



International cooperation

Analysis of labour market monitoring 2021

Background of the IC labour market monitoring and new concepts 2020

Since 2010, cinfo and BASS have monitored the Swiss International Cooperation (IC) labour market. The results of this monitoring provide data on job offers in the field of IC, job seekers, employers¹, and IC-relevant education and training in Switzerland. The monitoring aims to systematically obtain information about the Swiss labour market for international cooperation. The focus is on jobs that are accessible to Swiss nationals. These can be positions based in Switzerland or positions as an expatriate in a country of assignment – those employed on a local contract or unpaid volunteers are excluded.

The monitoring was revised in 2020, the latest taking into account positions with a supporting function, such as fundraising, HR and finance. Previously, the focus was on “IC professionals” whose tasks are part of the core work of IC and require relevant and specific IC training and experience. Accordingly, the following core statements are based primarily on cross-sectional data for 2020, as most of the monitoring time series can no longer be meaningfully interpreted.

¹ Employers in International Geneva are not included in the monitoring. For more information on International Geneva, see <https://www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/geneve-international/faits-et-chiffres.html>

Structure of the IC labour market

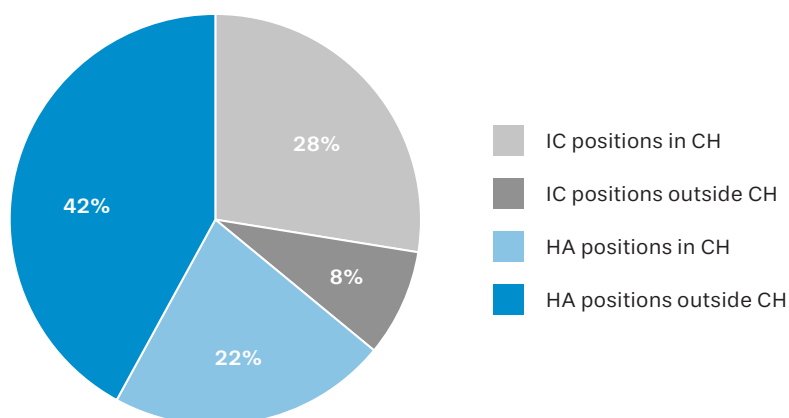
Almost **two-thirds** of the entire **IC workforce** work in the **humanitarian aid (HA) sector** (see Box 2), mainly due to the two major HA organisations, the ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières, which together account for more than half of all positions in the Swiss IC labour market². In addition, **half of all IC positions are located in Switzerland (CH), and the other half are outside of Switzerland** (see Figure 1).

² Total labour market size in 2020 excluding ICRC: 71 % DC employees, 21 % HA employees

The **most important** Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), pursued by more than 70 % of Swiss DC organisations, is “**Gender Equality**”, followed by the goals “**No Poverty**” and “**Quality Education**”, which are stated as priorities by almost 60 % of Swiss IC organisations.



Figure 1: Proportion of employees by sub-sector and job location in 2020



Source: Employer survey 2021, N=75

The **growth trend** of the entire IC sector seems to be **continuing**. Due to the abolition of the distinction between specialist and support positions, the total number of IC positions recorded has jumped from 5,019 full-time positions in 2018 to 8,329 in 2020 (+61%). Including support positions, the market size is around 12 % higher than in 2018.

Two sub-segments of IC

IC comprises two relatively clearly segmented sub-areas, humanitarian aid (HA) and development cooperation (DC).

Humanitarian aid (HA) aims to protect people in humanitarian emergencies whose very existence is threatened and to enable them to act on their own again. Usually, the reconstruction of infrastructure in devastated areas is also included in the field of humanitarian aid.

Development cooperation (DC) aims to sustainably reduce global disparities in socio-economic development and general living conditions. Close cooperation between all stakeholders is sought. Since peace and respect for human rights are important preconditions for sustainable development, (civil) peace-building activities and promoting human rights are also part of development cooperation.

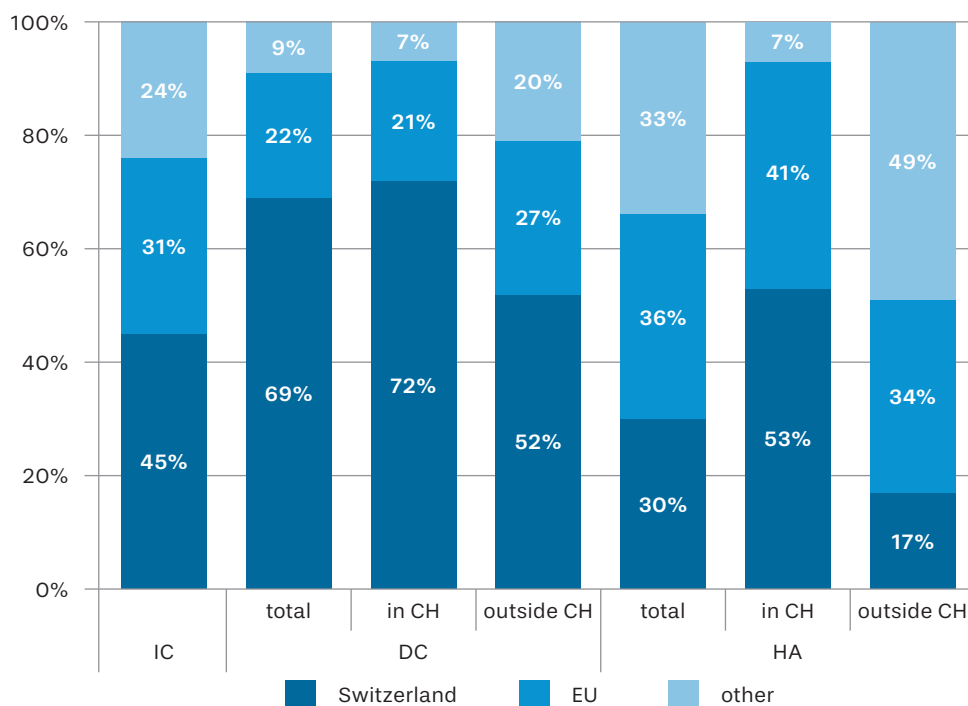
Structure of the IC workforce

The workforce structure of Swiss IC organisations in Switzerland and outside of Switzerland is significantly different. In both sub-sectors, the **proportion of women** based in Switzerland at the organisations is **significantly higher** (DC: 63 %, HA: 56 %) than for positions outside of Switzerland (DC: 43 %, HA: 40 %). Almost all positions **outside Switzerland** are **full-time** (DC: 90 %, HA: 99 %). However, of those based in Switzerland, part-time positions predominate in DC (51%), while in HA, part-time positions account for only 18%.

The **staff** of Swiss IC organisations are highly **international** (proportion of Swiss employees in 2020 total 45 %). This is particularly apparent in the HA posts, where only 17 % are filled by Swiss nationals (see [Figure 2](#)).

A working model not very widespread in Swiss IC organisations is **job and top sharing**, in which two or more employees share a full-time position with interdependent tasks and joint responsibility. Only around 1 % of employees in the IC sector work in a job sharing role. For more information, see cinfo's practical guide on job and top sharing in IC (www.cinfo.ch/publications).

Figure 2: Proportion of nationalities by sub-sector and place of employment



Source: Employer survey 2021, N=74

An excursus regarding local employees

More than half of all IC organisations surveyed not only employ people with “Swiss contracts” but also **local employees**, i.e. people who are employed on a local contract. This shows that the Swiss IC organisations have three times as many local employees as employees with a “Swiss contract”.

Steady growth in IC-specific training courses and further education

The **number of students enrolled** in IC-related courses and IC-specific further education courses has nearly tripled over the past 15 years – meanwhile, around 1,500 people complete a corresponding further education or training course each year. The strong growth in student numbers is probably due to an increase in the general interest of first-year students in IC-related courses. At the same time, the range of courses on offer has also been greatly expanded – today, around **four times as many courses are offered compared to 2005**. As in previous years, it is apparent that women make up around 60 % of students in IC-specific training courses and further education.

Job seekers

According to the survey of job seekers on the job portal cinfoPoste (www.cinfo.ch/jobs), **women and men display very similar search behaviour in terms of workload and place of work**: 75 % of women and 78 % of men are looking for full-time positions, 68 % of women and 72 % of men are looking for jobs in Switzerland and abroad or only for jobs abroad. However, **the more IC experience a person has**, the higher the proportion of job seekers only looking for **jobs in Switzerland** (26 % for newcomers, 47 % for people with 16-20 years of IC experience).

Job opportunities

In the DC and HA sub-segments, the most advertised jobs by far are in the areas of “**business support and administration**”. The proportion of advertised junior or internship positions is equally low in both. In addition, a **high level of education** is generally required. Differences between the two sub-segments can be mainly observed relating to jobs in the country of assignment. Compared to jobs advertised in DC, HA has a higher proportion of jobs based in the country of assignment. It also has proportionately more positions with a management/coordination function in the country of assignment.

Match or mismatch?

Specifically focusing on the support area newly included in the monitoring programme, it is apparent that there are some new incongruencies between supply and demand. Almost half of the jobs advertised on cinfoPoste are in “business support and administration”. In contrast, only 12 % of job seekers on cinfoPoste indicate that they are interested in “HR, finance, IT and administration” jobs. Employers find the most challenging recruitment problems in “media, communication, fundraising and marketing” and “HR, finance, IT and administration”. A similar picture emerges concerning the subject areas of the training courses: when comparing the subject areas in demand in the job advertisements (demand side) and the subject areas of the job seekers (supply side), the most significant oversupply emerges in the subject areas “International Relations, DC” (+8 percentage points) and the greatest undersupply in the subject areas “Business, Law, Commercial, General Services” (-15 percentage points) (See [Figure 3](#)).

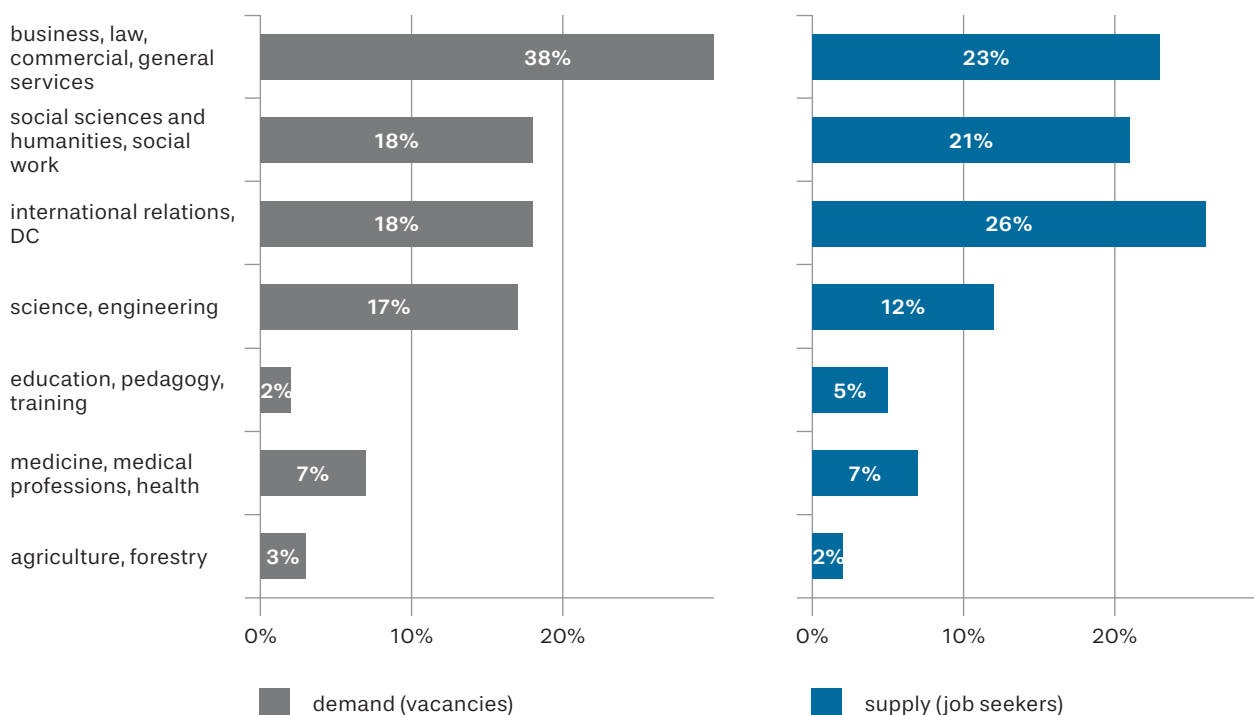
Conclusion

While this cross-sectional data cannot be directly compared to previous years, it is consistent with some of the trends observed since 2010:

- the overall size of the sector is increasing, as is the number of specific training and development opportunities offered
- profiles for certain functions remain hard to find
- women are less represented in positions abroad
- the staff of Swiss organisations is highly international

The IC sector continues to be in a state of flux in the face of emerging challenges. In the future, the issue of localisation will certainly gain importance and lead to important changes in the sector.

Figure 3: Subject areas in demand in job advertisements (demand side) and subject areas of job seekers (supply side) 2020



Source: Coding of job advertisements cinfoPoste 2020 (n=1,523) and survey of job seekers cinfoPoste 2020 (n=684)