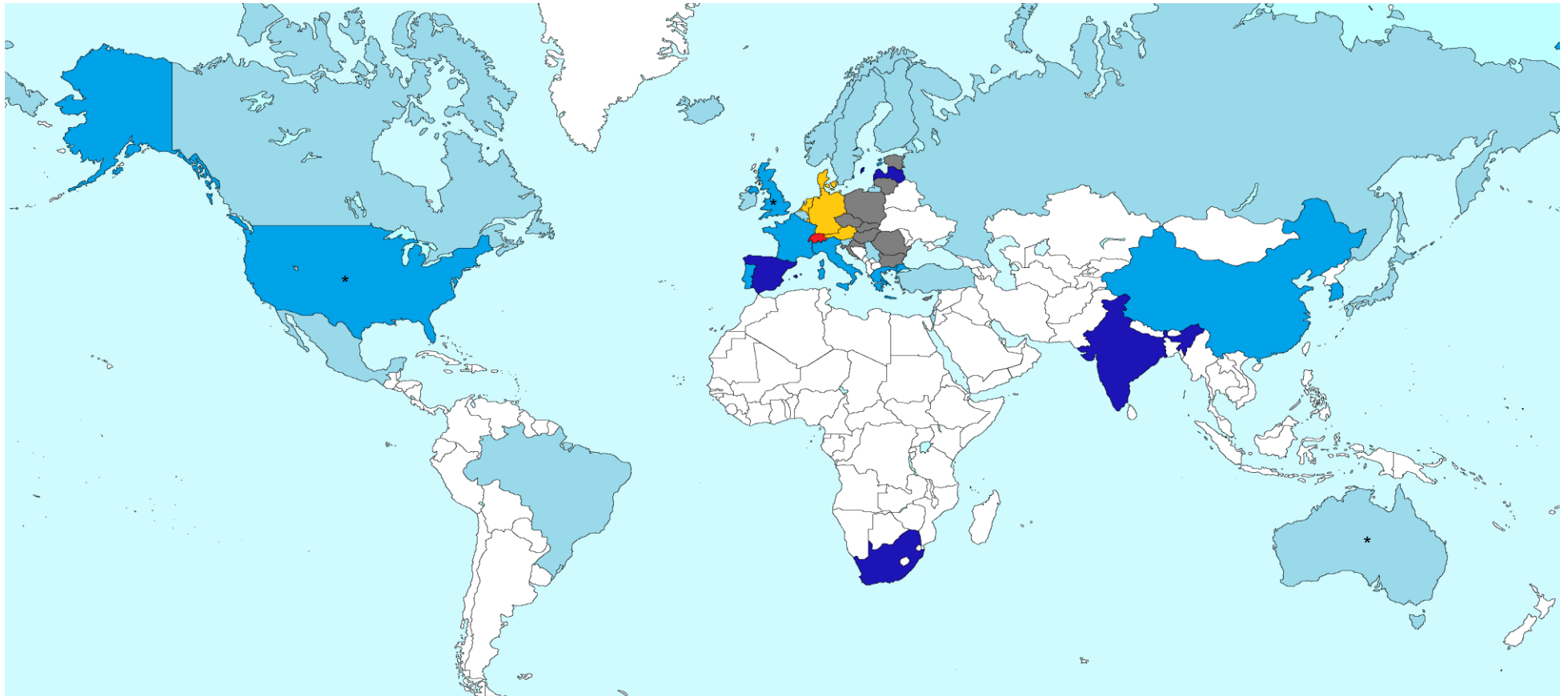
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		<p>The available, limited resources of VPET partners will be overburdened by activities relating to international cooperation in vocational and professional education and training. This could reduce the level of commitment felt by VPET partners in this area.</p>	
<p>Increased demand from other countries for Swiss expertise in the area of VET</p>	<p>The social recognition and economic value of the Swiss VPET system for individuals and companies can be promoted at both the national and international. The VPET system trains workers for competence-based economies.</p> <p>The Swiss VPET system can be positioned in economically important partner countries. This will raise the profile of the Swiss VPET system and enable Switzerland to influence the international VPET context.</p>	<p><u>If Switzerland does not offer expertise:</u></p> <p>Potential partner countries will obtain the required expertise from countries with other VPET systems. Over the long-term, this could weaken the international relevance of the Swiss VPET system and result in lesser international visibility.</p> <p><u>If Switzerland offers expertise:</u></p> <p>The strengths of the Swiss VPET system will be used in bilateral political relations as an incentive for negotiations (e.g. offers of cooperation in VPET) without having a clear idea of the benefits that this will bring to the Swiss VPET system.</p> <p>Foreign VPET programmes produced with Swiss expertise or support may develop a level of quality that is lower than that achieved within the Swiss VPET system. The reputation of the Swiss VPET system for high-quality training will be compromised by this.</p> <p>The available, limited resources of VPET partners will be overburdened by activities relating to international cooperation in vocational education and training. This could reduce the level of commitment felt by VPET partners in this area.</p>	<p>For all bilateral relations where cooperation in VPET could be included, the benefits that this will bring to the Swiss VPET system must always be assessed.</p> <p>Switzerland must offer expertise in the area of dual VET in a coordinated fashion on the basis of clearly established and conveyed criteria and priorities. Measures to be taken must be of varying intensities.</p> <p>Switzerland should not impose itself. There must be a clearly identified need and a request made by the partner country.</p> <p>VPET partners must be extensively involved in the consideration, planning and execution of measures to be taken.</p> <p>Quality control measures must be implemented in transfer and cooperation projects relating to international cooperation in vocational education and training.</p>

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		<p>The expectations of foreign partners taking part in a cooperation initiative with Switzerland may not be met (e.g. short-term solution to youth unemployment). This could damage the reputation of Switzerland and its VPET system.</p>	
<p>Countries are intensifying their efforts to export education abroad. Education systems in English-speaking countries predominate. As a result, too much emphasis is being placed on general education and academic programmes.</p>		<p>The international context is influenced primarily by countries whose education systems place greater emphasis on general education and academic pathways. Due to the inadequate focus on VET and PET and preference for other types of education qualifications on the internationalised labour market, there is less social recognition of the Swiss VPET system and lower demand from international employers for holders of VET and PET qualifications.</p> <p>Over the long term, this could erode the international relevance of VPET in general.</p>	<p>The strengths and features of the Swiss VPET system must be recognised at the international level.</p> <p>International recognition and familiarity with Swiss VET and PET qualifications – particularly at PET level – must be achieved.</p>

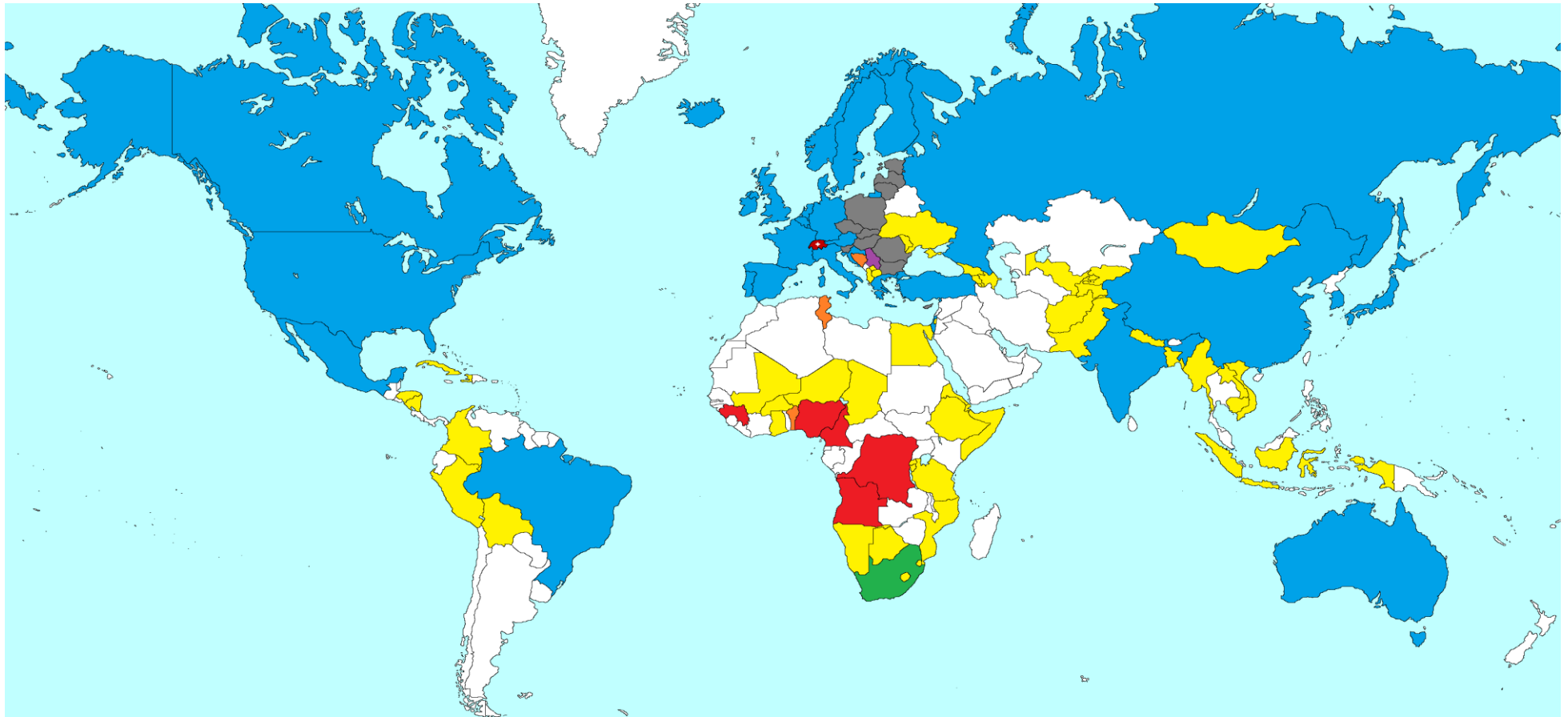
## 6.6 Map of SERI's priority countries for IC-VPET activities



### Legend

Strategic partner countries
Potential project countries
Potential countries for advisory services
Contact countries
Countries benefiting from Switzerland's contribution to EU enlargement
* Countries that are greatly involved in the internationalisation of education

### 6.7 Map of priority countries for federal agencies involved in IC-VPET activities



**Legend:**

ERI (VPET)	Development cooperation (SECO and/or SDC)	Migration cooperation	Swiss contribution to EU enlargement
ERI (VPET) + development cooperation	Development cooperation + migration cooperation	ERI (VPET) + development cooperation + migration cooperation	



## 6.8 Brief summary: results of evaluation of SVETII project

The pilot project *Swiss VET Initiative India* has shown that aspects of Swiss dual-track VET programmes can be successfully implemented in (Swiss) companies whose production sites are located in a country that lacks a corresponding VET tradition. The main prerequisite is that there be a clearly established framework for this. With each new initiative, the aim is to devise objectives, a concept as well as an implementation strategy that matches the specific context. It is essential that potential partner companies and government agencies in the partner country assess their need for aspects of the Swiss VPET system and determine their requirements so as to ensure sustainability of such an initiative. If key aspects of the Swiss VPET system (e.g. strong commitment of the private sector to VET, combination of competence-based theoretical and practical training (dual-track approach), partnership between private and public sector) are identified and adapted to suit the specific socio-cultural and economic context, then the chances of successfully transferring aspects of the Swiss VPET system to other countries are greater. Successful long-term implementation requires strong local partners, professional management and a robust project design. Special emphasis also needs to be placed on language skills on both sides.

Source: *Pilot Project Swiss VET Initiative India: Cooperation between Switzerland and India in the field of Vocational Education and Training 2009-2013; Evaluation – Final Report*, econcept commissioned by SERI, 5 December 2013.