

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

NATIONAL COMMITMENT

Please provide **contact details**:

COUNTRY	Switzerland
Ministry(ies)	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI
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Give a short description of the **ministry / ministries involved**

Include information on responsibilities for vocational education and training policies, including apprenticeships.

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI within the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER is the federal government's specialised agency for national and international matters concerning education, research and innovation policy. The SERI controls an annual budget of around CHF 4 billion. The head of the SERI is State Secretary Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, wherein Deputy Director Josef Widmer carries responsibility for vocational and professional education and training.

As the Confederation's specialised agency for the ERI system, SERI has the following remit:

- Establishing a strategic overview of the Swiss education, research and innovation system and preparing federal performance and resource plans.
- Pursuing international networking activities and ensuring that Switzerland remains involved in European and global education, research and innovation efforts.
- Fostering a broad and diverse range of education opportunities, ensuring that academic and vocational/professional pathways remain fully equivalent and compatible with one another.
- Maintaining and improving the quality and appeal of vocational/professional pathways in keeping with changes taking place on the labour market.

Indicate the **focus of this commitment** – tick relevant box(es)

Supply

Quality

Image

Mobility

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) is a multi-stakeholder initiative to strengthen the supply, quality and image of apprenticeships. The commitment will be published on the EAfA webpage.

Web: ec.europa.eu/apprenticeships-alliance

Email: empl-eafa@ec.europa.eu

Give a short description the **reform(s)/initiative(s)**

Please include information on your objectives and key activities.

Application of the Swiss Strategy in International Cooperation in Vocational and Professional Education and Training (IC-VPET) / www.sbf.admin.ch/ibbz

Economic, social and political trends have an influence on the Swiss VPET system at various levels (global, European and national):

- Need for skilled workers for competence-based economies
- Economic crisis and (youth) unemployment
- Demographic change and labour migration
- Internationalisation and harmonisation of education, pressure for more academic content (including NQF VPET, Certificate and Diploma Supplements)

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
- 3) Successful positioning of Switzerland at the international level.

Strategic project on national level with a package of measures in order to enhance the financing, positioning, esteem, comparability and transparency of professional education and training PET nationally / www.sbf.admin.ch/hbb/

The measures include the following aspects:

- Increase of the funding for PET examinations, degree programmes and preparatory courses
- Improvement of tax deductions for job-related continuing education and training on individual level
- National Qualifications Framework for VPET and diploma supplements
- Refined English title translation standards for PET qualifications
- Improvement of the permeability between the different types of tertiary education
- Promotional measures to increase visibility and esteem of PET

Specific projects on national level in Initial VET including improvements for qualification processes, competence-based examination processes, matching and legal measures / www.sbf.admin.ch/match-prof

- Simplification of the validation processes and competence-based examinations
- "Match-Prof" – Improvement of matching supply and demand of VET apprenticeship positions on the labour market
- New age limit and related measures for risky work in VET

Cooperation and partnership with other participating countries and collaboration on international level

- Active and contributory participation in EU groups and committees concerning VET (ACVT, WG VET, EQF Advisory Group)
- Association to Erasmus+ National Authorities for Apprenticeships project on Policy learning and support promoting apprenticeship under EAfA.

Organisation of International VPET Congresses in Switzerland in June 2016 / www.vpet-congress.ch

- 3-day congress with focus on VPET
 - Topics & aims: The presentation of best practices & development of international cooperation in the area of dual-track VPET, bilateral exchanges between the private sector and policymakers and image building.
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Describe the **added value** of the commitment

Please include clear targets, indicators of success and timeline if possible (e.g. increased numbers, qualitative improvements, enhanced attractiveness, increased mobility, tools developed, or other).

The Swiss commitment to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships is of non-financial nature. Nevertheless, the SERI is fully committed to spreading the profound knowledge it has in multilateral and bilateral collaboration with other countries/ministries as well as in governance structures of vocational and professional education and training.

- Improved cooperation and partnership with EU member states through active participation in EU groups and committees
- Maintaining strong international relationships with priority countries according to the IC-VPET strategy
- Raise awareness of the Swiss VPET system on international level
- Increase number of mobility in VPET
- Transparency and comparability of Swiss VPET qualifications through establishment of NQF VPET, Certificate supplements and Diploma supplements

The above-mentioned initiatives all result in a better understanding for the VPET system, showcase the high quality of VPET, and increase the attractiveness and prestige of VPET and foster lifelong learning pathways for individuals through the high permeability of the system.

What **partners** will be involved in the initiative?

In Switzerland the provision of vocational and professional education and training is shouldered by the Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations. All three partners are jointly committed to the highest possible standard of quality within the Swiss VPET system. They also strive to ensure the availability of an adequate number of apprenticeships and training courses.

Guidelines for completing the template

Commitments are accepted from **EU countries, EFTA countries and EU candidate countries**, and should demonstrate concrete commitment and actions that will strengthen apprenticeships when it comes to one or more of the following aspects:

1. Increasing **supply**
2. Improving the **quality**
3. Improving the **image**
4. Enhancing **mobility**

Commitments should be in line with the [Council Declaration](#) on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships of 15 October 2013, and include concrete reform(s)/initiative(s). They should not be funding applications or project proposals, and they will not give any rights for funding. For instance, commitments could be linked to:

- a change in or a reform of the national VET and apprenticeships system;
- enhanced support to actors, including financial and non-financial aid;
- exploring the possibility of initiating a pilot for developing apprenticeship-type training in companies that have not previously engaged in this form of training;
- considering adopting or building on a successful apprenticeship model from another country/region;
- reviewing an existing apprenticeship model in order to explore how the quantity, quality, efficiency image of this training could be increased;
- measures to improve opportunities of mobility for apprentices;
- offer cooperation and partnership to other participating countries.

Benefits

By making a pledge and joining the Alliance your organisation can benefit from:

- **Networking** – A European network of apprenticeship experts
- **Learning** – Sharing of experiences and best practices
- **Tools** – Access to guidelines, practical tools and resources
- **Information** – News, reports, funding information and invitations to workshops and events
- **Visibility** – Increased visibility and publicity around your initiatives

Commitment

By making a pledge and joining the Alliance your organisation commits to:

- **Promoting** – Promote the value and benefits of apprenticeships
- **Sharing** – Share learning and practices within the Alliance network and other stakeholders
- **Informing** – Provide information on your activities, results and next steps through an annual online survey

Definition of apprenticeships:

1. Apprenticeships are part of **formal education and training programmes**;
2. Apprenticeships combine **company-based training** (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) with **school-based education** (periods of theoretical/ practical education in a school or training centre);
3. Apprenticeships **lead to a nationally recognised qualification**.

Most apprenticeships are based on a contract or formal agreement between the employer and the apprentice, with the apprentice being paid for his/her work. Sometimes they are other contractual arrangements between the employer, the VET provider and the apprentice.