Dear reader,

Switzerland is one of the world’s leading locations; regular top positions in international rankings testify to this. Its innovative and competitive companies, excellent universities, first-class experts and excellent infrastructure form a strong foundation.

But we do not want to rest on our laurels with these achievements. As Director of the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), I am committed to maintaining and further consolidating these excellent conditions. We are thus cultivating and strengthening Switzerland to be a location that is attractive both now and in the future. We want it to enable local and international companies as well as research institutes from all sectors to keep performing at their best. These companies must remain consistently on the right path so they can assert themselves in global competition. If these conditions are met, our country can continue to score points with its performance, quality and innovation in the future.

The Swiss economy has mastered the international challenges of recent years very well, thanks not least to the good conditions, but above all thanks to the productivity and innovativeness of local companies.

We want your company to become part of this success story. An initial guide for the choice of location can be found in this manual. To help you learn more about the specific advantages and the circumstances of individual location factors, the settlement specialists from Switzerland Global Enterprise and the cantons here in Switzerland, and also those in the Swiss Business Hubs abroad, are on hand to advise you. They are very familiar with the concerns and needs of international companies as well as Switzerland’s economic fabric and can actively support you.

We look forward to seeing you!

Guy Parmelin
Swiss Federal Council
Director, Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education, and Research (EAER)
Investment Promotion

As part of its remit from the Swiss Confederation (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO) and the cantons, S-GE provides potential foreign investors with information about the particular strengths and operating conditions of Switzerland as a business location. Its services for foreign companies include assessing the potential of their projects before they are presented to the cantons. S-GE assists the cantons by presenting Switzerland as a business location abroad and by coordinating the activities of all the bodies involved.
# Table of Contents

## SWITZERLAND – YOUR BUSINESS LOCATION 8

### INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY 10
- Research and Development Hub ........................................ 11
- Leading Industry Clusters .................................................. 12
- Strong Education System ................................................... 13

### SECURITY AND TRUST 14
- Reliable Governance .......................................................... 15
- Liberal Labor Market ............................................................ 16
- Sound Financial and Capital Market ..................................... 17
- Attractive Taxes .................................................................. 18
- Easy Start-Up Process .......................................................... 19

### ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE 20
- Unique Quality of Life .......................................................... 21
- International Environment ................................................... 22
- Reliable Infrastructure .......................................................... 23

### 1 SWITZERLAND – FACTS AND FIGURES 24

#### 1.1 Geography ................................................................. 25
#### 1.2 Climate .................................................................. 25
#### 1.3 Political System ........................................................... 26
- The Federal Government ...................................................... 26
- Separation of Powers at Federal Level .................................... 26
- Direct Democracy and the Concordance System .................... 27
- Political Stability and Social Harmony ................................... 27
- Public Finance .................................................................. 28
- Neutrality .......................................................................... 28
- Population ......................................................................... 28
- Cosmopolitanism and International Outlook ......................... 29
- Languages and Origins ....................................................... 29
- International Organizations .................................................. 29
- Switzerland in Figures .......................................................... 31

### 2 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE 32

#### 2.1 Gross Domestic Product and Industry Structure ............... 33
#### 2.2 International Integration .................................................. 36
- Goods and Services Trade .................................................... 36
- Direct Investments ............................................................... 37
- Key Industry Clusters ............................................................ 38
- Life Sciences: Chemicals/Pharmaceuticals, Biotech, Medtech .... 38
- Machinery, Electrical Engineering, and Metals Industry .......... 39
- Information and Communication Technology ....................... 39

#### 2.3.4 Cleantech ................................................................. 40
#### 2.3.5 Company Headquarters ............................................. 40
#### 2.3.6 Financial Services .................................................... 41
#### 2.3.7 Trading and Resources ............................................... 41

### 3 ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK 42

#### 3.1 International Exchange of Goods and Services ............... 44
- Free Trade Agreements, WTO, and Elimination of Trade Restrictions ........................................ 44
- Customs and Excise ............................................................ 44
- Rules of Origin .................................................................. 45
- Protection of Free Competition ............................................. 45
- Protection of Intellectual Property ........................................ 46
- Patents ............................................................................. 46
- Trademarks ...................................................................... 48
- Design ............................................................................. 48
- Copyright ...................................................................... 48
- Product Regulations and Product Liability ............................. 49
- Foodstuffs ....................................................................... 49
- Pharmaceutical Products ..................................................... 50
- Medical Devices ................................................................ 50
- Land Use Planning and Environmental Protection ................ 51
- Building and Zoning .......................................................... 51
- Environment ................................................................... 51

### 4 SWITZERLAND AND EUROPE 52

#### 4.1 Trade and Direct Investments ........................................ 53
- Political and Economic Cooperation ...................................... 53
- Free Movement of Persons .................................................. 54
- Schengen Agreement ............................................................ 55
- Elimination of Technical Barriers to Trade ............................ 55
- Research ......................................................................... 55
- Rail, Road, and Air Transport .............................................. 55
- Public Procurement in Switzerland ....................................... 56
- Trade in Agricultural Products .............................................. 56
- Taxation of Savings Income .................................................. 57
- The Euro .......................................................................... 57

### 5 ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING A COMPANY 58

#### 5.1 Corporate Structures .................................................... 59
- Stock Corporation (AG) ....................................................... 60
- Limited Liability Company (GmbH) .................................... 60
- Branch Office .................................................................. 60
- Limited Partnership for Collective Investment ....................... 60
- Sole Proprietorship ............................................................ 63
10.5.7 Exports .......................................................... 115
10.5.8 International Business Activity ...................... 115
10.5.9 Non-Resident Enterprises .............................. 116
10.6 Other Taxes .................................................. 116
10.6.1 Stamp Taxes ............................................. 116
10.6.2 Real Estate Taxes ........................................ 116
10.7 Double Tax Treaties ...................................... 117
10.8 Tax Proposal 17 ............................................. 117
10.9 Transfer Pricing Rules .................................... 117

11 INFRASTRUCTURE ............................................. 118
11.1 Transportation ............................................. 119
11.1.1 Road Traffic ............................................ 120
11.1.2 Rail .......................................................... 120
11.1.3 Shipping and Navigation ......................... 121
11.1.4 Air Travel ............................................... 121
11.2 Communication ......................................... 124
11.3 Energy ....................................................... 125
11.4 Water ........................................................ 125
11.4.1 Drinking Water ....................................... 125
11.4.2 Waste Water Disposal and Water Pollution Control .................................................. 126
11.5 Post ............................................................ 126
11.6 Healthcare .................................................. 126
11.6.1 Medical Care ........................................... 126
11.6.2 Health Insurance ...................................... 126

12 EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ..................... 128
12.1 Schooling and Vocational Training .................. 129
12.1.1 Basic and Further Education ..................... 129
12.1.2 Vocational Training .................................. 132
12.2 Further Education ....................................... 132
12.3 Universities and Colleges .............................. 132
12.3.1 Universities and Institutes of Technology .... 132
12.3.2 Universities of Applied Sciences ............... 134
12.3.3 Executive MBA (EMBA) Programs ............. 134
12.4 International Private Schools and Boarding Schools .............. 135
12.5 Research and Development ........................... 135
12.5.1 Conducting Research in Switzerland .......... 135
12.5.2 International Collaborative Research ........... 136
12.6 Switzerland Innovation – The Swiss Innovation Park .... 138
12.6.1 Innovation Focus Areas ............................ 138
12.6.2 Switzerland Innovation Parks ..................... 138
12.6.3 Target Audience ...................................... 139
12.6.4 Services ................................................. 139

13 LIVING IN SWITZERLAND ......................... 140
13.1 Safety and Quality of Life ................................ 141
13.2 Relocation and Integration ............................ 143
13.2.1 Moving .................................................. 143
13.2.2 Language Courses .................................. 143
13.3 Renting an Apartment .................................. 143
13.3.1 Deposits and Rental Agreements ............... 143
13.3.2 House Rules and Maintenance ................ 144
13.4 Telephone, Internet, and TV ......................... 144
13.5 Insurance .................................................. 145
13.6 Public Transport ......................................... 145
13.7 Leisure Activities ........................................ 145
13.7.1 Recreational and Cultural Offers ............... 145
13.7.2 Associations and Volunteer Work .............. 146
13.8 Income and Cost of Living ............................ 146

14 INVESTMENT PROMOTION ..................... 148
14.1 Responsibilities and Services ......................... 149
14.2 Promotional Policy and Instruments ............... 150
14.2.1 Cantonal Promotion .................................. 150
14.2.2 Tax Relief as Part of Regional Policy ......... 150
14.2.3 Switzerland Innovation ............................ 151
14.2.4 Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) .......................... 151
14.2.5 Technology Parks and Business Incubators .... 151

15 APPENDIX ....................................................... 154
15.1 International Network .................................. 155
15.1.1 Swiss Business Hubs Investment Promotion (target markets) .................................................. 155
15.1.2 Additional Switzerland Global Enterprise Swiss Business Hubs .................................................. 155
15.2 National Network ........................................ 156
15.2.1 Cantonal Business Promotion Agencies ......... 156
15.2.2 Intercantonal Location Marketing Organization .................................................. 157
15.3 List of Figures ............................................. 158
Switzerland is the most competitive business center in the world. There are numerous good reasons to locate a business in Switzerland: innovation and technology, a liberal economic system, political stability, close links with foreign markets, excellent education and healthcare systems, an outstanding infrastructure, a high standard of living, and a competitive tax system.

3 Swiss firms are among the 40 most valuable companies in the world

World’s most innovative country

Leading Industry Clusters:
– Life Sciences
– ICT
– MEM

One of the happiest nations in the world

Among the top 2 nations with the highest number of Nobel laureates per capita

Strong dual training system
Motivated workforce: No general strikes for 100 years

Most attractive country for highly qualified foreign workers

Employees with significant international experience

World’s best working conditions

Multilingual employees with 4 national languages plus English

World’s highest purchasing power

World’s third-highest life expectancy

Among the top 10 most popular countries for expatriates

3 in the top 15: Swiss cities offer a very high standard of living

SECURITY + TRUST

ENVIRONMENT + LIFE