

A Handbook for Investors

VALAIS AS A BUSINESS LOCATION



IN COLLABORATION WITH

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August 2016 / June 2017
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Welcome



Christophe Darbellay
State Councillor
Head of the Department of
Economic Affairs and Education

Dear readers,

Valais is a region of superlatives at every level. Our canton is home to the Aletsch glacier, the largest river of ice in the Alps; the Matterhorn, the world's best-known and most frequently photographed mountain; and the monumental Grande-Dixence, the world's tallest gravity dam. Our valley, set against a backdrop of 41 summits of 4,000 metres or more, enjoys almost 300 days of sunshine a year.

In addition to this stunning Alpine scenery, Valais is also home to cutting-edge technology:

- Overall, there are 27,000m² of technology parks throughout the whole canton
- Almost 600 SMEs, schools and research institutes are active in industry
- It is the second major centre in Switzerland for the chemical industry

Situated at the heart of the Alps and the centre of Europe, our canton has many assets, including its bilingualism, a pleasant living environment, a highly qualified workforce, state-of-the-art technology infrastructures and favourable living costs. The three chapters that follow will help you discover a canton that is active, innovative and home to major sector hubs. The young companies and renowned research institutes located here continue to grow in number and serve as a daily showcase for Valais technology, whose influence extends far beyond our own borders. Information and communication technologies (ICT), life sciences, engineering and a solid base in energy and environmental technologies are the cornerstones of innovation in Valais under the auspices of The Ark Foundation.

The canton's government has created an economic development strategy that helps strengthen and diversify the local economic structure in order to build a Valais that is prosperous, open, dynamic, diversified and attractive. With this in mind, Valais has also created a unique organisation based on partnership, known as Business Valais, which brings together all the local economic development actors with the aim of enhancing support for value-added projects. Thanks to the expertise of its partners, Business Valais can respond quickly and efficiently to a variety of requests from project developers.

The competencies of Business Valais, together with those of the EPFL, HES-SO Valais-Wallis and The Ark Foundation research institutes, create value for the local economy. Therefore, the canton of Valais ranks 4th in the country in terms of welcoming high-tech start-ups, and 42% of those choosing to set up business here that receive support from The Ark Foundation come from outside Switzerland.

To sum up, the fact that 30% of the canton's GDP comes from industry and technology proves that Valais offers the best possible overall conditions for attracting new companies. Our canton undeniably has skills and expertise to offer that are worth promoting. Whether from the point of view of basic research or technology transfer, structures are in place and ready to respond to the challenges of the future. The canton of Valais is unquestionably the place to launch your company and develop your business. And Business Valais is your partner!

I hope you enjoy reading this brochure and make many interesting discoveries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darbellay' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christophe Darbellay

Under its Board of Directors chaired by Christophe Darbellay, Head of the Department of Economic Affairs and Education, Business Valais groups together all the local economic development actors under one roof.

Acting as a single point-of-contact, it is able to provide a fast and efficient response to a variety of requests from project developers.

At the service of companies and entrepreneurs, Business Valais can provide them with a wide range of professional and tailored services thanks to the expertise of its partners, which covers mentoring and coaching, obtaining financing, technology transfer, training and networking.

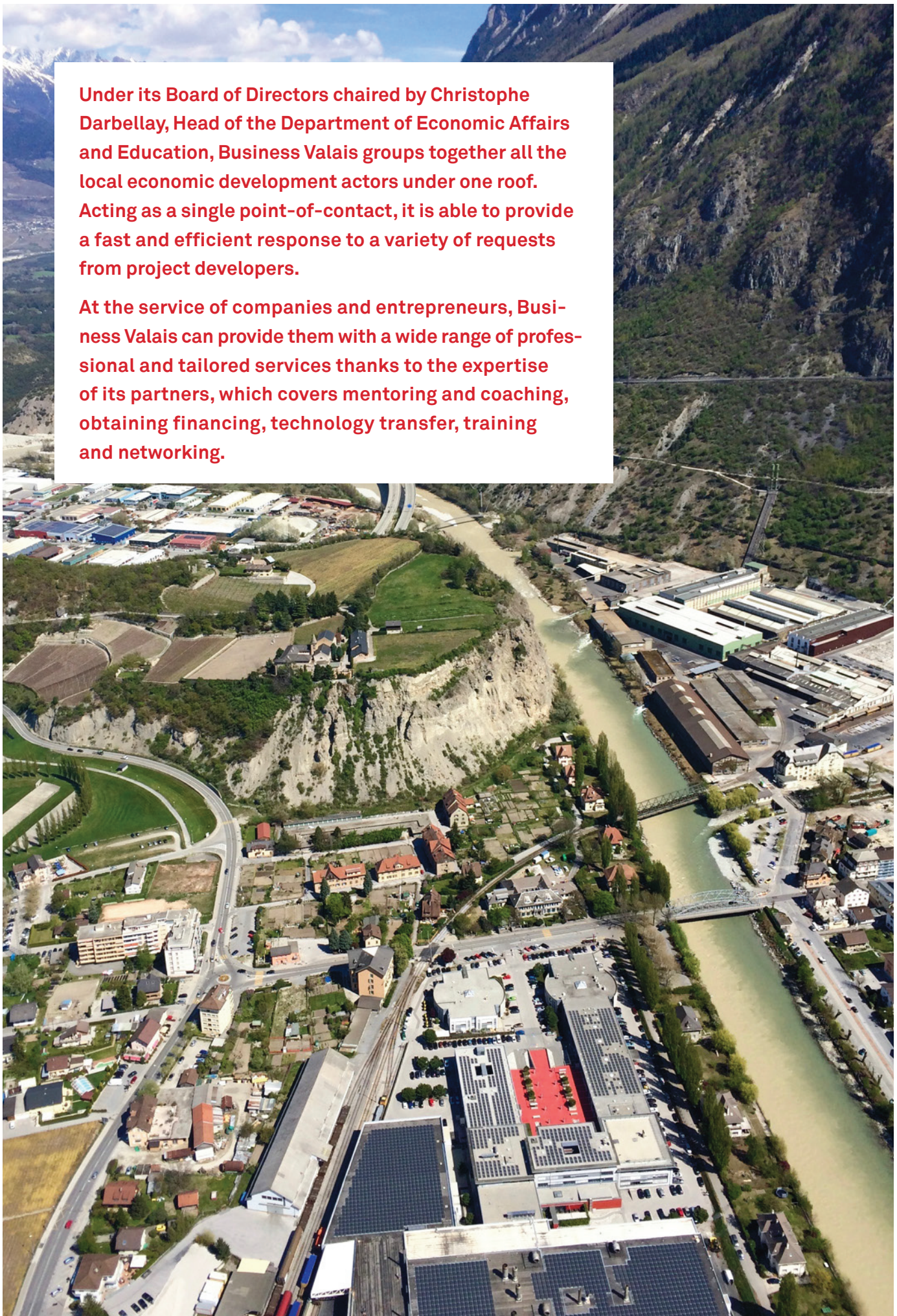


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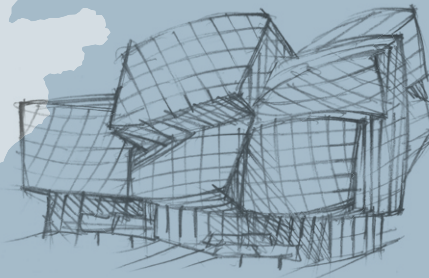
VALAIS – YOUR BUSINESS LOCATION

The Canton of Valais is a competitive business location. There are numerous good reasons to locate a business in Valais: 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.



Leading industry clusters:

- MEM
- ICT
- Life sciences
- Cleantech



Strong dual education system

INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY



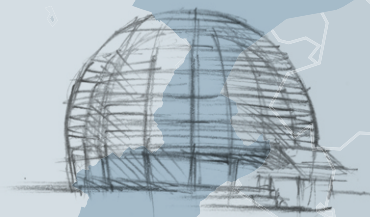
World's most innovative country



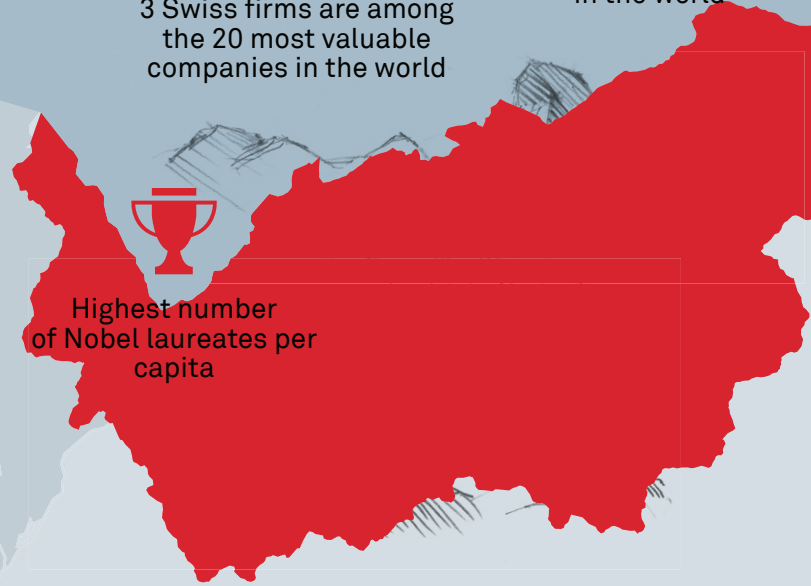
3 Swiss firms are among the 20 most valuable companies in the world



Among the top 3 happiest nations in the world



Highest number of Nobel laureates per capita





Motivated workforce:
No general strikes
for almost 100 years



Most attractive country
for highly qualified foreign
workers

SECURITY + TRUST



Employees with the best
international experience



Multilingual
employees with 4
national languages
plus English



World's best
working conditions




World's highest
purchasing power




ENVIRONMENT + LIFE



World's highest
life expectancy



Most popular country
for expatriates



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