

# Sales channels for various industries and how to get started



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA



EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND



SLOVENSKA  
POSLOVNA  
TOČKA

Workshop “Entering the Swiss market” organised by Spirit Slovenia and the Chamber of Commerce Switzerland – Central Europe

13.09.2022



PRODIGO



# Agenda

1. How to get started & selling to different industries
2. Where to start selling in Switzerland ?
3. Identifying appropriate sales channels
4. Finding potential customers
5. How to get noticed & feedback in sales
6. Working with an agent ?
7. Who can help ?
8. Useful links

# 1. How to get started & selling to different industries (1)

*General remark*


As Switzerland is a non-EU country:

➤ For goods:

- Do a check-up of possible tariff and non-tariff trade barriers for your product: could affect your price-setting (check My Trade Assistant on the Access2Markets site)
- *Before exporting check with your transport partner or customs agency if an EORI (Economic Operator Registration and Identification) number is needed. In order to do a Customs clearance within the European Union, it is normally mandatory.*

# 1. How to get started & selling to different industries (2)

*Example: HS code 0407 2110 eggs for consumption*


**My Trade Assistant**  
**Goods + ROSA** (Rules of Origin Self-assessment tool)

[How to use this form](#)
[Disclaimer](#)

**Product name or HS code**

**Country from**

**Country to**

**Search** >



04

04 07

04 07 21

**04 07 21 10**

04 07 90

# 1. How to get started & selling to different industries (3)

*Example: HS code 0407 2110 eggs for consumption*

**Tariffs**

latest update: 01 September 2022

[How to read the results](#)

<b>MFN</b>	<b>Most Favoured Nation rate</b> Tariff applicable to 234 countries and territories	<b>50.0 CHF/100 gross kilogram</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>EU preferential rate</b> Tariff applicable to 27 countries and territories	<b>50.0 CHF/100 gross kilogram *</b> (* Normal rate of duty.) <b>47.0 CHF/100 gross kilogram *</b> (* Rate applicable to eggs for consumption within a tariff quota of 150 tons net.)

**Notes**

**Agreement**

For current information on the preferential trade arrangements, please choose 'Procedures and Formalities'. The 'Overview' contains a paragraph on 'Preferential Treatment' that may be directly accessed from the list of contents.

Menu giving access to various types of information

Information about applicable tariffs and quotas

# 1. How to get started & selling to different industries (4)

## *General remark*

As Switzerland is a non-EU country:

- When providing services: no customs declaration at the border, so in most cases a fiscal representative must be appointed for VAT purposes. Quarterly declare to the Swiss tax administration the turnover realised in Switzerland.
- When realising a project in Switzerland by sending workers, specific rules apply.

# 1. How to get started & selling to different industries (5)

## *More sector-specific*

➤ Take into account that the differences in terms of regulations, openness, potential, etc. between the various industries can be quite large!

- Pharma

- Some drugs need to be approved by Swissmedic;
- Medical devices : need to appoint a representative on the Swiss market.
- Quite closed sector: difficult to approach



- Agricultural sector:

- Quotas on some products (protectionism)
- Organic labels are increasingly in demand



- Banking: difficult to approach



# 1. How to get started & selling to different industries (6)

*More sector-specific*

- Check if there is really a potential: does a sector or a subsector have clear needs? (e.g. Swiss IT sector). Identify and try to respond to that in your oral and written communication when you approach them.
  - How to find out? Via sector studies, annual reports, press articles.

## 2. Where to start selling in Switzerland?



## 2. Where to start selling in Switzerland? (1)

Where is the geographical potential for my products and services?

➤ For some companies, the biggest potential is where **clusters** are concentrated, like life sciences, fintech, medtech, machine industry, etc.

Life sciences

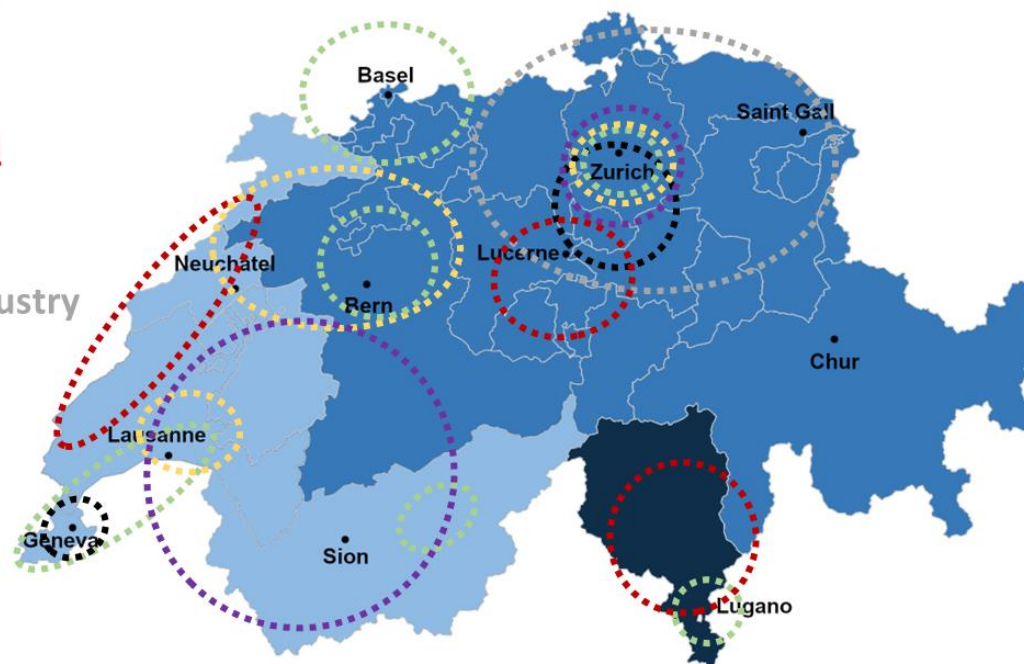
Fintech

Medtech

Mechanics &  
electronics

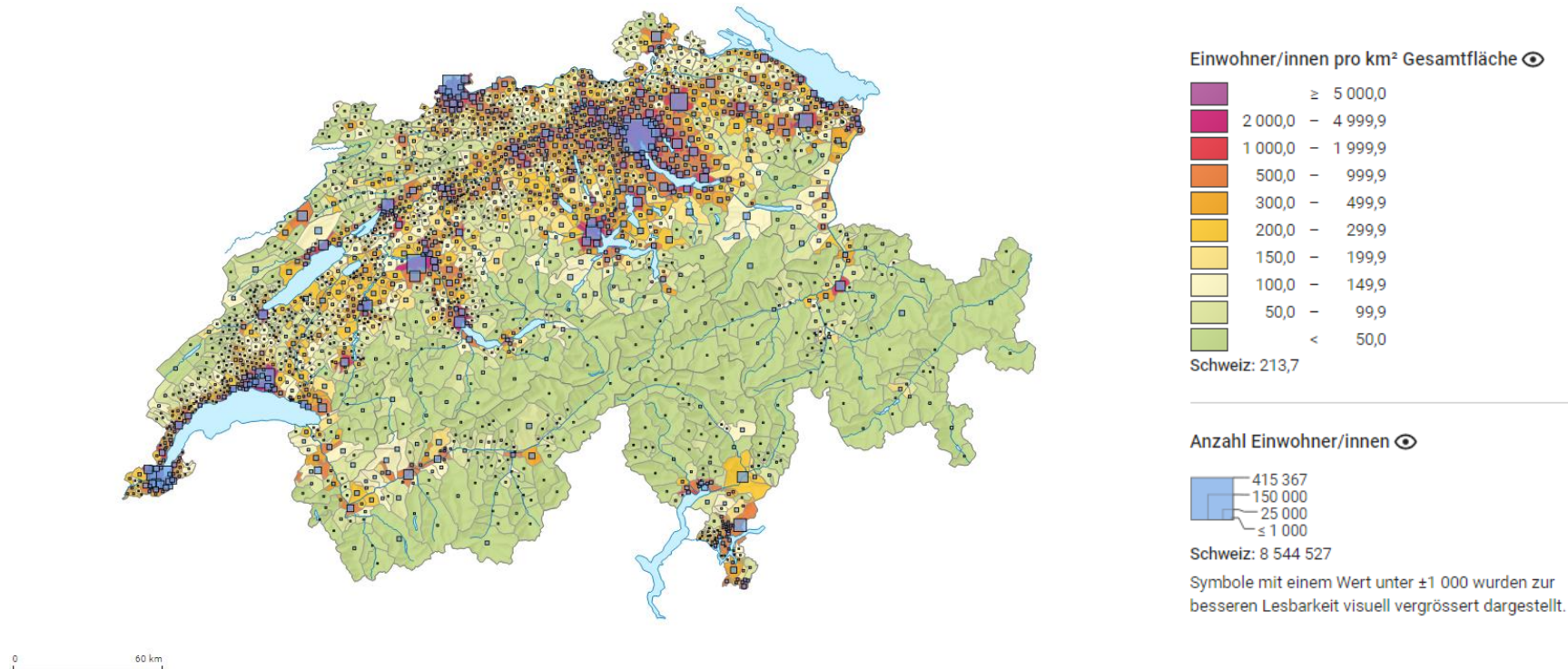
Cleantech

Machine industry



## 2. Where to start selling in Switzerland? (2)

➤ For other companies, the biggest potential is often in the most **densely populated** areas. Out of a total of 26 cantons, 63% of the Swiss population lives in 7 cantons, on the so-called “Plateau”, the diagonal line on the map.



### 3. Identifying appropriate sales channels (1)

➤ Depending on the sector, various channels are possible:

- Importers
- Distributors
- Working with an agent?



➤ How to find the right channels?

- Participate in sector-related events:
  - Specialised trade fairs
  - Networking events
- Contact trade promotion organisations (like Spirit Slovenia, Embassy, Chambers of Commerce) or business development companies

## 3. Identifying appropriate sales channels (2)

### ➤ Define the right sales profile

- Use some criteria that will allow you to do a precise selection afterwards, such as company size, number of employees, geographic and linguistic coverage, ...
- Base yourself on a successful sales profile (by using the 3 C's factors) already operational elsewhere
- Remark: take into account that sales representatives in Switzerland are quite often only focused on the language area (German, French) where they are located. Solution: appoint a separate sales rep for both regions or find a representative in a bilingual area (Bern, Fribourg, Valais)

## 4. Finding potential customers (1)

- Online sales platforms
- Via trade promotion organisations or Chambers of Commerce or specialised business development companies
- Fairs
- B2B matchmaking events, e.g. during trade missions
- Through public procurement: 3 levels:
  - federal (whole of Switzerland);
  - cantonal (26 cantons);
  - municipal (2148 municipalities).

# 4. Finding potential customers (2)

Simap.ch = the electronic platform on public procurement

The screenshot shows the Simap.ch website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Sitemap, Administration, and Simap.ch Association. Below this is a search bar and a language selector (Deutsch, Français, Italiano, English). The main content area is divided into several sections:

- User guidelines:** Includes links for 'Actual situation of the public procurement in Switzerland', 'Invitations to tender (1506)', 'Awards (563)', and 'Other publications (93)'.
- Overview according to local or curatorial origin:** Lists various Swiss cantons and regions with their respective counts, such as Confederation (597), Foreign country (18), Aargau (202), Appenzell A.Rh. (19), Berne (372), Basel-Landschaft (36), Basel-Stadt (97), Fribourg (60), Geneva (106), Glarus (11), Graubünden (46), Jura (4), Lucerne (41), Neuchâtel (30), Nidwalden (6), Obwalden (4), St.Gallen (83), Schaffhausen (4), Solothurn (26), Schwyz (11), Thurgau (30), Ticino (91), Uri (5), Vaud (184), Valais (117), and Zug (19).
- Sustainable public procurement knowledge platform (PAP):** Describes the PAP as a reference tool for issues relating to sustainable public procurement, published by the Federal Procurement Conference (FPC) and the Coordination Group for Construction and Property Services (KBOB).
- TRIAS fact sheets:** Mentions the Association of Swiss Communes (SGV), the Swiss Union of Cities (SSV), the cantons (BPUK), and the confederation (BKB and KBOB) in the process of developing a common handbook on procurement.
- Exclusion from public procurement contracts:** Links to measures related to the situation in Ukraine and employers subject to enforceable penalties.
- Agenda:** Announces the member's meeting 2023 and the Competence Centers Day.
- Training and continuing education KBB:** Links to training and continuing education resources.

Applicable for:

- Construction projects > 300 k EUR
- Products and/or services > 150 k EUR

## 4. Finding potential customers (3)

### ➤ Double advantage on following up on public procurement:

- to get a clear idea on the precise needs by Swiss public authorities on specific products, services and combinations of both;
- to participate in a public tender.

### ➤ Tendering procedures:

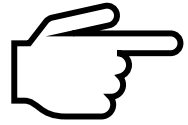
1. open procedure: public call for tenders is launched and any tenderer may submit a tender; at least 3 bidders (time limit: 40 days);
2. selective procedure: interested tenderers submit a request to take part. Only those tenderers selected (at least 3) by the awarding body may then submit a tender (time limit: 25 days to submit application + 40 days to submit tender).

### ➤ In which sectors?

- some sectors are more present than other, e.g. health, construction, engineering, energy, ...

## 5. How to get noticed & feedback in sales (1)

➤ The Swiss market is a very mature one, so be prepared!



You get only 1 chance to give a first good impression!

➤ Lower the threshold for your Swiss prospect, in order to get better noticed.  
Some tips:

- translate the documentation (website, e-flyer) in German and/or French: bigger chance that the Swiss prospect will read it in his own mother tongue;
- focus on the segment or products/services range you wish to focus on for Switzerland;
- try to identify your prospect's needs and address them;
- add some relevant references in the sector of the prospect.

## 5. How to get noticed & feedback in sales (2)

➤ If you are an SME, you have a big advantage because you can talk from equal to equal. In CH 99.7% of all companies are SMEs and count for 2/3 of all the jobs. It helps to build trust and set up a long-term partnership.



➤ Take into account the cultural differences, influenced by the 3 main languages: German, French and Italian, reflected in fields like gastronomy, fashion, decoration and literature.



## 5. How to get noticed & feedback in sales (3)

- Determine in advance at which level you want to approach a potential client, starting from bottom up (a) or bottom down (b)?
  - a: rather suited for bigger companies (people at C-level are difficult to reach);
  - b: rather suited for SMEs (management is easier to approach).
  
- When no specific name, you better call the company and ask who is in charge:
  - ask to be put through to this person:
    - if he's available, introduce yourself briefly and gauge his interest and needs. When he shows a first sign of interest, suggest to send him some documentation and discuss the follow-up;
  - if not possible, ask for his personal email address (info@ addresses rarely yield anything!) and request a feedback.

## 6. Working with an agent ?



- An agent is not required to do business in Switzerland
- Advantages:
  - direct access to potential clients
  - familiar with the Swiss business culture
  - if needed, after-sales services
- Less tendency in Switzerland to work with an agent, as there are fewer agents in the market (due to too small margins).
- It is therefore recommended to work either via an importer or directly through a distributor (either 1 for the whole of Switzerland, or 2 for the German and French speaking regions).

## 7. Who can help



1. Public organisations, like trade promotion organisations (Spirit Slovenia), the Embassy, Chambers of Commerce (like SEC Chamber)

2. Private companies, specialised in business development

1 and 2 often have complementary roles: 1 are more focusing on the organisation of business related events (trade missions, seminars, networking events, etc.), whereas 2 are more oriented towards market entry questions.

## 8. Useful links

Name	Theme	Link
<b>My Trade Assistant on the Access2Markets</b>	Information about tariffary and non tariffary measures applying to third (non-EU) countries	<a href="https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/">https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/</a>
<b>Swiss Federal Tax Administration</b>	Fiscal and VAT related questions	<a href="https://www.estv.admin.ch/estv/en/home.html">https://www.estv.admin.ch/estv/en/home.html</a>
<b>Entsendung</b>	Posting Workers Platform	<a href="https://entsendung.admin.ch/">https://entsendung.admin.ch/</a>
<b>Swiss Commercial Agents Association</b>	Swiss Agents Federation	<a href="https://www.vka.ch/?lang=en">https://www.vka.ch/?lang=en</a>
<b>Netcomm Suisse</b>	E-commerce Association	<a href="https://www.netcommsuisse.ch/">https://www.netcommsuisse.ch/</a>
<b>Swissmedic</b>	Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products	<a href="https://www.swissmedic.ch/swissmedic/en/home.html">https://www.swissmedic.ch/swissmedic/en/home.html</a>
<b>Bio Suisse</b>	Federation for Organic Food Products	<a href="https://www.bio-suisse.ch/en.html">https://www.bio-suisse.ch/en.html</a>
<b>SIMAP</b>	Electronic Platform on Public Procurement	<a href="https://www.simap.ch/">https://www.simap.ch/</a>

# Questions & Answers



Castle of Oberhofen, Thoun Lake

# Thank you for your attention and see you in Switzerland!



## **Zurich Office**

Michel Patteet  
Managing-partner

+41 (0)44 552 02 70

[www.prodigo.ch](http://www.prodigo.ch)  
[info@prodigo.ch](mailto:info@prodigo.ch)

