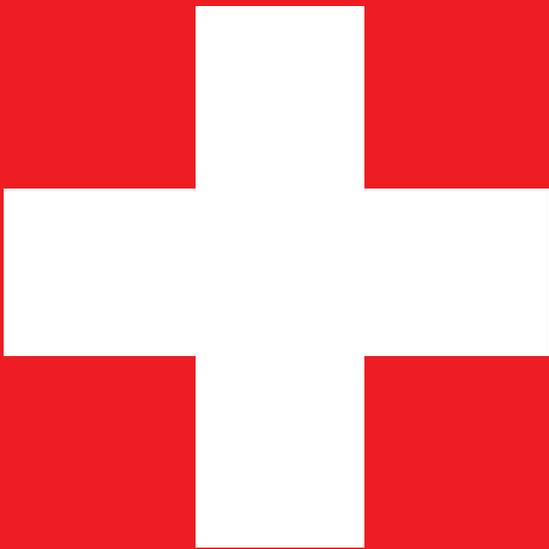




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Summary of the growth strategy for Switzerland as a tourism destination

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Growth strategy for Switzerland as a tourism destination

Swiss tourism is intended to assert its importance to the national economy in Switzerland and capture market shares within the European alpine region. By introducing a growth orientated policy the Swiss Federal Council aims to strengthen the position of Swiss tourism in the competition for locations and to ensure that in future the tourism potential can be exploited to even better effect and all in accordance with the basic principles of sustainable development.

The vision and guiding principles of the national policy on tourism portray Switzerland as an attractive and successful tourism country; it is in fact one of the most competitive tourism countries in the world. It is a destination that is unique, known throughout the world and very difficult to imitate. It also has an extremely high density of tourism attractions.

The aim is for Swiss tourism to make better use of its exceptional potential, to utilise growth in order to create jobs and increase the net value added for the regions. Swiss tourism companies contribute towards economic growth, both on the national and regional level. Switzerland's tourism offering is of the highest quality, characterised by the outstanding services provided by individual companies and excellent value for money. As a tourism destination Switzerland is a model of sustainability and Swiss tourism is continually improving its resource efficiency.

Vision and guiding principles of the policy on tourism



Core strategies and areas of action for the new policy on tourism

The policy on tourism is based on four core strategies (see box below). The aim is to create the best possible structure for the framework conditions for tourism companies through strategic issue management (Strategy 1) and a greater awareness of the inter-disciplinary tasks (Strategy 2).

The promotion of the tourism destinations is intended to help increase the attraction of the offering (Strategy 3) and to strengthen Switzerland's market presence as a tourism country (Strategy 4).

The four core strategies



Strategy 1: Identifying and tackling topics at an early stage (strategic issue management)

The environment for Swiss tourism is going through a period of rapid change. With the help of strategic issue management the Swiss federal government intends to tackle issues relating to tourism policy at an early stage and to ensure that the opportunities presenting themselves are identified and exploited early on.

■ Improvement of the bases for the policy on tourism

The statistical bases are to be improved. It is also the intention of the Swiss Federal Council to develop an exchange platform for strategic questions relating to the policy on tourism. Under the heading of «Tourism Forum Switzerland» (TFS) regular meetings are to be held between representatives of the Swiss federal government, the tourism regions and cantons as well as the tourism industry. The objective is to address and discuss issues of key importance for Switzerland as a tourism country and to improve the coordination of the endeavours of the Swiss

federal government, tourism industry, as well as the cantons and tourism regions in order to strengthen Switzerland as a tourism destination.

■ **Strengthening international cooperation**

On the international level Switzerland is championing the concept of «unfettered» travel, supporting the formulation of international standards (e.g. in tourism statistics) and the international knowledge exchange. Switzerland is concentrating its efforts on the multilateral level. It is a member of the OECD Tourism Committee as well as of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

Strategy 2: Strengthen coordination and cooperation (cross-sectional tasks)

Many areas of the policy influence the opportunities for entrepreneurial development.

■ **Embedding within the location and economic policy**

It is important for the policy on tourism to be embedded within Switzerland's location and economic policy to optimum effect. Tourism relies on price stability and benefits from a dependable fiscal policy with low taxes, a business-friendly legal framework and a reduction in the amount of red tape.

Opening up the market is one of the key aspects for improving the framework conditions. The resultant, increasingly fierce competition acts as an incentive for the market participants to be innovative. This also increases the competitiveness of the companies by reducing the outlay costs. The opening up of the Swiss labour market to foreign workers on a controlled basis is of significant importance to Swiss tourism.

■ **Coordination and cooperation in the federal policy**

The aim of the efforts with regard to coordination and cooperation is to improve the collaboration between the various policy areas. The following policy areas, amongst others, are important for tourism:

Regional development and planning

Tourism develops in those areas where the raw materials for tourism exist: Zermatt lies at the foot of the Matterhorn, Lucerne on Lake Lucerne. These natural conditions are predefined determinants for tourism development and can only be influenced to a limited extent. It is particularly important to protect these on a long-term basis.

Agriculture and food industry

High priority is accorded to the use of the existing synergy potential between agriculture and the food industry as well as tourism. The intention in particular is to make better use of the potential for agro-tourism for which a key milestone was reached with the establishment of the umbrella organisation «Agro-tourism Switzerland» on 31 May 2010.

Environmental and climate policy

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Tourism, incorporates the issues specific to tourism within the over-arching endeavours of the Swiss federal government from the climate policy aspect.

Sustainable development strategy

Taking account of the basic principles of sustainable development is one of the objectives of the Swiss federal government's tourism policy. High priority is accorded to associated projects and measures in the implementation of the growth strategy.

Strategy 3: Increase the attraction of the tourism offering

The attraction of the tourism offering must be continually improved to ensure that Switzerland remains competitive as a tourism destination. The main responsibility for this lies with the companies in the tourism industry. The Swiss federal government can facilitate this task by providing innovation, cooperation and investment incentives and supporting the companies.

■ Promotion of innovation, cooperation and knowledge building (Innotour)

The promotion of innovation and cooperation in tourism by the Swiss federal government from 2012 is to be implemented on the basis of the revised federal legislation on the promotion of innovation and cooperation in tourism (Innotour). The aim in future, with the help of knowledge building, is to give this a third point of emphasis and to transfer it into permanent law.

Innovations

The promotion of innovation remains the key direction of impetus. Innotour aims to improve the climate for innovation in the destinations, initiate innovation and consequently strengthen the competitiveness of the destinations.

Cooperation

Combining individual services to create an overall «holidays» package is the characteristic feature of tourism.

Knowledge building

Knowledge building, which encompasses the dissemination of knowledge, is Innotour's new, third point of focus. The available knowledge is becoming increasingly important for success in the international competition for tourism destinations.

■ Promotion of the hotel industry

The hotel industry is the lead industry for tourism. Guests who spend an overnight stay in a hotel also spend money locally on a wide range of additional goods and services. That's why a tourism country like Switzerland needs an attractive portfolio of competitively-priced hotels.

The hotel industry in Switzerland has to cope with high production costs. On the demand side this industry is faced with increasingly discerning customers who have high expectations and complex needs. The Swiss federal government has outsourced the task of promoting the hotel industry to the Swiss Society for Hotel Credit (SGH).

Strategy 4: Strengthen Switzerland's market presence as a tourism country

The Swiss federal government helps to promote the demand for Switzerland as a travel and tourism country. The aim is to strengthen and coordinate the marketing efforts of the companies and tourism organisations on the local, regional and cantonal level.

■ National tourism office (Switzerland Tourism)

As a tourism country Switzerland needs an impressive and unified market presence. This task is performed by the national tourism office financed by the Swiss federal government. The increasing globalisation of tourism has meant greater importance being attached to national tourism organisations. The huge expansion of the tourism market and the associated increase in the number of destinations are compelling service providers to combine their forces. That is why there is a need for cooperation in tourism between the regional and national level. Given the background of the global competition this provides the required market attention for the fragmented tourism industry in which small businesses are predominant.

Within the framework of the division of work between the local and regional tourism organisations, the main task of Switzerland Tourism (ST) is to develop the new and more distant markets. The activities of ST in the Swiss domestic market are coordinated with the partners. ST provides advisory support in the development of internationally marketable products. ST uses its own distribution channels to provide support for the local providers and to help develop new product lines.

■ **Coordination and cooperation in the promotion of the location by the Swiss federal government**

National tourism marketing is one of the key image creators for Switzerland and an important, integral part in the promotion of Switzerland as an economic location. The aim is to continue with and further strengthen the coordination and cooperation between the national tourism marketing and the other agencies responsible for advertising and promoting Switzerland as an economic location.

Location promotion for Switzerland

Great importance is attached to the cooperation between ST and the Osec Business Network Switzerland, an association established under private law, which has been responsible for the operational side of the Swiss federal government's location promotion since 1 January 2008. ST and Osec are already working successfully together in selected areas.

Export promotion for Switzerland as an agricultural location

The strengthening of the coordination between the national tourism marketing and the promotion of sales and exports for Switzerland as an agricultural location offers important synergies. The intention is to intensify the coordination of Switzerland's presence as a tourism destination on the one side and as an agricultural and farming location on the other.

National tourism marketing

The activities of ST are being coordinated with the national communication of Switzerland. The coordination and cooperation between the national tourism marketing and national communication is already being carried out today by ST and Presence Switzerland on the project level. This cooperation is to be continued.

Implementation of the Swiss federal government's policy on tourism from 2012

The growth strategy is designed on a medium to long-term basis. In order to set this out in concrete terms implementation programmes will be formulated by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO – in consultation with the tourism industry as well as the tourism cantons and regions – the first programme is to be for the period 2012 to 2015. The implementation programmes will make an important contribution towards the success of the new growth strategy for Switzerland as a tourism destination. These programmes will for example enable the policy on tourism to be periodically evaluated and the areas of focus to be adapted as required.

Work on the first implementation programme has already started. Objectives and areas of action as well as concrete projects and measures will be formulated for each of the four core strategies.

