

SWITZERLAND

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Switzerland is a parliamentary federal state composed of 26 cantons. It is further divided into 2148 municipalities.¹



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).²

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The 2018 VNR indicates that “in Switzerland, sustainable development is an objective enshrined in the Federal Constitution. [...] Government bodies at all levels have the task of seeking a durable and balanced relationship between nature’s capacity to regenerate and the demands placed on it”. Switzerland’s **2030 Sustainable Development Strategy (2030 SDS)** adopted in 2021 is aligned with SDGs. It defines specific national goals and strategic directions to enable the Swiss Confederation to achieve the SDGs. **Strategies, action plans and measures in all areas of policy and at all levels** have been adopted to implement the national strategy and integrate the 2030 Agenda (e.g., the 2021-2023 Action Plan for the 2030 SDS, the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23, the International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24, etc.).

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The national coordination for SDG implementation relies on the **2030 Agenda Steering Committee**. It is composed of the most relevant federal government agencies from all departments, plus the Federal Chancellor, and it fulfils a strategic, cross-sectoral role and fosters the integration of the SDGs in sectoral policies. The **2030 Agenda Advisory Group** is another body that articulates the federal government and non-governmental sustainable development actors. It consists of representatives from the private sector, the scientific community and civil society. It provides expertise and encourages dialogue between different groups of actors. Moreover, Switzerland conducts a periodical “**2030 Dialogue on Sustainable Development**” and an annual **Sustainable Development Forum** which gathers representatives from regions, cities and municipalities.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

An inter-ministerial working group drafted the 2016 VNR and the report was then discussed in a participatory approach. All VNR processes used quantitative data provided by the **comprehensive sustainable development monitoring system (MONET)**. 2018 and 2022 VNR processes relied on comprehensive baseline assessments evaluating the progress and challenges attached to all of the SDGs and targets, and recording action taken and activities planned. Those assessments were produced in a collaborative process involving all government departments and the Federal Chancellery. The process leading to the 2018-2022 baseline assessment was digitized using the **SDGital2030 IT tool**. The cantons, cities and municipalities, as well as organizations from the private sector and scientific communities and civil society, were given access to SDGital2030 to share information. 93 organizations and administrations, including 14 cantons and 26 municipalities responded.

1.3 MONITORING

Upon the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the Federal Council commissioned a **comprehensive baseline assessment** on the status of implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Switzerland. As mentioned above, a baseline assessment was also conducted between 2018 and 2022 to evaluate the progress attached to all of the SDGs and targets. In order to measure contributions to the SDGs, Switzerland uses its **MONET system** in place since 2003, which relies on approximately 75 regularly updated indicators.

1. See: <https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/>

2. See: https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/10617Full%20Report%20HLPF%202016_Switzerland_EN%20fin.pdf (2016);
https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/20152Country_Report_Switzerland_2018_web.pdf (2018);
https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/LB_2022_EN_090620_Link_final.pdf (2022)

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

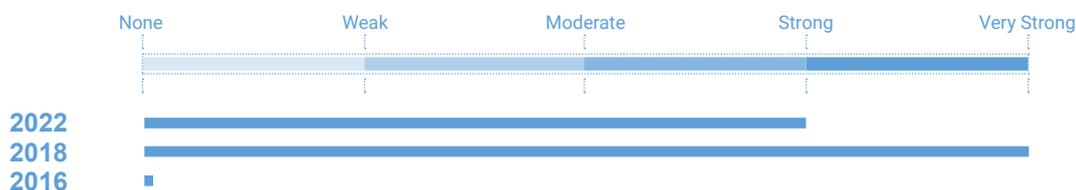
Switzerland is committed to integrating sustainable development principles into all levels of government, including the cantons and municipalities, to create and increase ownership. Most of the cantons (e.g., Ticino, Fribourg, Geneva, Valais and Vaud) and cities (e.g., Bern, Fribourg, Lausanne, Luzern, Yverdon-les-Bains, Uster and Zurich) have integrated the SDGs into their plans or developed their own strategies. Both the [Union of Swiss Towns](#) and the [Association of Swiss Municipalities](#) implement actions to contribute to the 2030 Agenda.³

Cantons have established coordination mechanisms to support SDG localization initiatives and serve as the first point of contact for the municipalities. The [Network on Sustainable Development](#) supports joint coordination efforts between the federal government and the cantons on sustainable development matters. Municipalities are less involved in federal coordination mechanisms. Finally, LRGs participate in the [annual Sustainable Development Forum](#).

Cantons participated in the 2018 VNR at consultative level. In 2022, both tiers of subnational governments contributed to the VNR process via the [SDGital2030 platform](#). 14 cantons and 26 municipalities shared information through this platform. The Cantonal Sustainable Development Network facilitates cantons' involvement. Nevertheless, all cities and municipalities have not clearly engaged in the reporting process. The city of Geneva, for example, stated that it did not participate and only received the VNR after it was finalized.⁴

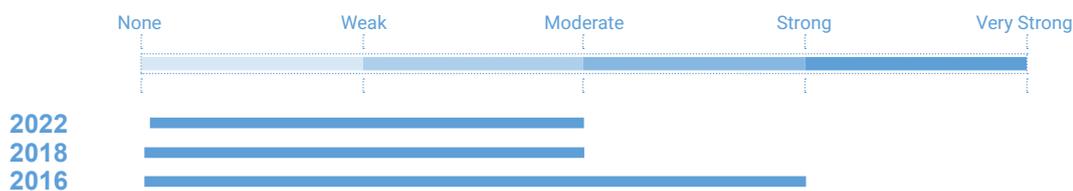
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: Local governments were consulted through the SDGital2030ITTool.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: Cantons and municipalities participate in the annual Sustainable Development Forum. Cantons are more involved in national coordination mechanisms via their Network on Sustainable Development.

This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

The cantons and municipalities are mentioned more frequently in the 2022 VNR than in the two previous ones. In the three VNRs, there are more references to the cantons than to the municipalities. Switzerland's 2022 VNR includes one [section on collaboration with subnational governments](#) (see VNR, 2022, p. 9). It highlights the fact that cantons have a special part to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as they exercise primary responsibility for some key policy areas, such as health and education, and that successful implementation demands greater cooperation both horizontally between the cantons and vertically between the cantons and the federal government.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The cantons created a [Network on Sustainable Development](#).

► The canton of [Vaud](#) adopted its own 2030 Agenda which establishes sustainable development as a shared central reference point that affects all of the canton's public policies.

3. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

4. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

▶ The city of **Bern** adopted its RAN2030 Sustainable Development Framework Strategy geared to the 2030 Agenda and designed to do as much as possible towards achieving its goals.

▶ The city of **Geneva** promotes active ageing and solidarity between generations through different intergenerational projects. The Atelier-Vie Kindergarten, which opened in 2000, is the first intergenerational kindergarten in Geneva. In this space, children can discover the life cycle through activities such as reading, storytelling, theater, poetry and dance, with an educational team that includes volunteer older people from retirement homes, senior citizen associations and cultural centers. The city also chairs a network, Coord 21, with all the municipalities of the Romandy and Ticino region, and developed a guide for SDG localization in cantons and municipalities.⁵

▶ The city of Lugano conducts projects and initiatives to identify shared solutions to the challenges facing our planet. The aim of the “Lugano sostenibile” project, for example, is to bring the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs to life for the public with an inclusive and interactive approach.

2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

Not applicable.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

No reference.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: Recent reforms are making clear progress towards further decentralization in Switzerland. The 2008 federalism reform, recently amended in 2020, improved the fiscal equalization system, clarified the assignment of responsibilities and provided incentives for the formalization of intercantonal cooperation agreements. In 2017, the tripartite conference (between the Confederation, cantons, cities and municipalities) was extended to rural areas and mountainous regions.⁶

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

In 2021, Switzerland adopted its Gender Equality Strategy 2030. It encourages both men and women to participate at all levels of decision-making in social, economic, political and public life. But there is no information on the representation of women in local authorities in the 2022 VNR.

3.2 COVID 19

In Switzerland, in response to the crisis, subsidies in the form of capital transfers from the Confederation to the cantons and from the cantons to municipalities, increased, thus maintaining subnational debt at its pre-crisis level.⁷

5. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

6. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

7. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

4. SDG INDICATORS⁸

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		32 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	100 (2020)
	Rural	99 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		-
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		99.5 (2015, Zurich)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		10.1 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		50 (2017)

8. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>