

Work in Progress

为外资企业提供融资



For the vibrant Swiss SME sector, the Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement is still not bringing many tangible benefits after two years of operation. However, SME firms trading between the two countries are confident that in time benefits will be forthcoming.

by **Mark Andrews**

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang signed the first free trade agreement (FTA) between China and Switzerland on his official visit to the Alpine nation in May 2013, before a second signing later in Beijing in July. This marked the culmination of a process that started with a feasibility study in 2010. In July 2014 the agreement came into effect and covers a far greater area than just trade, encompassing protection of intellectual property, parallel agreements on employment and labour, investment promotion, technical cooperation and environmental protection. As a result of the agreement Zurich has joined a select group of financial cities as a trading hub for the Renminbi.

Free trade agreements are an extension of Switzerland's sonderfall special case approach to politics and foreign policy. "The objective (of FTAs) is to provide Swiss companies with an unobstructed, stable and non-discriminatory market access in these countries compared to their main competitors" according to the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the Chinese agreement is one of a total of 28 with areas outside the EU. Under the agreement 99.7% of Chinese exports and 84.2% of Swiss goods were meant to receive zero tariffs. There are also further provisions for tax cuts for certain products.

Size matters

Still, two years after the signing, the agreement has seemed to favour larger companies. "Big export companies which have better know-how and more experience with the China market probably benefit more from this agreement, whereas smaller export companies are still facing some challenges to benefit from the reduced customs duties for exporting into the China markets" says Michael Indlekofer, Director Marketing & Sales Switzerland, DHL Global Forwarding, a world leader in the sector. However, Switzerland is known for its small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which are often family owned. It seems that so far these companies are struggling to gain much economic advantage two years on from FTA's implementation.

"In the beginning we thought it would help us a lot. Our company owner, Peter

中瑞自由贸易协定在执行两年后仍未对生机勃勃的瑞士中小企业带来任何切实的利益，尽管如此，中小企业仍对自由贸易协定未来所能带来的利益充满信心。

作者：**Mark Andrews**

2013年5月，中国国家总理李克强在正式访问瑞士期间签署了第一份自由贸易协定书，并于当年7月在北京签署了第二份协定书，标志着从2010年的可行性研究开始的谈判过程的完成。2014年7月，协定开始执行，所涉及的领域并不局限于贸易，还包括知识产权保护、就业和劳动平行协议、投资促进、技术合作 and 环境保护等方面。协定也推动了苏黎世成为几大人民币离岸交易中心之一。

自由贸易协定是瑞士政治与外交政策的特例。瑞士联邦政府经济事务司表示，“自由贸易协定的目标是为瑞士企业提供一个相比其他主要竞争对手而言进入这些国家的无阻碍的、稳定的和无歧视的市场准入”，与中国的协定是欧盟之外的28个协定中的一个。根据协定，99.7%的中国出口商品和84.2%的瑞士商品都将获得零关税的待遇，此外，协定还针对某些商品制定了进一步降低关税的条款。

规模很重要

在协定签署两年后，似乎大型企业从中受益更大。“那些拥有较强的技术和中国市场经验的大型出口企业更容易从协定中受益，而那些小型企业在向中国市场出口时如想从中受益仍面对一些挑战，”敦豪全球货运物流公司瑞士市场与销售部部长 Michael Indlekofer 表示。然而，瑞士以中小企业尤其是家族企业为主。在自由贸易协定正式执行两年后，这些企业仍在努力寻找从中获益的机会。

“最开始我们以为会带来很大的利益，公司所有人 Peter Daetwyler 甚至还出席了在中国的签字仪式。可是拿现状与我们最初的设想相比较的话，就会发现

Daetwyler, even attended the signing ceremony in China. When we compare today to our initial thinking, in most cases it is not possible for us to benefit from the FTA due to the administrative paperwork, and requests from Chinese customs” says Thomas Liechti, Commercial Operations Manager, MDC Daetwyler (China). Daetwyler Group consists of two divisions, which means it has two core businesses. The first, SwissTec, is the global leader for high-quality doctor blades for every printing application (the doctor blade is necessary to remove the excess ink from a printing cylinder); and the second, the Industries division, which manages the Faessler brand of high-precision gear honing machines, mainly used in the automotive industry.

Local customs

For smaller Swiss businesses, Chinese customs regulations seem to still be a major sticking point. “Leister has not benefited from the FTA yet. The main reason lies in difficulties during China Customs import clearance. Specifically, different HS codes assigned by both shipper and consignee cause the stoppage of the FTA customs application. For example, Leister Switzerland produces a product called “LHS 41S PREMIUM”, and assigns a Swiss HS code, and delivers to nearly 100 countries using the Swiss HS Code. But when we carried out China customs importation, customs officers rejected this product’s Swiss HS Code, and insisted on a Chinese HS Code” says Max Zhou, general manager of Leister’s China operations. Leister specialises in plastic welding sold mainly to customers in civil engineering, plastic fabrication, plastic roofer welding, plastic pipeline welding and shrinking tube implementation. Yet the HS (harmonized system) codes are intended to be an internationally recognised system to classify traded products.

In theory the single shipping document should make it much easier for the importers and exporters to move goods. However, in the wording of the FTA it talks about seaport to seaport, but Switzerland is landlocked and does not have a seaport. As part of the documents it is necessary to prove that no one had access to the goods during the transportation chain. For SMEs using sea freight this is a problem as they often do not have the trade volume to fill a whole container and also must pass through a third country. “Currently the benefit is when we do air freight, but as that is very expensive so is not the solution for us,” says Liechti.

Many Swiss SMEs now have manufacturing facilities in China, but many of these are still dependent on components or raw materials imported from Switzerland. Bobst is a Swiss manufacturer of printing machines used by packaging manufacturers. While producing some models in China they still import around 40% of their products plus components such as rollers. “For importing products manufactured in Switzerland (with Certificate of Origin), we pay less duty certainly, but when compared to the bulk of our business, it’s not a big benefit,” says Mike Wang business controller for China of Bobst.

Lack of awareness

Another problem is that a lot of Swiss businesses are still not fully aware about what the agreement really means for them, and the same holds for their local service providers. “What I know is that it is still very confusing for people, including for the agent I am using for the importation of my Swiss wines” says Philippe Huser owner of NAPA restaurant, who as part of his business imports wine from countries including Switzerland. Among Chinese companies only the ones that deal a lot with the Swiss market are really aware of the agreement. This is partly because the Swiss FTA is quite small compared to other trade agreements that China has subsequently set up.



Thomas Liechti, MDC Daetwyler (China)
Thomas Liechti, MDC Daetwyler (中国)

我们很难从自由贸易协定中获益，有行政审批文件方面的原因，也有中国海关要求方面的原因，” MDC Daetwyler (中国) 商业运营经理 Thomas Liechti 说。Daetwyler 集团的两个业务部组成了公司的两大核心业务。一个称为 SwissTec，是全球领先的高品质印刷机刀片（刀片用于刮除印刷滚筒中流出的多余墨汁）供应商；另一个称为 Industries，主要经营应用于汽车行业的 Faessler 品牌高精密切齿机。

当地海关

对于较小的瑞士企业来说，中国海关监管仍是一个主要的症结所在。“Leister 尚未从自由贸易协定中受益，主要原因是中国海关清关手续复杂，尤其是承运商和收货人使用不同的 HS 编码导致无法享受自由贸易协定的优惠。举个例子来说，Leister 在瑞士生产一款名为 ‘LHS 41S PREMIUM’ 的产品，在运往近 100 个国家的过程中都会使用瑞士 HS 编码，但是在中国海关通关时，海关人员不接受该产品的瑞士 HS 编码，并坚持要求提供中国 HS 编码，” Leister 中国公司总经理 Max Zhou 表示。Leister 的主营业务是塑性焊接，客户主要分布在土木工程、塑料制造、塑料盖焊接、塑料管道焊接和收缩管应用等领域。目前 HS（协调制度）编码是在国际范围内通用的贸易商品分类体系。

理论上来说，单一的运输文件理应使进口商和出口商更便捷的交付货物。然而，在自由贸易协定的措辞中谈的是海港对海港，而瑞士是个内陆国家，没有海港。另外，作为通关文件的一部分，企业须证明在运输过程中货物保持原封不动。对于中小企业来说使用海运存在问题，因为它们的贸易量往往不足以装满一整个集装箱，而且在运输过程中必定要经过第三国。“目前的优惠主要在空运方面，但是由于空运成本过高，这明显不是解决我们所面对问题的办法，” Liechti 称。

目前，许多瑞士中小企业都在中国设立了生产工厂，但许多企业仍需从瑞士进口零部件或原材料。Bobst 是家制造包装印刷设备的瑞士生产商，虽然某些型号实现了中国生产，但是仍有约 40% 的产品和某些零部件如滚筒等需要进口。“我们在进口瑞士生产的商品（要求原产地证书）时交的关税确实少了，

但与我们的整体业务量相比，这种优惠的力度并不大，” Bobst 中国业务主管 Mike Wang 表示。

意识缺乏

另一个问题是许多瑞士企业仍然缺乏协定对它们而言有何意义的意识，它们的本土服务供应商也有着同样的问题。“据我所知，许多人并不完全理解协定，包括我们公司的瑞士红酒进口商在内，” NAPA 餐厅老板 Philippe Huser 说，从包括瑞士在内的国家进口红酒是其餐厅业务的一部分。对于中国企业来说，只有那些经常与瑞士市场打交道的企业才了解该协定，部分原因是瑞士贸易协定相比中国达成的其他贸

Also the complexities of the agreement disadvantage those firms in the SME sector. “The agreement does need to be adjusted in a way that is also more suitable for the requirements of SMEs, because these companies are a main part of the Swiss economy and contribute to the innovation of Swiss industry and manufacturing sector,” says Liechti. Currently the agreement is too complicated for smaller companies to benefit. They neither have the spare employees to handle every single detail required, or the financial resources to engage a separate trading specialist. Typically, brokers charge three to five percent of the goods value which currently wipes out any real benefit gained from tariff reductions. “There are just too many documents and bureaucratic requirements we need to follow such as certificates of origin and packaging,” says Wang from Bobst.

“We have a little roundtable of Swiss companies that meets once or twice a month,” says Liechti. “Everyone says the FTA is difficult for them and at the end there is no big financial profit in it at the moment and, as we don’t have the labour or financial resources at this time, we’ve stopped investing more time in it.”

Intangible benefits

Despite these issues, most companies do see benefits that have come from the Agreement, if not in direct financial terms. One intangible benefit is the positive PR that the agreement has generated about the relationship between the two countries. “Currently there is definitely a positive image factor as a result, although it’s not really an economic benefit,” says Liechti. “The Chinese and Swiss governments are always speaking about the FTA, so there is a lot of good communication in the news.” Also the fact that it was the first such agreement between a continental European country and China (although an FTA between China and Iceland did come into effect a year earlier) should give Swiss companies a distinct first mover advantage over EU competitors. Companies such as Leister, which may receive no direct financial benefit yet from the FTA, still believe that it does give Swiss companies a helping hand.

Optimistic outlook

In fact, among Swiss SME there still remains a lot of optimism about the Agreement delivering in the long term. Liechti says that it has taken longer than he would have hoped for, but he is still confident that within the next two years at least 80% of the FTA will be working effectively. Similarly, Huser is optimistic based on his experience with FTAs with other wine-producing countries. “If the tax reduction is fully in place it will certainly impact positively the importation of Swiss wines like it does for New Zealand or Chilean wines, for example, that enjoy about 15-18% import tax reduction,” he says. Liechti also remains optimistic that the cost savings will come in the longer term. “When we look at the reductions or benefits for different kinds of products in other markets, there is always a certain period of time elapses they reduce taxes and duties step-by-step and in general it takes about five years before we would get a full benefit,” he says. ○



Max Zhou, Leister China
Max Zhou, Leister 中国

易协定而言规模较小。

另外，协定复杂的条款也使中小企业处于劣势。“应该对协定进行调整，使它更符合中小企业的要求，因为这些企业是瑞士经济的主要组成部分，是它们促进了瑞士产业和制造业的创新，” Liechti 称。目前，协定条款过于复杂，使得小企业无从受益。它们既没有多余的员工来处理每个具体的要求，也没有资金来聘用专门的贸易专员。一般来说，贸易商的费用是商品价值的 3%-5%，这基本上抹掉了企业从关税减让中获得的实际利益。“我们需要准备的文件和遵守的

要求太多了，比如原产地证书和包装等，” Bobst 的 Mike Wang 表示。

“每个月瑞士企业的代表召开一次或是两次圆桌会议，” Liechti 说，“大家普遍反映自由贸易协定要求太多，以至于目前难以从中获得较大的经济利益，而且由于这次我们没有人力或财力继续投入其中，以后就更不愿意在这方面花时间。”

无形利益

虽然困难重重，多数企业还是感受到了协定带来的利益，即便不是经济利益。另外，协定也促进了两国间关系的积极发展。“协定确实带来了积极的形象影响，尽管不是经济利益，” Liechti 说，“中瑞两国政府常常谈到自由贸易协定，因此在新闻报道中的曝光率也很高。”另外，作为首个与中国达成该协定的欧洲大陆国家（中国与冰岛间的自由贸易协定一年前开始执行），瑞士企业将获得优于其他欧盟企业的明显的先发优势。像 Leister 这样的企业虽未能从自由贸易协定中获得直接的经济利益，仍表示它推动了瑞士企业的发展。

前景乐观

事实上，瑞士中小企业对协定长期所能带来的利益仍充满信心。Liechti 表示虽然时间上比他之前的预期要长，但是他仍然认为在未来两年里自由贸易协定中 80% 的条款都将能有有效的运作。同样，Huser 与其他红酒生产国在执行自由贸易协定中的经验令他到中瑞自由贸易协定保持乐观。“如果关税减让完全执行，这将对瑞士红酒进口带来十分积极的影响，享受与新西兰或智利红酒相同的待遇，享受 15%-18% 的关税减让，”他说。Liechti 也表示长期来看协定必将带来成本节约。“从其他市场的不同商品的关税减让或优惠来看，税收和关税减让都是逐步实现的，有一定的时间递延，但总的来说，大概需要五年的时间企业就能得到完全的利益，”他说。○

Sources quoted in the article

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