



INVESTMENT PROMOTION

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Investment promotion is an important part of Swiss economic policy and takes the form of close cooperation between businesses, the state, the cantons and Switzerland Global Enterprise. The activities used to promote foreign direct investment in Switzerland are organized and coordinated by Switzerland Global Enterprise on behalf of the state.

14.1 RESPONSIBILITIES AND SERVICES

In accordance with Switzerland's federal form of government, responsibility for investment promotion is shared between the federal government and the cantons.

Acting on behalf of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the cantons, Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) informs foreign potential investors about Switzerland's particular strengths as well as the underlying conditions for doing business in Switzerland.

S-GE maintains offices abroad, known as Swiss Business Hubs (SBH). The specialists at these hubs are the first point of contact for foreign investors. Foreign investors from countries without SBHs can contact the S-GE team of experts in Switzerland directly. S-GE assesses the project's potential before passing it on to the cantons.

Area and cantonal economic development agencies are responsible for informing potential investors about the advantages of locating a business in their respective canton, presenting them with concrete location proposals, and organizing local support for investors as they settle in. Even after an investment project has been completed successfully, the economic development agencies continue to look after the investors through a kind of customer service.

S-GE supports foreign investors with the following tasks through the network of cantonal economic development agencies and various private-sector partners:

- Making contact with regional and cantonal economic development offices
- Looking for the ideal location in Switzerland
- Meeting legal and administrative requirements
- Working together with research centers and universities
- Obtaining work and residence permits
- Defining the ideal corporate structure and understanding the Swiss tax system

Switzerland Global Enterprise supports companies at all times throughout their investment project. Contact addresses can be found in the annex.

www.s-ge.com/invest

Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.s-ge.com/cantons

Areas and cantons

Language: English

14.2 BUSINESS PROMOTION POLICY AND INSTRUMENTS

In line with Switzerland’s liberal economic system, economic policy in Switzerland focuses on optimum structuring and support for the general business environment. Financial assistance programs are time-limited and strategic. In general, financial assistance from the state always complements private initiatives.

The possible funding options, the mix of various instruments and the scale of payments depend on the specific investment project. There is always room for individual solutions. It is therefore advisable, once a project has been roughly evaluated, to discuss it with the cantonal economic development agencies first.

14.2.1 Cantonal Promotion

Most Swiss cantons have their own economic development agencies, although some of these work together with other cantons. All cantons can offer tax relief to businesses as an economic development incentive. Other forms of economic assistance vary from canton to canton, depending on interest and regional economic conditions.

14.2.2 Tax Relief as Part of Regional Policy

As part of federal regional policy, specific support is given for the economic development of structurally weak regions such as mountainous areas and rural districts. The federal government can support major investment and innovation projects as well as the establishment of new companies in these regions through tax relief (Fig. 73). The main requirement for federal tax relief is that the canton in question also supports the project by providing an equivalent level of tax relief.

The application process for tax relief in connection with regional policies is always handled by the cantons. The cantonal economic development agencies in question provide advice on the best way to proceed.

See also section 9.4.3

www.seco.admin.ch > Topics > Location promotion > SME policy
Tax relief (regional policy)
Languages: German, French, Italian

Examples of Cantonal Business Promotion Instruments

(FIG. 72)

AREA	TYPE OF SUPPORT
Procurement of sites and premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Support in finding business premises and sites– Subsidizing the planning and/or development of industrial sites– Subsidizing the cost of converting corporate buildings
Taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Offering tax relief during the start-up or construction phase as well as for restructuring projects
Funding investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Granting or assisting with securities for bank loans– Assisting with interest-rate cuts or paying/waiving interest costs– Offering interest-free or low-interest cantonal loans– One-off donations (outright grants)

Source: Legal basis and information from cantonal economic development agencies

Areas of Application for Tax Breaks, 2016

(FIG. 73)



● Areas of application as per DEA directive of July 1, 2016

Source: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

14.2.3 Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)

CTI is Switzerland's federal innovation promotion agency. For more than 60 years, it has fostered the transfer of knowledge and technology between businesses and universities. It brings partners from these two areas together in applied research and development projects and provides assistance to start-up companies during the development phase. Switzerland has one of the highest levels of innovation of any country in the world. CTI has a budget of about CHF 100 million and operates under the motto "Science to Market." Companies work with universities to generate new knowledge that can be used to develop products and services and bring them to market.

CTI provides funding for:

- Market-oriented R&D projects carried out jointly by companies and universities to develop products and services
- The formation and development of science-based companies
- Know-how and technology transfers through platforms and networks

R&D project grants are available in all disciplines involving scientific innovation. Project applications are submitted in accordance with the bottom-up principle. Grants are awarded on the basis of innovative content and market potential.

In its Venturelab program, CTI helps promising entrepreneurs get started by guiding them through customized training modules. The modules give them the tools and methods they need to implement an exciting business idea and establish a new company. Young entrepreneurs can also apply for professional coaching. Support is provided to knowledge-intensive technology-based companies with great market potential.

CTI's KTT support strengthens knowledge and technology transfer between universities and industries in the same region. Professionally-run national thematic networks (NTNs) provide on-site assistance to SMEs and universities in making contacts and developing projects. Innovative Swiss companies and researchers are also offered development opportunities through access to international programs and networks such as IMS, ESA and EUREKA.

www.kti-cti.ch

Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.venturelab.ch

Venturelab
Languages: German, English, French

www.ctistartup.ch

CTI start-up
Language: English

14.2.4 Technology Parks and Business Incubators

Facilities and support centers designed to encourage or facilitate entrepreneurial activity are now part of an economy's infrastructure. Switzerland has a large number of technology parks and business incubator or start-up centers. Most have joined together to form networks or associations. They differ in concept and specific focus; some have developed in close cooperation with universities while others stem from purely private initiatives. They offer premises (generally at preferential rates) for the start-up and development phase as well as shared infrastructure and professional support.

Participation by their umbrella organizations in international networks enables them to use technology park infrastructures throughout Europe. This enables companies to speed up the difficult start-up phase and save on start-up costs. A number of business incubation centers have also been formed in major cities. They too serve as short-term start-up locations for foreign companies establishing new operations in Switzerland by providing flexible and expandable premises, contacts, and business incubation support.

Technology parks and business incubators have the following advantages:

- They provide services such as advice, coaching, telephone services, etc.
- They offer contacts to universities
- Companies are surrounded by like-minded entrepreneurs
- Good infrastructure and flexible premises
- Networking
- Higher chance of success: The average survival rate is more than 90%

www.swissparks.ch

Association of Swiss Technology Parks and Business Incubators
Language: English

“Numerous technology parks and business incubators offer premises, shared infrastructure and professional support.”

Science parks, incubators, and research institutes

(FIG. 74)

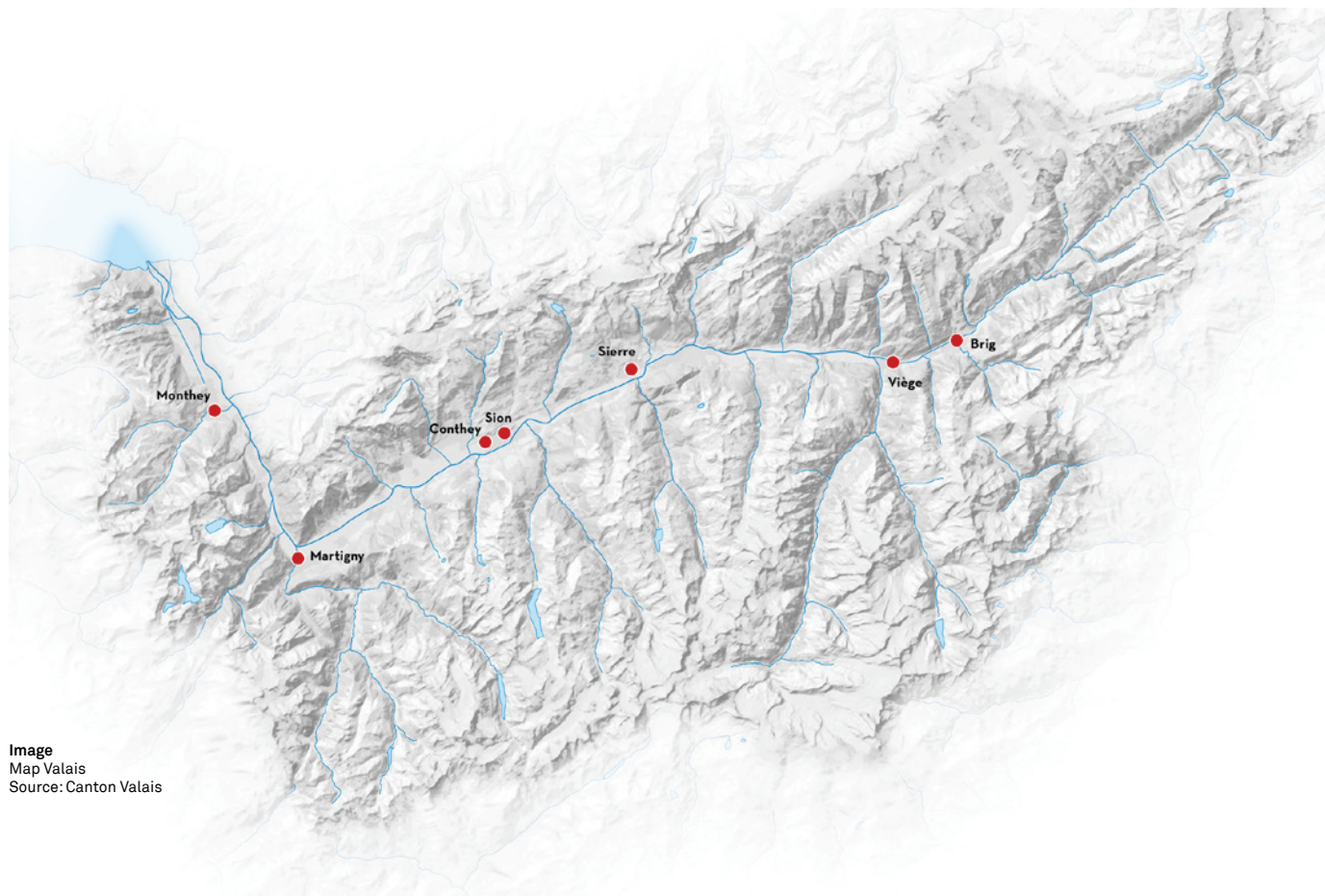


Image
Map Valais
Source: Canton Valais

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