

Swiss-Latvian Cooperation Programme

SUPPORT MEASURE AGREEMENT

between

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

and

The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Latvia

on

the Support Measure

***“Stronger work-based learning for improving vocational education and training in
Latvia”***

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, acting through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, hereinafter referred to as “SDC” and

The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Latvia as the National Coordination Unit, hereinafter referred to as the “NCU”,

Together hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”,

Referring to the Framework Agreement, including its Annex 1 (Country-Specific Set-Up), between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of Latvia concluded on 19 June, 2023, as well as to the Regulations on the implementation of the Second Swiss Contribution in the area of Cohesion issued by Switzerland and containing the general rules and procedures on the implementation of the Swiss-Latvian Cooperation Programme, hereinafter referred to as “Framework Agreement” and “Regulations”,

Considering the financing of the Support Measure “Stronger work-based learning for improving vocational education and training in Latvia” (hereinafter referred to as the “Support Measure”) in the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – Latvia),

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1 – General provisions

The legal Framework as defined in Article 2 in the Framework Agreement shall apply.

Article 2 – Objective and eligibility period

1. The Support Measure is assigned to the following thematic area: Vocational and professional education and training.
2. The objective of the Support Measure is to create a more attractive, flexible and high-quality VET (Vocational Education and Training) system for increasing Latvia's economic productivity and promoting competitiveness approach.
3. The Support Measure starts on 01.04.2025 and ends on 30.11.2029. Only expenditures incurred during this period are considered eligible as in accordance with Chapter 6 of the Regulations. Any costs that would incur after 03.12.2029 and do not comply with Chapter 6 of the Regulations to bring the Programme to completion will be ineligible and have to be borne by Latvia.

Article 3 – Obligations of the Parties

1. Switzerland agrees to grant a contribution of up to 10,000,000 Swiss francs for the implementation of the Support Measure according to the budget (Annex B).
2. The contribution of Switzerland shall cover a maximum of 85% of the total eligible expenditures of the Support Measure as mentioned in Chapter 6 of the Regulations.
3. Switzerland's contribution to the Support Measure is based:
 - a) on the final version of the Support Measure proposal 7F-11148.01, dated 04.12.2024 attached to this Support Measure Agreement (Annex A); and

- b) on the conditions put forward by Switzerland as part of the final decision to support the Support Measure and communicated to Latvia by means of the letter 7F-11148.01, dated 19.12.2024 attached (Annex D).
- 4. In accordance with Article 7 of the Framework Agreement, the responsibility of Switzerland with regard to this Support Measure is limited to providing funds in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 1 of this Support Measure Agreement.
- 5. Latvia shall ensure the timely provision of the co-financing of the total eligible expenditures of the Support Measure, as described in Article 4 paragraph 5 of the Framework Agreement, and in Article 3.1 paragraph 1 and Chapter 6 of the Regulations.
- 6. Costs for staff of the Programme Operator and Programme Component Operator who are assigned to carry out tasks for the Support Measure, comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, are eligible expenditure under this Support Measure, within the limits set in the budget in Annex B of this Support Measure Agreement and in accordance with Chapter 6 of the Regulations.

Article 4 – Implementation Responsibility

- 1. The NCU, Paying and Audit Authorities shall have the roles and responsibilities as defined in the Regulations, in particular in Articles 3.1 to 3.6, and further specified in the Country Specific Set-up.
- 2. The Programme Operator of this Support Measure is the Ministry of Education and Science. It performs tasks and obligations as defined in the Regulations, point 4.10 of the Country Specific Set-up, national legal acts and other documents examined by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia governing the implementation of the second Swiss Contribution.
- 3. The Programme Components have the following Programme Component Operators:
 - a) Programme Component 1 “Development of industry-based VET”: Programme Component Operator – State Education Development Agency.
 - b) Programme Component 2 “Development of human resources in VET (Open call)”: Programme Component Operator – will be selected through the open call.
- 4. The Support Measure shall be implemented in partnership with the following Swiss Support Measure Partners:
 - a) Programme level: Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI);
 - b) Programme level: Swiss Federal University of Vocational Education and Training (SFUVET);
 - c) Programme Component 1 “Development of industry-based VET”: Hotel und Gastro Formation Schweiz;
 - d) During the implementation of the Support Measure potential partnerships with other Swiss Support Measure Partners may be established based on mutual agreement of both sides.

Article 5 – Support Measure Steering Committee

1. The Programme Operator shall establish the Support Measure Steering Committee as defined in this Article and Article 4.11, paragraph 4, 6 and 7 of the Regulations. The Support Measure Steering Committee shall assume the following tasks:
 - a) supervise the progress of implementation and make suggestions for improvements;
 - b) approve in accordance with Article 4.12, paragraph 4 and 6 of the Regulations any modifications to the Support Measure based on the proposal by the Programme Operator.
2. The Support Measure Steering Committee shall be composed of the following members:
 - a) Programme Operator as Chair and Deputy Chair;
 - b) NCU;
 - c) Latvian Confederation of Employers;
 - d) One representative from each of the selected industry sectors;
 - e) Programme Component Operators;
 - f) Programme Operator as Secretary;
 - g) Swiss Contribution Office (with the right to veto any decision taken by the Support Measure Steering Committee in accordance with paragraph 3 c) of Article 4.11.);
 - h) Swiss Support Measure Partners upon invitation;
 - i) any other public or private sector entity from the Partner State and/or from Switzerland with a close thematic, financial or operational connection to the Support Measure could be invited as an observer by proposal of the member of the Steering Committee.
3. The following members shall have a voting right:
 - a) Programme Operator;
 - b) NCU;
 - c) The representative delegated by sectoral associations and organizations.
4. Each member of the Support Measure Steering Committee with voting right shall have one vote. The Support Measure Steering Committee shall strive for reaching consensus. Otherwise, a simple majority shall be necessary for decisions.
5. The quorum shall be constituted by 3 members of the Support Measure Steering Committee with a voting right and the representative from the Swiss Contribution Office.
6. The Programme Operator shall act as secretary and shall assume the tasks as set forth in the Article 4.11, paragraph 7 of the Regulations.
7. The Steering Committee meeting shall take place at least once a year in person, in line with the Article 4.11, paragraph 6 of the Regulations. The Steering Committee may also take decisions through remote meetings and written procedure at the initiative of the Chair and the

NCU. The voting procedure for remote meetings and for written procedure shall be set in the Steering Committee's statutes.

Article 6 – Programme Operator competences for modifications of the Support Measure

1. The Support Measure may be modified in accordance with Article 4.12 of the Regulations.
2. In accordance with Article 4.12, paragraph 4.a of the Regulations, the Programme Operator is entitled to modify Programme Components, provided the following conditions are cumulatively met:
 - a) the modification shall not contradict with the agreed outputs and outcomes of the Support Measure;
 - b) the modification must not change the duration of the Support Measure;
 - c) the financial consequences of the modification must be within the following limits:
 - i. for reallocations within one Programme Component: funds reallocated between different budget items must be less than 100 000 CHF;
 - ii. modifications may not be split with the intention of circumventing this restriction.
3. Switzerland shall be informed about the modification by means of the next Reimbursement Request under Article 8.2, paragraph 3 of the Regulations and the next Annual Support Measure Report under Article 4.13 of the Regulations.

Article 7 – Advance payments

In accordance with Article 8.3 of the Regulations, no advance payments are foreseen in this Support Measure.

Article 8 – Policy Dialogue

1. A policy dialogue is foreseen for this Support Measure.
2. The needs and objectives for the policy dialogue are described in the Support Measure Proposal.

Article 9 – Procurement

1. The procurements under this Support Measure Agreement shall be made according to Chapter 7 of the Regulations and point 4.10 of the Country Specific Set-up.
2. The initial procurement plan, including those procurements that are selected by Switzerland, in accordance with Article 7.2 of the Regulations, shall be annexed to this Support Measure Agreement (Annex C).
3. This procurement plan shall be updated following the approval of Programme Component 2 (Open call) and submitted to Switzerland for selection in accordance with Article 7.2 of the Regulations within 20 working days. The periodically updated procurement plan shall be submitted to Switzerland with the Reimbursement Request.

Article 10 – Post-completion obligations and ownership of assets

1. The post-completion obligations related to the assets (operating assets as well as equipment, installations) financed by the Swiss contribution under this Support Measure as well as their ownership are described in Article 4.15 of the Regulations.
2. In accordance with Article 4.15, paragraph 7 of the Regulations, the Parties shall decide by exchange of letter regarding the ownership of the assets provided with the Swiss Contribution for the duration of the Support Measure as soon as such ownership can be determined.

During the duration of the Support Measure, the assets shall be used in accordance with Article 4.15 paragraph 6 of the Regulations.

The receiving entity shall be contractually committed by the Programme Operator to fulfil the obligations set out in Article 4.15 paragraph 2 of the Regulations concerning equipment, installations financed by the Contribution.

3. In accordance with Article 4.15 paragraph 7, the Parties shall decide in writing after the completion of the Support Measure on the use and ownership of the assets provided with the support of the Swiss Contribution.

The receiving entity shall be contractually committed by the Programme Operator to fulfilling the obligations set out in Article 4.15 paragraph 2 of the Regulations concerning equipment, installations financed by the Contribution.

4. The disposal of the property of the results of the activities performed under this Support Measure and of the rights to any intellectual property, including copyrights; and of the revenues generated by the intellectual property rights shall be decided in writing by the Parties after the completion of the Support Measure.

Article 11 – Reimbursement Procedures, Reporting, Audits, Compliance

Reimbursement Procedures, Reporting, Auditing and compliance rules are described in the Framework Agreement and the Regulations. According to Article 8.2, paragraph 7 of the Regulations Latvia and Switzerland agree that the first report period starts on 01.04.2025 and ends on 31 December 2025.

Article 12 - Annexes

The following Annexes are governed by this Support Measure Agreement:

Annex A: Final version of the Support Measure Proposal as of 04.12.2024, including Logframe

Annex B: Budget

Annex C: Initial Procurement Plan

Annex D: Decision Letter from SDC

Article 13 - Amendments

The Support Measure may be modified according to Article 4.12 of the Regulations. In the cases as described in Article 4.12 Paragraph 8 of the Regulations, the modification of the Support Measure shall be formalised by way of an amendment to this Support Measure Agreement. This shall be done by signing the amendment by the Parties. Annexes of the Support Measure Agreement shall be amended through an exchange of letters between the Parties.

Article 14 - Suspension and Termination

The Support Measure Agreement can be suspended or terminated according to Article 4.16 of the Regulations.

Article 15 - Clause on electronic signature

The parties expressly agree that this agreement and its amendment can be validly concluded by means of an electronic signature process and then archived exclusively in electronic form. By electronic signature, the parties mean a technical process which, on the one hand, makes it possible to ensure the identity of the signatory and his membership of the signing party and, on the other hand, guarantees the integrity of the signed document.

Article 16 – Entry into force and duration

1. This Support Measure Agreement covers the duration of the Support Measure as stated in Article 2 paragraph 3.
2. This Support Measure Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the last signature of the Parties and remain in force until all obligations under it have been fulfilled.

Signed in Riga on 19 March 2025, in two original copies in the English language.

For the Swiss Agency for Development and
Cooperation



19.03.2025

Christoph Liechti
Head of the Swiss Contribution Office

For the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of
Latvia/National Coordination Unit



Diāna Rancāne
Director of EU Funds Investments
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Finance
on behalf of the
Head of the National Coordination Unit