

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

Pilot Project Swiss VET Initiative India: Cooperation between Switzerland and India in the field of Vocational Education and Training 2009-2013; Evaluation

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

The Swiss VET Initiative India and its Pilot Project

The «Swiss Vocational Education and Training Initiative India» (SVETII, «Initiative») was launched at the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the independence of India. The Initiative is based on the Swiss-Indian bilateral friendship treaty, signed by the two countries on August 14, 1948. The Initiative reflects a specific demand of Swiss companies in India for qualified workers as well as Switzerland's interest in positioning its vocational education and training (VET) system internationally. In this perspective, the Initiative aims at transferring elements which were identified as being of systemic relevance to the Swiss vocational education and training system to India.

The SVETII Pilot Project started in 2008 as a public-private partnership initiated by the Swiss-Indian Chamber of Commerce and including various VET partners, such as the Swiss Engineering, Electrical and Metalworking Industry Association (Swissmem), the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET), the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) and four Swiss companies in India. The main aim of the Pilot Project was to proof whether a transfer of systemic elements of the Swiss VET system to India is possible («proof of concept»). Consequently, the Pilot Project was guided by three sets of benchmarks:

Targets for the Pilot Project	Systemic elements to be transferred	Objectives of the Initiative
Locations, partner companies	Strong corporate responsibility for VET	Promoting Swiss VET system abroad
Industrial Training Institutes	Combining theory and practice in a dual approach	Increasing the competitiveness of Swiss companies in India
Instructors, teachers, examiners	Competence-oriented teaching	Supporting Indian future professionals
SVETII trainees, programmes	VET partnership	Contributing to bilateral relations

Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation focusses on the Pilot Project of the Initiative, i.e. on the measures taken between 2009 and spring 2013. The evaluation assesses the elements that were transferred from the Swiss VET system to the Indian context and identifies success factors of and challenges to this «systemic transfer». Hence, the objectives of the evaluation were defined as follows:

- Assessment of the results of the Pilot Project
- Assessment of the sustainability of the Initiative
- Identification of critical factors impacting a transfer of systemic elements
- Recommendations regarding «Lessons Learnt» in view of further transfers

The evaluation was based on the analysis of documents and statistics as well as on personal interviews conducted in Switzerland as well as in India. Both methods complemented each other.

Achievements of the Pilot Project regarding Specific Targets

The achievements of the SVETII Pilot Project regarding the quantitative targets included in the funding requests can be assessed as follows:

- *Locations:* 5 locations are currently included in the Initiative: Bangalore (Karnataka), Pune and Chandrapur (Maharashtra), Anand and Vadodara (Gujarat). This is one location more than planned.
- *Partner companies:* The objective set for 2010-11, namely to expand the Pilot Project to 40 partner companies has not been met. The request for 2012-13 reduced the number to 10 (Swiss) companies and 1-3 other companies. These targets have almost been met (8 Swiss, 1 German, 1 Indo-American).
- *Industrial Training Institutes:* The number of ITIs involved has been outreached by the Pilot Project since 17 ITI are involved compared to the 4-9 foreseen.
- *Teachers, instructors, examiners:* Teachers, instructors and examiners were recruited and trained according to the need of the programmes offered.
- *SVETII trainees, programmes:* The quantitative objectives set regarding the numbers of SVETII trainees have not been achieved yet. In addition to the 2-years MSPT programme one company offers a 1-year programme. Moreover, specialised 1-year programmes (welding, electrical, machinist) have been introduced.

The quantitative targets set regarding partner companies and SVETII trainees have not been met; the other targets have been met or outreached.

Achievements regarding the Transfer of Systemic Elements of the Swiss VET System

The Initiative followed the principle of transferring knowhow and responsibilities to the fullest extent possible from Swiss VET partners to partners in India. Hence, the Initiative was established as a public-private partnership with separate project organisations in India and in Switzerland. The organisational set-up reflected the needs of the Pilot Project and offered «quick wins». According to Swiss VET tradition, the Initiative is based on a strong responsibility of local companies for the training of their employees and the training is based on a competence-based approach of training and combines both practical training of employees «on the job» and theoretical instructions in the classroom (dual approach). However, the Pilot Project has not yet been able to develop formal and sustainable ties among the VET partners including training institutes, trade-organisations, and authorities in India. SkillSonics as a private company assumes the function of bridging the gap between the partners and delivers many services that are provided by the Swiss Cantons.

The Pilot Project was able to prove that a transfer of systemic elements of the Swiss VET system to (Swiss) companies based in India is possible and that the dual approach of Swiss vocational education and training is also suitable in this context. Thus, the «proof of concept» was successful within a well-defined framework.

Achievements regarding the Objectives of the Initiative

The achievements of the SVETII Pilot Project regarding the general objectives of the Initiative can be summarised as follows:

- *Promoting the Swiss VET system abroad:* The Initiative reflects all three priorities set by Switzerland's international strategy for education, research and innovation. The Initiative promoted Swiss quality as well as the reputation of Switzerland as reliable partner in vocational education and training in India.
- *Increasing the competitiveness of Swiss companies in India:* Partner companies benefitted from the trainings provided by the Pilot Project. They expressed a clear support for the Initiative and welcomed the enhanced quality of SVETII diploma holders. Yet, a critical mass of highly skilled SVETII diploma holders working on the shop floor and also as supervisors will be needed to change working cultures and thus to increase the quality of the output and to strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of companies involved.
- *Supporting Indian future professionals:* SVETII trainees strongly benefitted from the training offered by the Pilot Project. Their technical as well as their soft skills were strengthened and their professional perspectives improved. However, up to now, this positive impact has been limited to a small number of Indian future professionals. Moreover, the missing recognition of the SVETII diploma has to be mentioned as a problem. Governmental recognition of a diploma is needed to continue education within the Indian public education system and is also a precondition for diploma holders to join public service.
- *Contributing to bilateral relations:* The Initiative is based on the Swiss-Indian bilateral friendship agreement. Even though the Initiative is a relatively small project it contributes positively to bilateral relations between Switzerland and India.

The Initiative has the potential to achieve the objectives set – provided that the quality of the offer can be sustained.

Sustainability of the Initiative

In addition to the benchmarks discussed in the previous chapter, the Initiative should be sustainable in the long run through a self-supporting public-private business model. Thus, the Initiative will depend on a strong interest and commitment of companies along with the support of public authorities. The following aspects concerning the embedment will be important for the Initiative in order to become sustainable:

- Assuring the quality of the Initiative and the overall SVETII approach
- Achieving a strong and enduring involvement of the private sector
- Sustaining the involvement of public authorities and ITIs
- Building up a robust VET partnership

Having proven that the Swiss VET approach suits Swiss companies also in the Indian context, working on the embedment of the Initiative within the VET system of India will now be decisive in order to achieve sustainability.

Recommendations Addressing Specific Issues and Stakeholders

Based on a thorough SWOT-analysis¹ of the Initiative the following recommendations addressing specific issues and stakeholders of the Initiative can be offered.

Stakeholders	Recommendations addressing specific issues and stakeholders
Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure the quality of the training infrastructure – Select/ Appoint instructors having the potential and competences required – Allow instructors and training managers to invest enough time in their new responsibilities – Select students meeting the requirements for the SVETII programme – Convince parents and potential SVETII trainees of the added value of the training – Support SVETII trainees to also apply for the Indian apprenticeship certificate – Provide SVETII diploma holders with a working environment allowing them to apply their skills
SkillSonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assure an efficient management and coordination of the Initiative in India and in Switzerland – Assure the quality of the Initiative by implementing an overall quality management system – Strengthen the training of teachers and instructors (refresher courses) – Make the technical English in the training material easier to understand – Further development of the training material – Ensure continuing adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of the industrial sector rather than of particular interests of specific companies – Ensure cooperation with ITIs and availability of suitable theory teachers – Work towards better embedment of the Initiative in the educational system of India – Strengthen the visibility of the Initiative
SFIVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assure the standards set by the Swiss VET system especially with regards to the pedagogic training of mastertrainers, instructors, teachers, and examiners – Develop competence profiles for SVETII mastertrainers, teachers, and instructors regarding subject related capabilities in terms of method and pedagogy
Swissmem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assure the standards set by the Swiss VET system especially with regards to the curriculum and the technical training of mastertrainers, instructors, teachers and examiners, and to competency profiles and certification
SERI ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work towards a full implementation of a sustainable VET partnership – Investigations and discussions regarding a «Swiss label» for vocational education and training

Lessons Learnt Regarding the Transfer of Systemic Elements of the Swiss VET System

According to the evaluation of the Pilot Project, the following lessons can be learned regarding a further promotion of the Swiss VET system abroad.

1. Every new initiative aiming at transferring elements of systemic relevance to the Swiss VET system to another country will have to be redesigned regarding its objectives, concept and implementation strategy.
2. A clear demand expressed by potential partner companies as well as by public authorities in the country of destination will be pivotal.

¹ SWOT = **S**trengths / **W**eaknesses / **O**pportunities / **T**hreats

² SERI = State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, subsequent office of the former Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET)

3. The requirements regarding the sustainability of such an initiative will have to be clearly defined.
4. A systemic approach combining the elements identified as being of key relevance for the Swiss VET system and adapting their implementation to the specific context is the promising way to a transfer of systemic elements the Swiss VET system to other countries.
5. A professional management by a strong local partner is a precondition for successfully implementing such an initiative.
6. A robust organisation set-up is decisive in view of a sustainable development of such an initiative.
7. Particular attention has to be paid to language skills.