



Swiss Federal Council

Sustainable Development Strategy 2002

March 2002

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Introduction

2002 is the year that marks the «Rio +10» anniversary. This summer, the World Summit on Sustainable Development is to be held in Johannesburg as a follow-up event to the UN Conference on Environment and Development that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. For this reason, the Federal Council is issuing a revised strategy for the sustainable development of Switzerland.

In March 1993, following the Rio Conference, the Federal Council established a directorate-level interdepartmental committee, known as IDARio, to oversee the follow-up activities. It includes representatives from all the federal agencies whose remit is related to sustainable development. This committee was also responsible for steering work on the present strategy. Within the IDARio framework, an initial strategy – «Sustainable Development in Switzerland» – was developed in connection with «Rio +5» and approved by the Federal Council in 1997. The «Sustainable Development Strategy 2002» is based on – but refines and extends – the policy formulated in 1997. The new strategy adopts a more wide-ranging approach and aims to integrate the principles of sustainable development across the board, in every sector of policy. In order to buttress this integrated approach, the new Federal Constitution calls for sustainable development to be duly considered in all laws, programmes, concepts and projects.

The Federal Council's sustainable development policy is based on a broad conception of the process. Sustainable development is perceived as a political agenda which is concerned with ensuring that development is viable in the long term, addressing environmental, economic and social challenges equally. The present strategy thus faces challenges from a broad range of fields: industry and competitiveness, financial policy, research, technology and education, social cohesion, health, environment and natural resources, spatial planning, mobility and international relations.

The cornerstones of the 2002 strategy are as follows:

- Emphasis on an equilibrium between the three pillars of sustainable development (economy, society, environment).
- A fundamentally wide-ranging strategy, i.e. not confined to a small number of policy areas.
- Practical and results-oriented measures, in the sense of a specific plan of action.
- Involvement of cantons, communes, civil society and the private sector.

In its «Sustainable Development Strategy 2002», which is based on the groundwork laid by the IDARio, the Federal Council has approved ten action areas, with a total of 22 measures.

The Federal Council has also defined the framework and responsibilities for implementation of the strategy. The strategy is designed to cover a period of six years, up until the end of the 2004–2007 legislative period. A schedule is specified for the implementation of each individual measure. Regular reporting is to be guaranteed by systems of monitoring and evaluation to review the success of the action taken. In addition, successful implementation is to be promoted through partnership and joint communication efforts with the cantonal and communal authorities, civil society and the private sector.

1 Background

1.1 Mandate

In March 1993, following the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Federal Council established a directorate-level interdepartmental committee, known as IDARio, to oversee follow-up activities. It includes representatives from federal agencies whose remit is related to sustainable development.

Within the IDARio framework, an initial strategy was developed – «Sustainable Development Strategy in Switzerland» – which was approved by the Federal Council in 1997, i.e. five years after the Rio Conference. As the Federal Council made clear in its introduction to the 1997 strategy, this was not conceived as a comprehensive instrument, but instead concentrated on «a small number of practicable measures, designed to reinforce and complement the activities already initiated in the course of the 1995–1999 legislative period»¹.

On 11 December 2000, in connection with an interim report on the status of implementation of the strategy², the Federal Council mandated the Administration to undertake a revision: «In due course, the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) [in conjunction with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)] is to submit to the Federal Council a proposal containing new foundations for further development of the Federal Council's strategy.» The specified deadline was 2002. Refinement of the sustainable development strategy is also mentioned in the report on legislative planning for 1999–2003³.

In 2002, Switzerland, along with the rest of the world, is looking back on the decade that has elapsed since the Rio Conference. This summer, as a follow-up to the 1992 event, the World Summit on Sustainable Development is to be held in Johannesburg (South Africa). Against this background and for this reason, the Federal Council is issuing a revised sustainable development strategy, in the form of the present report.

The «Sustainable Development Strategy 2002» takes the 1997 strategy as its point of departure. It is, however, more comprehensive than its deliberately selective predecessor. It aims to promote the integration of the principles of sustainable development across the board, in all sectors of policy. Underpinning this aim is the completely revised Federal Constitution of 1999, which elevates sustainable development to the status of a national goal.

In its decree of 11 December 2000, the Federal Council instructed the federal agencies to continue their efforts to implement the measures specified in the 1997 strategy in accordance with the conclusions of the interim report. What this means in terms of their continued inclusion in the 2002 strategy is indicated in the table given in the Appendix.



From Rio to Johannesburg: sustainable development spanning two World Summits.

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¹ Report dated 9 April 1997 «Sustainable Development Strategy in Switzerland», BBl 1997 III 1045

² Interim report dated 11 December 2000 «Overview of the status of implementation of the strategy «Sustainable Development Switzerland».

³ Report dated 1 March 2000 on planning for the 1999–2003 legislative period, BBl 2000 2276; cf. «Other business» in the environment and infrastructure section.

1.2 New Federal Constitution

The adoption of the new Federal Constitution in 1999 represented a landmark for sustainable development in the 1990s. In this instrument, sustainable development is enshrined at several points.

The Preamble to the new Constitution refers, for example, to the responsibility of the Swiss people and the cantons towards future generations.

Article 2 defines the overarching purpose of the Confederation. This includes the promotion of common welfare, sustainable development, inner cohesion and cultural diversity (Para. 2), as well as efforts to safeguard the long-term conservation of natural resources and to promote a peaceful and just international order (Para. 4). The promotion of sustainable development is thus acknowledged to be one of the national objectives of the Confederation.

According to Article 73 (Sustainability), which imposes a binding requirement for action on all levels of government, the Confederation and the cantons are to «strive to establish a durable equilibrium between nature and its capacity for renewal, on the one hand, and its use by humans, on the other».

In Article 54, key elements of sustainable development are included in the list of foreign policy goals: the safeguarding of welfare, efforts to alleviate need and poverty in the world, respect for human rights, the promotion of democracy, the peaceful coexistence of nations, and the conservation of natural resources.

The importance attached to sustainable development in the new Federal Constitution represents a substantial and significant change compared with the former Constitution.

1.3 International context

UN

At the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, 27 universally valid principles designed to guide international efforts towards sustainable development were adopted by the participating governments (Rio Declaration). Another major achievement of the Conference was the fact that the governments concerned also agreed on a concrete action plan for the twenty-first century – Agenda 21. This action plan for sustainable development called on all the parties – including Switzerland – to develop national strategies. At a Special Session held in 1997, the UN General Assembly resolved that these strategies should be determined no later than 2002. In the UN Millennium Summit Declaration, the heads of State and government reaffirmed their support for the Agenda 21 programme.

OECD

In the judgement of the OECD, the measures adopted thus far to achieve the goals of sustainable development are inadequate. Although there has been progress in some areas, the overall assessment made by the OECD is worrying: with regard to the management and conservation of water and soil resources and of biodiversity, the situation has deteriorated significantly. Extreme poverty still blights the lives of a quarter of the population in developing countries. It may also be assumed that population growth will accelerate further and that disease will become more widespread. Ongoing poverty and inequality raise serious issues of sustainability – of peace and security, of equity

and solidarity, and of the environment – at the global, national and regional levels.⁴

In view of this situation, the OECD produced a document designed to provide practical guidance for countries seeking to develop sustainable development strategies⁵. This document stresses the importance of a participatory approach and the need to link the national and local levels. It includes special recommendations for addressing climate change and the management of natural resources, since the risk of unsustainable development appears to be particularly great in these areas.

European Union

At its summit in Gothenburg in June 2001, the European Council adopted a sustainable development strategy of its own. According to this declaration of intent, the economic, social and environmental impacts of all policies are to be assessed in a coordinated way and taken into account in decision-making processes. In order to improve the political coordination of these efforts, the European Council calls on Member States to develop and implement their own national strategies. The Council's strategy deliberately focuses on selected areas that face severe threats. In addition to the decisions already taken in the areas of poverty and social exclusion and the aging population⁶, objectives and measures were defined for four main areas:

- Combating climate change and increasing the use of clean energy, specifically with the aim of raising the proportion of electricity produced from renewable sources to 22% of total power consumption in the EU.
- Guaranteeing environmentally sound mobility and appropriate modes of transport by prioritizing investments in public transport and railway infrastructure, and by fully internalizing the social and environmental costs of transport.
- Reducing risks to public health, e.g. by putting a chemicals policy in place by 2004 and by establishing a European health monitoring and early-warning system.
- Raising public awareness of the need to manage natural resources responsibly, by promoting environmentally sound production methods in agriculture, restoring natural habitats and ecosystems, and halting the decline in biodiversity by 2010.

4 OECD: Policies to Enhance Sustainable Development. Paris 2001

5 OECD: The DAC Guidelines: Strategies for Sustainable Development: Guidance for Development Cooperation. Paris 2001

6 Commission of the European Communities. Social Policy Agenda (Lisbon strategy). March 2000

In addition, the EU strategy calls for efforts to improve communication between Member States and to mobilize the population and large companies. Accordingly, from 2002, the Commission intends to hold a biennial «Stakeholder Forum» so as to involve the general public in the evaluation of the EU strategy.

National strategies in Europe

It is difficult to compare the strategies of the various EU nations since they differ widely in terms of both approach and content. However, parallels do exist between several countries' endeavours and Switzerland's efforts. It can at least be noted that most European countries either have developed or are in the process of developing strategies for sustainable development.

Some national strategies, such as that of Italy, are primarily oriented towards environmental aspects. Other countries, such as the UK, Germany, France and Austria, have opted for broader approaches, with significant economic, social and environmental components. In Switzerland, too, the scope of the 2002 strategy has been extended compared with the 1997 strategy to include topics such as mobility and spatial development.

Although the various European countries' strategies for sustainable development differ, they are all based on a participatory approach. They all include preparatory and/or parallel structures involving a variety of parties, for example in the form of a round table, a Commission or a National Council for Sustainable Development. The present Swiss strategy was also developed with the participation of the cantons, civil society and the private sector, using the consultation procedure that is well established in this country. It is envisaged that the phase during which measures are fleshed out and implemented will involve an even closer dialogue and a partnership-based approach (cf. Part 4).

Provision is not made for evaluation systems in all national strategies. Regular monitoring and periodic evaluations are, however, planned to accompany implementation of the Swiss 2002 strategy (cf. Part 4).

1.4 Strategy development process and criteria for the selection of measures

Like its predecessor, the present strategy was developed within the IDARio framework. In an effort to involve as many policy areas as possible in the sustainable development process, all the federal agencies were invited to participate in elaborating the strategy.

In the preparatory phase, during which background materials were collected, a key role was played by the expert report entitled «Sustainable Development Policy in Switzerland: National assessment and perspectives»⁷. Together with a number of other documents⁸, this report influenced the analysis of the background and challenges. In the coming years, according to this view, Switzerland will be confronted both domestically and internationally with numerous developments of relevance to sustainability. These can be classified as economic, social and environmental.

This analysis led to the definition of the ten areas for action under which the present strategy's measures are classified. For each area, the background and developments are described in an introductory text, which is followed by a brief overview of the most important elements of current policy that already meet sustainability requirements. The subsequent descriptions of measures indicate the key aspects of future policy in the area concerned.

An important intermediate step was the report submitted by the Federal Council to the Secretariat of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in July 2001⁹. In May 2000, the CSD had called on all countries to undertake a review of the implementation of Agenda 21 at national level as part of international preparations for the «Rio +10» event. The Swiss report provided its partners in the Rio process with information as to the status of implementation of Agenda 21 in Switzerland. It also gave the Swiss parties involved an overview of the current situation and generated numerous ideas, in terms of analysis and measures, for the Federal Council's new sustainable development strategy.

The participatory process made it possible all the federal agencies to contribute to the definition of measures and formulate proposals for the strategy. All the measures were conceived by interagency or interdepartmental working groups, which will also participate in the process of fleshing-out and implementation. On the basis of the guidelines for sustainable development policy (cf. Part 2), a general framework was established for the 2002 strategy, covering the following key points:



Strategy development process coordinated by the federal government, with the participation of society.

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- 7 MAUCH Consulting, INFRAS, Ernst Basler und Partner AG: Politik der Nachhaltigen Entwicklung in der Schweiz: Standortbestimmung und Perspektiven. (Sustainable development policy in Switzerland: National assessment and perspectives.) Report commissioned by IDARio. Zurich 2001.
- 8 Apart from documents relating to individual policy areas, special mention should be made of the following: Swiss Federal Chancellery and Federal Statistical Office: Herausforderungen 1999–2003 – Trendentwicklungen und mögliche Zukunftsthemen für die Bundespolitik. Bericht des Perspektivstabs der Bundesverwaltung. (Challenges 1999–2003: trends and possible topics of future federal policy. Report by the federal Administration «Perspectives Committee».) Neuchâtel 1998.
- 9 From Rio to Responsibility – Switzerland's Progress towards a Policy of Sustainable Development, 1992–2002 Report of the Government of Switzerland to the Secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development of 3 July 2001.

- Equilibrium between the three pillars of sustainable development (economy, society, environment).
- Attention to both domestic and foreign policy concerns.
- As far as possible, a practical and results-oriented approach, in the sense of a concrete action plan.
- A fundamentally wide-ranging strategy, i.e. not confined to a small number of policy areas.
- Within individual areas, rigorous selection of measures according to the following criteria:
 - a) new measures (no policies already in effect or approved by the Federal Council)
 - b) intergenerational perspective (measures must address long-term problems or trends)
 - c) importance (measures requiring action by the Federal Council)
 - d) integration (environmental, economic and social dimensions).

In the consultation process, a draft version of the strategy was submitted to the cantons and various stakeholder groups. Their comments have also been taken into consideration in the present report. The cantons, civil society and the private sector are also to be involved during the implementation phase, as in a number of the areas covered they play a crucial role by virtue of their legal authority – which the strategy, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, leaves intact – or on account of their practical scope for action.

2 Guidelines for sustainable development policy



Policy goal: inter-generational and interregional justice.

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Guidelines for the Federal Council's policy are based firstly on the principles enshrined in the provisions of the new Federal Constitution mentioned above, and secondly on the three-dimensional concept of sustainable development that emerged from the Rio Conference, encompassing the economy, society and the environment. The guidelines expounded here refine and consolidate the guidelines and principles contained in the Federal Council's Rio +10 report to the CSD¹⁰.

There has been no fundamental change in the understanding of sustainable development since the 1997 strategy was published. The Federal Council's aim with the 2002 strategy, however, is its rigorous implementation with specific initiatives and enforcement programmes, which give equal consideration to social, economic and environmental dimensions or adopt a partnership-based approach to implementation.

2.1 Fulfilling our responsibility towards the future

The definition of sustainable development that the Federal Council still holds binding is that formulated by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, with the Rio Conference in mind, and named after the Commission's Chairwoman – the «Brundtland definition»¹¹. According to this, development is sustainable if it «meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs».

Underlying this definition is an ethical and philosophical position. Full control over the future is to be replaced by a responsibility towards the future, based on intergenerational and interregional equity. For sustainable development requires that natural resources be secured for all people living now and in the future, under conditions of dignity and justice. This notion of responsibility towards future generations was accepted as a binding guiding principle by the international community – and hence also by Switzerland – with the adoption of the Rio Conference documents.

Responsibility towards the future requires an ethical system in which rights and obligations are balanced between partners and partner nations of equal status. Conflicts of interest should be settled according to the dictates of legitimate claims rather than those of the distribution of power. Responsibility and the safeguarding of interests form the ethical basis of a sustainable and forward-looking policy. For the Federal Council, this applies to external relations as well as domestically: Swiss foreign policy seeks to safeguard Switzerland's interests and at the same time to fulfil the responsibilities incumbent on our country as a member of the international community¹². On the domestic front, Switzerland should both provide a framework that enables industry and ideas to flourish and also offer a habitable home, capable of development, for all its residents.

¹⁰ Cf. footnote 9.

¹¹ World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. Oxford/New York 1987, p. 43.

¹² Foreign policy report 2000 – Präsenz und Kooperation: Interessenwahrung in einer zusammenwachsenden Welt. Bericht des Bundesrates. (Presence and Cooperation: Safeguarding Switzerland's interests in an integrating world. Federal Council report.) 15 November 2000, BBl 2001 261.

If our responsibility towards the future is to be fulfilled, the precautionary, polluter-pays and liability principles also need to be supported at all levels as fundamental preconditions for economic, environmental and social action and viable long-term conduct.

However, in an open, liberal and democratic society, it is both inevitable and acceptable that there should be different views on how sustainable development is to be fleshed out in practice. The Federal Council takes the view that it would be presumptuous to give an exact definition of a sustainable future and for this to be set in stone and implemented. Rather, sustainable development is to be conceived as a social process of searching, learning and structuring.

Sustainable development is thus comparable to other fundamental ethical concepts, such as that of liberty, which are not amenable to definitive definition, but have to be interpreted and specified anew in the relevant historical context. Sustainable development is thus understood as a «regulative idea», an ongoing challenge which should inspire the social process of learning and structuring.¹³

2.2 Equal consideration to the environment, economy and society

Sustainable development involves the three target dimensions of environmental responsibility, economic efficiency and social solidarity. The goals to be pursued in each case can be determined using the criteria given below.¹⁴

As regards the target dimension of environmental responsibility, development is sustainable if habitats for humans, animals and plants are preserved and consideration is given to future generations in the use of natural resources. This means that:

- Areas of natural importance and biodiversity are to be preserved.
- The consumption of renewable resources (e.g. raw materials that can be recultivated, water) is to be kept below the level of regeneration or natural replenishment.
- The consumption of non-renewable resources (e.g. fossil fuels, raw materials) is to be kept below the level of the potential increase in renewable resources.
- Any impact of emissions and toxic substances on the natural environment (water, soil, air, climate) and human health are to be reduced to a safe level.
- The impact of environmental disasters is to be reduced and environmental risks are only to be accepted to the extent that, even in a worst-case scenario, no permanent damage, outlasting a generation, would be caused.

As regards the target dimension of economic efficiency, development is sustainable if prosperity and the capacity for economic development are preserved. This means that:



**Sustainable Switzerland:
equilibrium between
economy, environment
and society.**

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¹³ Cf. Jürg Minsch et al.: Institutionelle Reformen für eine Politik der Nachhaltigkeit. (Institutional reforms for a policy of sustainability.) Berlin/Heidelberg 1998, p. 16; MAUCH Consulting, INFRAS, Ernst Basler und Partner AG [footnote 7].

¹⁴ The criteria for the three dimensions of sustainable development are derived from the following works: IDARio: Elemente für ein Konzept der Nachhaltigen Entwicklung. (Elements for a concept of sustainable development.) Bern 1995; German Bundestag Study Commission: Konzept Nachhaltigkeit, vom Leitbild zur Umsetzung. (The sustainability concept: from guidelines to implementation.) Bonn 1998; MAUCH Consulting, INFRAS, Ernst Basler und Partner AG [footnote 7].

- Levels of income and employment are to be maintained and increased, as required, with due consideration being given to socially and geographically acceptable distribution.
- It should be possible for productive capital, based on social and human capital, to be at least maintained and to show qualitative improvement.
- Economic competitiveness and the capacity for innovation are to be improved.
- Market mechanisms (pricing) should be the primary economic determinants, with due consideration being given to scarcity factors and external costs.
- The public sector is not to be managed at the expense of future generations (e.g. debt, failure to preserve assets).

As regards the target dimension of social solidarity, development is sustainable if it promotes solidarity and well-being in human life and development. This means that:

- Human health and safety are to be comprehensively protected and promoted.
- Education is to be provided, ensuring individual development and identity.
- Culture is to be promoted, together with the preservation and development of the social values and resources that constitute social capital.
- Equal rights and legal security are to be guaranteed for all, with particular attention to equal rights for women and men, equal rights and protection for minorities, and respect for human rights.
- Solidarity is to be promoted within and between generations and also at the global level.

When specific policies are defined, due consideration must be given to all three aspects of sustainability. Sustainable development should not be equated – as is sometimes the case – with environmental protection, but be perceived as a political agenda which is concerned with guaranteeing that development is viable in the long term, addressing environmental, economic and social challenges equally. The aim of according equal status to the three dimensions of sustainability is also reflected in the measures proposed by the 2002 strategy.

2.3 Recognizing the individual characteristics of the dimensions of sustainable development

If consideration is to be given to sustainable development in the fulfillment of all federal tasks, the three target dimensions need to be weighed up continuously. In the difficult process of resolving conflicts and weighing up the various dimensions, attention needs to be given to their individual characteristics. Although the dimensions are to be regarded as of equal status, this does not mean either that they have identical characteristics or that they are completely interchangeable. The distinction drawn in the literature between «strong» and «weak» sustainability is of relevance to this question.¹⁵ These concepts, lying at opposite ends of a continuum, are concerned with the question of substitutability between and within the environmental, economic and social areas. According to the strong view, the stock and quality of each individual area is at least to be preserved, while the weak view would permit, for example, the consumption of environmental capital

¹⁵ MAUCH Consulting, INFRAS, Ernst Basler und Partner AG [footnote 7].

if this were compensated for by an accumulation of economic or social capital.

In the view of the Federal Council, a weak conception of sustainability is not adequate to the challenges of sustainable development. Given the specific characteristics of certain aspects of the environment, in particular, the idea of their being substitutable by social or economic capital seems unrealistic – notwithstanding the potential for technological progress. Not only are many environmental goods, such as a stable climate, biodiversity or an intact ozone layer, essential to the survival of humankind, but their destruction cannot generally be compensated for by means of social or economic capital. In addition, there is the problem of irreversibility: unlike changes in the economic and social spheres, the destruction of environmental goods cannot be reversed within a human time scale, so particular caution needs to be exercised in this respect.

However, the Federal Council also regards a strong interpretation – permitting no flexibility in balancing environmental, economic and social concerns – as inappropriate. In general terms, the Federal Council adopts an intermediate position between strong and weak sustainability and takes the view that difficult trade-offs should be handled in a transparent manner and not be systematically detrimental to the same key factor. All the while, the health of the biosphere must be maintained.

2.4 Integrating sustainable development into all policy areas

For the Federal Council, sustainable development is not an additional sectoral policy, but a «regulative idea» that is to be integrated into all sectoral policies. Consequently, the 2002 strategy is not confined selectively to a small number of policy areas, but is fundamentally wide-ranging. In this strategy, numerous policies from the whole spectrum of departmental responsibilities are covered, and both domestic and foreign-policy aspects are addressed.

In view of this guideline, a holistic approach, i.e. the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, is also a key criterion for action to be taken. The aim is therefore that policies oriented largely towards economic aspects should increasingly fulfil their social and environmental responsibilities, that policies falling within the social sphere should take undesirable economic and environmental repercussions into account, and that policies in the environmental area should also consider economic and social requirements.

To ensure compliance with this guideline, the Federal Council is promoting a cross-sectional approach for the present strategy, with measures being developed in interagency and interdepartmental working groups.

2.5 Improving coordination between policy areas and enhancing coherence

Not only do all policy areas need to be geared to the requirements of sustainable development, but coordination between the various sectors also needs to be improved. Over and above liaison and conflict management, the aim should be to optimize processes and develop synergies, e.g. between technological development, environmental protection and economic growth. By promoting innovation, offering incentives, and in particular also by ensuring that innovative forces are nurtured, new technologies can be developed that require fewer natural resources, reduce both the impact on the environment and risks to health and safety, and also create competitive advantages in the economic sectors concerned.

If sustainable development is to be achieved, the three target dimensions need to be considered at an early stage and problems need to be tackled in an interdisciplinary manner in the interests of viable long-term solutions. In the process, conflicts should be discussed openly and value judgements explained. Environmental, economic and social dimensions are to be taken into account in the fulfilment of all tasks. This means that the three key sustainability factors need to be weighed up continuously.

Transparent decision-making involving a variety of parties should ensure that the concerns of sustainable development are considered to the greatest possible extent in political resolutions. Conflicts between the goals of various governmental activities are a normal feature of such decisions. These conflicts should be made apparent and included in the political decision-making process in as transparent a manner as possible. The involvement of a wide range of parties is designed to ensure that the various goods are weighed up as part of an holistic analysis and that decisions are legitimated via a broad-based approach, as well as producing solutions that are capable of being implemented. Coherence is to be enhanced by strengthening horizontal structures and processes within the Administration. With regard to sustainable development policy, it should be noted that following the administrative reforms of 2000, the Federal Council established the new Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE), which is responsible, inter alia, for coordinating intersectoral activities relating to the implementation in Switzerland of the decisions adopted at the Rio Conference, and operates a permanent IDARio secretariat for this purpose. This is designed to enhance coordination and coherence in this policy area.

2.6 Achieving sustainable development on the basis of partnership

Sustainable development is not merely a task for official bodies or for the federal government alone. In view of the challenges existing today, sustainable development is a task for all institutions and individuals. The onus is not just on the federal government, but also on the cantons, communes and towns. Other parties in society, such as non-governmental organizations, economic stakeholder groups, companies and churches, are urged to take the initiative, take part in the debate and develop appropriate activities. The Federal Council remains aware that one of the federal government's responsibilities is to set an example, e.g. in its own procurement activities.

In this country, numerous problems can only be constructively resolved through close cooperation between the three levels of government. A Federal Council strategy confined exclusively to federal policy would therefore be inadequate. Cooperation with the cantons, towns and other communes is essential, although the federal government is guided by the principle of subsidiarity and its sustainable development policy is not intended to lead to any shift of responsibilities. Under the 1997 strategy, the federal government has to date supported around 30 projects via the Local Agenda 21 promotion programme; these were designed to implement the principles of sustainable development at the communal level.¹⁶

In order to involve especially the cantons, towns and regions more effectively, a «Sustainable Development Forum» was established in 2001, in which the federal government, all the cantons and the larger towns participate. With a view to implementation of the Federal Council's 2002 strategy, this body is designed to be a platform for achieving sustainable development at the cantonal and municipal level.

Given the factors and groups of parties which now play a role in sustainable development, a strategy restricted to the public sector would be just as inadequate as one confined exclusively to the federal level. Sustainable development policy must therefore also include civil society and the private sector.

Cooperation between the authorities and stakeholder groups is already well established in practice. In the area of international sustainability policy, regular contact has existed for some years with interested NGOs from the environmental, development and business spheres in particular. These organizations are involved in the authorities' preparations for important international negotiations and have given a significant impetus to sustainable development in Switzerland over the last ten years. Cooperation with NGOs is to be continued in the future.

The Federal Council believes that cooperation should also be intensified with the business sector in particular, which has the capacity for effective action. Special mention should be made of the role in sustainable development of the financial markets, where there is evidence to suggest that investors are exerting greater pressure on companies to sharpen their focus on sustainability so as to avoid the major costs of environmentally and socially detrimental action rebounding on the companies responsible. The federal government must endeavour to engage the private sector as a partner in the promotion of sustainable development, so that favourable trends are supported in line with the concerns of the public sector.

¹⁶ Cf. motion 97-033 received by the Federal Council from the National Council's Commission on the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy (UREK-NR), which reads as follows: «The Federal Council is mandated to initiate and support the process of development and implementation of cantonal and communal Agenda 21 programmes.» The motion was adopted by the Council of States in the form of a recommendation.

3 Action areas and measures

3.1 Action area 1: Economic policy and public services



Continuing the policy of greater openness, with due consideration for peripheral regions and the environment.

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If sustainable development is to be achieved, prosperity needs to be safeguarded over the long term. The key challenges facing Switzerland with regard to the preservation of economic prosperity are the growing competition between business locations and the development of large and expanding regional economic blocs. To ensure that the country's high level of prosperity is not jeopardized as a result of ongoing globalization, the Federal Council believes that the policy of economic liberalization should be pursued further. Crucially important to this country are effective global regulations on international trade and capital movements, which do not only address economic concerns, but also meet the social and environmental requirements that are vital to successful long-term development. With regard to the social dimension of sustainable development, one of the questions that ought to be considered is how the need for basic service provision can be more systematically addressed in infrastructure liberalization projects. With regard to the environmental dimension, economic policy should become more innovation-friendly than is currently the case, promoting environmental modernization by creating incentives and developing an appropriate climate. The aim should therefore be to pursue efforts to improve Switzerland's competitiveness and at the same time to intensify discussions on enhancing the sustainability of Swiss economic policy.

Over the past ten years, various efforts in this direction have already been undertaken in Switzerland in the light of the ongoing globalization process. Alignment with EU regulations or WTO agreements, and the opening-up of key markets – in particular former State monopolies and heavily regulated sectors on the country's own initiative – has been energetically pursued, with attention also being given to social and environmental concerns, for example:

- Efforts to dismantle State monopolies in the railway, postal, telecommunications and electricity markets, with attention to the issue of basic service provision, which is important for national cohesion, and accompanying environmental measures.
- Measures to strengthen the employment market (decree on apprenticeships, active policy to promote rapid and lasting reintegration of job seekers), to prevent the social exclusion of individual segments of the population and maintain competitiveness.
- Fundamental reform of agricultural policy in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, with measures to boost the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, direct compensation for non-profit-making services and environmentally beneficial action, and structural reform on socially acceptable terms.

Over the next few years, the Federal Council will also be making particular efforts in the following two areas:

■ *Measure 1: WTO and sustainable development*

Together with the other Member States, Switzerland will endeavour to promote further liberalization and integration of the global economy within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the global economic and financial system can only survive in the long term if social and environmental demands are also addressed. For this reason, Switzerland is supporting the cause of sustainable development within the WTO and promoting discussion of the conflicts of interest that arise as a result. In future negotiations at the WTO, the Federal Council intends to focus primarily on the economic and development-specific dimensions of sustainability, with the aim being to optimize the use of economic resources in particular by further dismantling non-sustainable subsidies and barriers to trade and investment. In the medium term, however, the other dimensions of sustainability also need to be strengthened within the WTO, so that opposition to and undesirable effects of expanded and closer economic ties can be avoided and markets can be established which will operate in the long term. Thus, in the environmental sphere, the Federal Council is calling for coherence between regulations on trade and international environmental agreements, for the provision of information for consumers by means of WTO-compliant eco-labelling, for minimum environmental standards and for the application and extension of the precautionary and polluter-pays principles within the WTO. As regards measures in the social sphere, Switzerland is pressing within the WTO for increased cooperation between multilateral organizations and for closer dialogue with NGOs.

■ *Measure 2: Concept for public services in the infrastructure sector*

To date, public services in the infrastructure sector have been safeguarded by adopting an approach, varying according to the specific sector, which involves a political definition of the services to be provided, regulations concerning the environmental framework and the introduction of more extensive free-market elements. This concept is to be evaluated and further developed. The aim is to establish a set of cross-sectoral guidelines, facilitating rational individual solutions in all the relevant sectors while upholding the three target dimensions of sustainable development. In the long term, this framework should enable economically efficient services to be provided at an acceptable cost, guaranteeing fair prices and equal access for all, and ensuring an environmentally sound system through a resource-saving approach and restrictions on emissions. The aim is to establish a dynamic regulatory framework, open to new developments, which incorporates procedural principles and rules for the definition of the required standards.

3.2 Action area 2: Financial policy

Sustainable development demands that the present generation does not live at the expense of future generations. With regard to financial policy, an undesirable redistribution of prosperity between different generations must be avoided. Of fundamental importance to a policy of sustainable development, which will inevitably exert a certain influence, are sound finances, with sufficient flexibility for financial policy to fulfil the relevant governmental responsibilities. Government expenditure and revenues reflect a country's economic and social options. The composition of such revenues and expenditure and their impact on the economy, society and the environment are crucial to the success of a policy of sustainable development. As a result of its interaction with federal policies, financial policy plays a key role in relation to sustainable development. To ensure that financial policy is more closely oriented towards this goal, there is a particular need to avoid environmentally counterproductive direct and indirect subsidies. In addition, taxation and wage policies should be used to create incentives for a more economical use of resources.

With a level of taxation that remains attractive by international standards, Switzerland's initial position is favourable, provided that the retrenchment efforts undertaken in recent years are successfully consolidated. An optimum balance has to be struck between the need to stabilize debt levels, calls for lower taxes and the desire for additional federal spending, with due consideration being given to the principles of sustainable development at the same time. The difficult process of reconciling the various interests should be conducted in as transparent a manner as possible and the various dimensions of sustainable development should be taken into account in equal measure. The following efforts have been undertaken in the area of financial policy in the recent past in view of domestic and foreign policy challenges:

- The implementation of a series of tax reforms in the 1990s served to promote competitiveness, which is an important foundation for economic prosperity and adequate government revenues.
- The stabilization programme in 1998 and the budgetary targets set for 2001 were designed to bring the persistent budgetary deficit under control. The brake on public debt approved in 2001 limits future growth in expenditure to the level of medium-term growth in GDP. The aim is to safeguard the government's scope for action.
- The reform of financial equalization and task allocation (NFA) is designed to help revitalize the federal system, facilitating improvements in the equalization of resources among cantons, creating a system of intercantonal compensation for costs associated with central functions, and providing compensation for costs arising from specific geographical/topographical and sociodemographic burdens. This is designed to improve the general framework for sustainable development.



Resource conservation incentives: targeted taxation policy and forward-looking procurement.

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In the coming years, the Federal Council proposes to take the concerns of sustainable development into account in financial policy by setting the following additional priorities:

■ **Measure 3:** *Fiscal incentives for the economical use of resources*

The current problems of environmental pollution – and in particular global warming – are closely linked to excessive consumption of non-renewable sources of energy and other resources. Market-based instruments represent an appropriate option for achieving the goals of sustainable development specified by the CO₂ act (CO₂-Gesetz), the «EnergieSchweiz» («SwissEnergy») programme and the Kyoto Protocol. Environmental and incentive taxes are more effective and less costly than conventional regulatory instruments. Despite the rejection of the energy proposals by the electorate on 24 September 2000, consideration of fiscal incentives in the medium term as an instrument of energy and climate protection policy remains an important issue for the Federal Council. The aim is to achieve a revenue-neutral shift in taxation from labour to energy. In 2003, the Federal Council will therefore issue a status report, in which the question of increased environmental incentives in the tax system will once again be considered – taking into account the possible introduction of a CO₂ tax and developments in energy policy abroad.

■ **Measure 4:** *Introduction of an integrated product policy*

To ensure that the principles of sustainable development are also put into practice in relation to products (goods and services), the Federal Council supports the introduction of an integrated product policy (IPP). Through the creation of a more favourable national and international framework, the Federal Council is seeking to shift public sector and consumer demand towards products that meet high economic, environmental and social standards. Throughout their life cycle (planning, production, use and disposal), products and services are to comply with stringent economic, environmental and social requirements. The aims of the IPP are correspondingly diverse. Its principles are to be applied at every stage in the formulation and implementation of policies relating to products. For all policy areas of relevance to IPP, criteria and instruments are to be developed which highlight the interplay between the three dimensions of sustainability and are conducive to the implementation of this policy.

3.3 Action area 3: Education, research, technology

Knowledge and its utilization are among the most valuable resources now available for promoting sustainable development. From an economic perspective, knowledge as the product of education, research and technology is a crucial factor in a country's ability to withstand mounting international competitive pressures (locational advantage). In addition, with regard to the social dimension of sustainable development, knowledge is essential to the ability to perceive global changes not merely as a danger but primarily as an opportunity, for critical reflection on values and behaviour, the development of personal identity, the acquisition of practical skills for dealing with life's challenges, and cultural and economic integration among the various sections of the population. Finally, knowledge is also important in understanding the relationships between society, politics, the economy and the natural environment from an ecological perspective and in taking appropriate action. In the education, research and technology sector, there is thus a need for higher quality, an increased emphasis on performance, a more international approach, a greater openness to outside influences, improved intercultural skills and lifelong learning.

Both nationally and internationally, the education, research and technology sector is under pressure to adapt to the ongoing changes in the direction of a knowledge society. Against this background, the Federal Council considers it especially important that there should be concerted efforts to ensure that sustainable development takes root within compulsory education, at universities and in vocational training. In Switzerland, numerous efforts in this direction are already under way:

- Examples of current efforts to promote sustainability include the reforms at university level, the establishment of universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen), the creation of vocational secondary schools (Berufsmittelschulen), and the debate on the use of information technology in the widest possible range of subjects, as well as the establishment of two National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs) in the fields of climatology and North-South partnerships.
- With the federal decree on public-private partnership, «Schools on the Net» (PPP-SiN), Switzerland is laying the foundations of sustainability both for the knowledge society and for the development of information and telecommunications technology. This should give the younger generations greater equality of opportunity than was enjoyed by previous generations and creates synergies between the private sector, the federal government and the cantons.

In order to strengthen the ties between education, research and technology and sustainable development, the Federal Council proposes to introduce the following measures:



Overcoming the digital divide: Internet access for the less privileged as well.

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■ **Measure 5:** *Raising public awareness via the education system*

Dissemination and implementation of the concept of sustainable development require the broadest possible public debate. Therefore, while respecting the subsidiarity principle and cantonal authority, the Federal Council wishes to harness the entire education system to promote a high level of awareness of sustainable development. Specific education and training programmes on sustainable development at federal and cantonal level should therefore be more effectively publicized in order to stimulate greater public debate and gain attention. To this end, the Federal Council, together with the cantons, intends to enhance the coordination of educational initiatives currently under way and perform systematic evaluations so as to optimize the use of existing resources and create a close network of the parties involved. In a discussion forum, the federal government and the cantons will be able to exchange experience with schools, companies and other interested parties, so that education and training programmes can be further developed with a view to establishing a National Agenda 21 for the education sector.

■ **Measure 6:** *Promotion of scientific cooperation with developing and transitional countries*

The Federal Council attaches great importance to scientific cooperation between Switzerland and developing and transition countries and to systematic studies in the area of sustainable development. Since 1960, it has therefore requested grants from Parliament each year to enable students and young scientists from developing countries to pursue higher education or training in Switzerland. On the basis of an evaluation of existing measures, the Federal Council will decide whether or not to submit proposals to Parliament for additional measures, or to opt for the intensification of existing measures in the context of its Opinion on the promotion of education, research and technology.

3.4 Action area 4: Social cohesion

Sustainable social development is based on solidarity and justice within society. Important sustainability issues thus include the protection of human rights, the provision of opportunities for disadvantaged members of society, opportunities for cultural and personal development, a socially and regionally equitable distribution of prosperity, guaranteed health care provision, public safety and equal rights for women and men. Social cohesion – with regard to different social strata but also to the country's various linguistic and cultural communities – faces significant challenges owing to a variety of developments. The aging population, changes in household make-up owing to the increase in single-person households and married couples without children, changes in life courses, modes of living and gender roles, rising separation and divorce rates and the migration and integration of foreigners have had a variety of impacts on, for example, social insurance funding and costs, the employment market, the education system and the housing market. In addition, public safety faces new challenges from trends in crime and violence.

In the social security sector in particular, the Federal Council considers it important to guarantee funding for social insurance schemes, while the social goals specified in the new Federal Constitution (Art. 41) should be pursued in parallel. These go beyond general protection from poverty: every individual is to be entitled to benefit from social security.

With regard to the criteria relating in particular to the social dimension of sustainable development, the Federal Council is already pursuing a number of different policies:

- The revision of the compensation for loss of earnings act (Erwerbsersatzgesetz) – with entitlement being extended to mothers in paid employment during maternity leave – represents a further step in the direction of equal rights for women and men.
- Under the 2001 taxation package, burdens are to be redistributed between households with children and other persons liable for tax (partial splitting procedure for married couples, increase in deductions for children, and tax relief for non-family child care and single parents).
- Securing the long-term financing of social insurance schemes, in particular old age and survivors insurance (Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung, AHV), is the central concern of the 11th revision of the AHV system.
- The introduction of regular generational accounting makes it possible to examine the impact of financial and social policy on present and future generations.
- The 10th revision of the AHV has already incorporated substantial refinements to the social insurance system in response to changes in the employment market, the individualization of life courses and shifting gender roles (adjustment of retirement age, pension splitting, recognition of child rearing and care activities). In pursuit of the goal of equal rights for women and men, similar adjustments were made to the occupational pension and disability insurance schemes. In addition, one of the aims of the 11th revision of the AHV system is to achieve greater flexibility as regards retirement ages.



Standardized family allowances: children should not mean poverty.

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- The health insurance act (Krankenversicherungsgesetz) introduced in 1996 now guarantees access to quality health care for all people resident in Switzerland and has improved solidarity among the insured. To date, cost containment measures have not been as effective as hoped, and they are to be strengthened through a revision of the law so as to give greater consideration to financial as well as social concerns.
- In the current legislative period, the Federal Council has set itself the goal of developing legislation on language (Sprachengesetz) as a concrete expression of the language policy mandate contained in Article 70 of the Federal Constitution. The key element of this mandate is the promotion of understanding and interchange between the linguistic communities, ultimately as a means of strengthening national cohesion.
- On the basis of the ordinance on the integration of aliens (Verordnung über die Integration von Ausländerinnen und Ausländern) which came into effect in the autumn of 2000, the federal government is supporting efforts to improve mutual understanding between the Swiss and the foreign population.

In addition, the Federal Council intends to introduce the following measure as a way of addressing ongoing social challenges:

■ **Measure 7:** *Countering new poverty risks*

The social insurance system is highly effective, especially with regard to provision for old age and disability. However, the problem of poverty has not disappeared but, as a result of changes within society, has shifted to social groups such as the working poor or families, in particular, for which no specific provision is made in the current social insurance system. Since poverty has a particularly adverse impact on children's prospects for development, education and subsequent employment and thus poses a major intergenerational challenge, the Federal Council believes that action is required in line with the policy of sustainable development. At present, a single income is frequently not sufficient to support a family. The level of cantonal income support varies widely, and it only covers a small proportion of actual costs. In addition, as a result of the lack of supplementary child care facilities, persons responsible for rearing children have only limited employment opportunities. In many cases, part-time work also leads to a reduction in the entitlement to child allowances. In the interests of sustainable development, the general conditions for the physical, psychological and cognitive development of children in Switzerland should be as favourable as possible. The Federal Council therefore advocates national arrangements for family allowances at the federal level, which would enable a proportion of the costs associated with children to be covered irrespective of parents' paid employment. It also supports efforts in the area of supplementary child care.

3.5 Action area 5: Health



Promoting exercise, preventing cardio- vascular disease.

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Sustainable development requires that the population's quality of life, which notably includes physical health and psychological well-being, should be secured. The broad range of challenges relevant to sustainability in this area can be illustrated by examples such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease), Aids, and widespread ignorance of the relationship between dietary and exercise habits on the one hand and health on the other, as well as the increasing incidence of developmental disorders in young people.

The aim of future health policy will be to secure what has been achieved to date over the long term in a changing economic and technological environment. A national health policy supported by all parties should facilitate the paradigm shift from a disease-oriented to a health-oriented approach. Greater importance needs to be attached to prevention and health promotion. For this purpose, it is essential that other policy areas should become more aware of their public health responsibilities and their potential influence. In recent years, sustainable development has been integrated into health policy using the following, in particular:

- The Swiss «Environment and Health» action plan, which was developed in 1997 as a means of implementing the Agenda 21 chapter on health, is designed to promote universal health and well-being in a healthy environment. The themes of «nature and well-being», «mobility and well-being» and «housing and well-being» were selected from a wide range of possible priorities.

In the future, the Federal Council intends to raise public awareness of an integrated approach to health by introducing the following measure:

■ Measure 8: *National «Health Diet Exercise» programme*

Dietary and exercise habits have a marked influence on human health, while patterns of consumption have an impact on food production methods and hence also on the environment. In order to promote positive interaction between the areas mentioned in the interests of sustainable development, the Federal Council believes that action is required, particularly with regard to the prevention of cardiovascular disease. Knowledge needs to be disseminated to all sections of the population concerning a healthy diet, the relationship between consumer behaviour and production methods, and the need for adequate physical exercise. In order to achieve these goals, the Federal Council is supporting the national «Health Diet Exercise» programme, which will involve a variety of specific activities. A network comprising all the relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations is to be established to coordinate existing measures and the introduction and evaluation of new, innovative programmes. In addition, the public is to be comprehensively informed about the positive interaction between a healthy diet, sustainable agricultural production and adequate physical exercise. This will necessitate continuing education and motivation programmes for teaching staff, as well as improvements in product labelling.

3.6 Action area 6: Environment and natural resources

Notwithstanding the indisputable successes achieved in this policy area, specifically as a result of technological efficiency gains and environmental protection measures, insufficient progress has been made in decoupling socioeconomic development from resource use. In Switzerland, natural resources face pressure from development and modernization processes in business, transport, (bio-)technology and tourism, as well as challenges arising from the consequences of global warming and major risks. These reflect the country's very high population density and intense economic activity. Since the 1970s, the federal government and the cantons have therefore been seeking to limit the adverse effects of these processes by pursuing an ambitious environmental policy. Nonetheless, the depletion of natural capital is continuing at both the sectoral and global level.

In the areas of water quality protection and waste recycling, progress towards targets is well advanced. Thanks to a coherent pollution control strategy, emissions of most air pollutants have been successfully reduced [SO_x , NO_x , volatile organic compounds (VOCs), CO_2 , particulates, heavy metals], and air quality has been significantly improved. However, in many cases (NH_3 , NO_x , VOCs, particulates), air pollutant emissions remain at a level that is detrimental to the environment and human health. The increase of CO_2 emissions, a key contributor to the greenhouse effect, remains problematic. Other causes for concern are the ongoing loss of fallow and cultivated land as a result of settlement and transport infrastructure developments, the presence of persistent pollutants in soil, the continuing decline in biodiversity (despite increased conservation efforts) and the threat to water resources posed by new types of pollutants. In the area of noise abatement, certain improvements have been achieved on the railways as a result of major investments in noise barriers and preventive measures at source, but, action is still required to reduce road and aircraft noise.

The following efforts to reduce environmental pollution and the pressure on natural resources are currently under way:

- The CO_2 strategy initiated by the Federal Council in 1995 set the target of meeting the country's commitments under the UN Convention on Climate Change. The federal law on the reduction of CO_2 emissions (Bundesgesetz über die Reduktion der CO_2 -Emissionen) came into force in 2000. This provides for the introduction of a CO_2 tax if the reduction target is not achieved by means of voluntary agreements with industry.
- The goal of the «Energie 2000» programme launched by the Federal Council in 1990 was to stabilize CO_2 emissions by 2000, and the country came close to achieving this goal. The follow-up programme, «EnergieSchweiz» («SwissEnergy»), which has been running since 2001, is designed to meet the goals of Swiss energy and climate protection policy and to pave the way for a sustainable energy supply system.
- The amendment of the forestry law (Waldgesetz) in 1991 represented an important step towards sustainable development. For the first time, explicit reference was made to the important social and ecological functions of forest and woodland, as well as their role as sources of timber.



Nature and countryside parks: the economic basis for gentle tourism.

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- In nature and landscape policy, the Swiss countryside concept approved by the Federal Council in 1997 established a framework which ensures that the concerns of nature and countryside protection are given due consideration in the performance of all federal tasks with implications for land use.
- In order to improve the protection of inhabited areas against natural hazards in the long term, the Federal Council – in close cooperation with the cantons – is supporting the paradigm shift away from a culture of safety towards a dialogue on risk, since only limited protection can be provided by technological means. In the interests of sustainable management of water resources, water engineering measures are increasingly being planned and implemented in a networked and integrated manner.
- In order to promote sustainable development in the area of natural resources at the global level, Switzerland has long supported the establishment of international environmental institutions.

In this area of policy, the Federal Council intends to increase its commitment by introducing the following measures:

■ Measure 9: *Refinement of energy and climate protection policy*

For the Federal Council, the reduction of CO₂ emissions is a priority, since there is a need to curb the dangerous consequences of global warming, caused by energy consumption, at the global, regional and local level. In the long term, therefore, Switzerland requires an energy supply system permitting increased energy efficiency and making greater use of renewables. The «EnergieSchweiz» programme and the instruments of the energy and CO₂ acts (Energiegesetz und CO₂-Gesetz) provide a basis for the refinement of the country's existing energy and climate protection policy in the interests of sustainable and climate-friendly power generation. In the first instance, the Federal Council intends to press ahead energetically with effective implementation of these measures. In addition, since aircraft fuel is not covered by the CO₂ act or the «EnergieSchweiz» programme, the Federal Council will work towards an international agreement on limiting emissions from aviation. In accordance with the CO₂ act (Art. 2 Para. 6), it will also submit proposals in good time to the Federal Assembly concerning reduction targets for after 2010. The scenario of a «2000-watt society» serves as a conception guiding energy and climate protection policy. In the long term, this would require a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (primarily CO₂) to the sustainable level of one tonne per capita, with per-capita energy consumption of 500 watts being derived from fossil fuels and 1500 watts from renewable sources. With this in mind, the Federal Council is supporting further studies by a working group within the Federal Administration in order to formulate intermediate goals and define responsibilities and time frames.

■ **Measure 10:** *Support for clean-fuel vehicles*

The Federal Council believes that, if progress is to be made towards sustainable development in the road transport sector, action is required in response increasing greenhouse gas emissions and the fact that certain impact thresholds specified by the ordinance on air pollution control and noise abatement (Luftreinhalte- und Lärmschutzverordnung) are being exceeded. The target vision involves a stock of motor vehicles with particularly clean, low-noise and fuel-efficient engines and noise-absorbing tyres. As an initial step, over a period of ten years, the Federal Council wishes to have 400,000 motor vehicles powered by low-consumption engines and 1.5 million cars fitted with low-noise tyres. To this end, fiscal instruments in particular are to be developed to provide support for clean-fuel vehicles in accordance with the polluter-pays principle. However, another question that the Federal Council wishes to see examined is whether Switzerland should introduce legal provisions of its own or await international regulations.

■ **Measure 11:** *Incentive strategy for nature and the countryside*

The Federal Council is considering providing greater support for nature and countryside parks in Switzerland, as they give an impetus to all three dimensions of sustainable development. Economically, they boost regional policy, gentle tourism and sales of local products. At the same time, they promote appropriate countryside development and careful land use, with benefits for biodiversity. In addition, the enhancement of recreational areas creates fresh opportunities and incentives for appropriate sociocultural development. New forms of cooperation can be used to promote the participation of local, regional and cantonal parties. The Federal Council will specify requirements for the designation of various types of nature and countryside parks, with a view to awarding «quality labels», applicable for a limited period, to new national parks, regional nature parks and wilderness parks established on the basis of proposals developed by local and regional initiatives. It will consider providing support in the form of limited, specific subsidies. In this way, it also wishes to bolster the efforts currently being made by regions, cantons and private organizations to establish large-scale protected areas.

■ **Measure 12:** *Strengthening the system of international environmental governance*

The heterogeneous nature of environmental institutions and agreements means that the current global system of environmental governance is highly fragmented and lacking in coherence, and potential synergies remain unexploited. This impedes efforts to promote sustainable development. The Federal Council therefore supports efforts to streamline and strengthen the global environmental regime, and to improve its position compared with other regimes in the economic and social spheres. It is concentrating its efforts on enhancing the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a political,

institutional and organizational centre and thereby increasing the coherence of global environmental institutions. The Federal Council also supports improvements in coordination and cooperation among the various institutions and agreements, the replenishment and strengthening of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which serves as the central international mechanism for financing environmental projects associated with conventions, and the structural and geographical concentration of environmental institutions – specifically, the establishment in Geneva of a centre of chemicals expertise.

3.7 Action area 7: Spatial and settlement development

Spatial processes are of major relevance to sustainable development, as the three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, environmental) are closely interlinked in spatial planning. Thus, spatial development policy has to address the following concerns in equal measure: the spatial requirements of industry, the need for efficient infrastructure, economical use of land, the protection of natural resources and social and geographical cohesion. The importance of the construction industry for sustainable development deserves particular mention. As this is one of the most important sectors, generating substantial flows of materials and energy, and also influencing the life of society through its buildings, it is essential that the construction industry is integrated into the policy of sustainable development.

New challenges are emerging from a variety of trends. With the structural shift towards «metropolitanization», economic activity is being concentrated in a small number of major agglomerations, which increases functional segregation (i.e. employment in central areas, residence in peripheral areas) in metropolitan regions and calls into question the goal of decentralized settlement structures. Although this means that cities and agglomerations are becoming increasingly important as engines of economic growth and innovation, social problems are also intensified. At the same time, settled areas continue to grow at a greater rate than the population. The ongoing growth in the area of settled land per capita, which is reflected in the expansion of built-up areas and progressive overdevelopment of the countryside, makes it more difficult to organize transport along resource-saving lines and to maintain and enhance the quality of urban areas. This has adverse effects on the international competitiveness of the country as a business location.

In recent years, the Federal Council has sought to respond to these challenges in various ways:

- As early as 1996, the report «Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines» established a new overall strategic framework for Swiss spatial development policy. Goals and action were set out in concrete terms in the federal law on spatial and regional planning (Raumplanungsgesetz), which was expressly oriented towards sustainable development. However, the implementation of this policy is complicated by substantial enforcement problems.
- 1996 also saw a strategic reorientation of regional policy towards an integrated approach based on sustainable development. Objectives were expanded to incorporate environmental and social elements



Desired spaces: overdevelopment remains a problem.

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as well as economic goals. To date, however, planning instruments have only been adapted in a small number of areas.

- In 2001, the Federal Council decided to launch an active agglomeration policy based on the goal of sustainable development. Since cities and local communities in agglomerations currently play an important role in stimulating social and economic activity – and will continue to do so in the future – support is to be provided in the form of specific incentives for innovative and sustainable projects in this area.
- With the adoption of the affordable housing support act (Wohnraumförderungsgesetz, WFG) in 2002, the Federal Council, rather than providing general support for the construction of housing, is seeking to provide specific support for economically disadvantaged sections of the population. The emphasis is placed on renovation and densification projects with a high amenity value, giving due consideration to sustainable development criteria.

The Federal Council intends to introduce the following additional measures in the future:

■ Measure 13: *Sustainable spatial planning programme*

In order to enhance the sustainability of spatial development, the Federal Council will take a series of measures aimed primarily at improving the enforcement of existing legislation. With regard to the key «land area consumed» indicator, the Federal Council aims to stabilize the per-capita settlement area at the current level of around 400 m². Under its sustainable spatial planning programme, the Federal Council intends to take the following specific measures:

- To put into effect the document «Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines», especially as regards settlement renewal and inward development.
- To bring federal concepts and sectoral plans more closely into line with sustainable development. To this end, the land use implications of federal projects and the resultant conflicts of interest and goals are to be more clearly established, the coordination of sectoral plans is to be enhanced – with thematically related concepts and sectoral plans being consolidated – and cooperation between federal agencies and cantons in the elaboration and implementation of plans is to be improved.
- To make better use of cantonal structure plans in cooperating with cantons and to give greater weight to sustainability criteria.
- To consider a review of the current system of land use planning and develop criteria for sustainable settlement development.
- To stimulate cross-boundary (intercantonal and supracommunal) cooperation in the area of spatial planning.
- To intensify cooperation between spatial planning, housing support measures and the residential and general construction sector.
- To influence site selection policy for large installations heavily used by the public and to provide support for the implementation and evaluation of pilot schemes.

- To promote the development of built-up areas along exercise-friendly lines (space required for exercise, sport and leisure activities).
- To elaborate a review system for spatial planning policy (monitoring of targets, performance and enforcement).

■ *Measure 14: New regional policy strategy*

Securing regional cohesion, especially in a highly federalist State such as Switzerland, is a fundamental requirement for national cohesion and hence for sustainable development. Like other OECD nations, Switzerland is undergoing a paradigm shift in regional policy. In the future, as a result of global economic developments, this policy must address the needs not only of peripheral regions but also of central areas, which are particularly exposed to international competition. As early as 1996, the Federal Council decided to place regional policy on a new conceptual footing. However, the instruments of regional policy do not yet meet the new requirements. The Federal Council therefore proposes that a new set of regional policy instruments should be elaborated, taking into account the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development, with the following two main thrusts:

- Firstly, new legal foundations are to be developed for regional policy, which should be conceived along integrated, programme-oriented and sustainable lines. A flexible response is to be made to regional challenges, in the form of measures applicable for a limited period (programmes running for several years). The goal of the new policy is to boost the competitiveness of certain areas in a greater regional context, giving due consideration to environmental and social factors.
- Secondly, support for mountainous regions, hitherto pursued as a priority matter, is to be placed on a new, viable footing, which recognizes that these regions continue to have special requirements but at the same time is compatible with the overall conception of regional policy. To this end, the federal government will consider setting up a cohesion foundation, which would take the place of existing support measures for infrastructure in mountainous regions (investment aid act, Investitionshilfegesetz). The purpose of this institution would be to promote the long-term competitiveness of small-scale regions in mountainous areas, enabling them to meet specific challenges, e.g. to ensure high-quality and viable long-term tourism facilities.

3.8 Action area 8: Mobility

Ever-growing traffic volumes represent a key challenge for sustainable development. The goal of Swiss transport policy is to ensure sustainable mobility. This means that mobility requirements are to be satisfied in an economically viable and efficient manner, that all sections of the population and regions of the country must have access to mobility services, and that the necessary mobility is to be managed in as environmentally sound a manner as possible. In order to achieve this goal, Swiss transport policy will adopt a coordinated approach, agreed with neighbouring countries, making use of and intelligently combining the various modes of transport according to their respective advantages. Technological means of optimizing infrastructure, vehicles and fuels are to be exploited. The proportion of total traffic volumes accounted for by public and non-motorized transport is to be increased, with greater attention being paid to agglomerations (cities and suburban areas) and leisure traffic. In addition, the profitability and true cost pricing of individual transport sectors needs to be promoted and safety is to be improved, particularly on the roads.

In recent years, considerable progress has been made towards sustainable mobility in Switzerland. Various important steps towards sustainability have been completed or initiated via the Federal Council's transport policy, including the following efforts in particular:

- In 1998, the electorate approved a programme of railway infrastructure modernization, involving the implementation of the first and second phases of the «Bahn 2000» rail project, the construction of NEAT (new transalpine railway axes), the integration of the railways into European high-speed networks and railway noise abatement measures.
- The railway reforms which came into effect on 1 January 1999 gave Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) greater entrepreneurial freedom and responsibility to enable it to become more productive and attractive.
- In 2000, a bilateral agreement was concluded with the EU on overland transport, in which the EU accepted the goal of shifting heavy freight traffic onto the railways, in addition to the associated instruments, in particular the distance-related Heavy Vehicle Fee (HVF).
- The introduction of the distance-related HVF with effect from 1 January 2001 is an important market-based instrument for switching freight traffic onto the railways.
- Finally, the Federal Council intends in future to increase the federal government's contribution to the funding of suburban transport. In 2001, initial proposals to this effect were submitted to Parliament in the Federal Council's Opinion on the new financial equalization programme (NFA).

Under its sustainable development strategy, the Federal Council intends to introduce the following additional measures in the transport area:



Public transport and non-motorized transport: an environmentally friendly duo.

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■ **Measure 15:** *Guiding principles for sustainable mobility*

The transport policy of recent years, oriented towards sustainable development, is to be further elaborated in a set of guiding principles for sustainable mobility. These are to specify the fundamental principles and long-term goals of sustainable mobility, giving equal weight to environmental, economic and social dimensions, and serve as an important instrument for management and coordination purposes. In particular, the guiding principles should indicate mechanisms whereby potential conflicts of interest between use and protection or between environmental and infrastructure policy can be resolved in an acceptable manner.

■ **Measure 16:** *Strengthening public transport*

Growing traffic volumes can only be sustainably managed if the railways' market share is further increased and the entire public transport sector is further strengthened. The primary task of transport policy will be to press ahead with the modernization of the railway infrastructure (in particular, the second phase of the Bahn 2000 rail programme – international high-speed connections). Another main task will be to further improve institutional structures for public transport (Phase 2 of the railway reforms). This process will be supported by the Federal Council by reorganizing and coordinating infrastructure funding, infrastructure ownership, the sharing of costs between federal government and cantons, the overall framework within which all transport enterprises operate and investment in the transport sector. In economic terms, the modernization of railway infrastructure and the next phase of the railway reforms contribute to sustainable development by promoting the profitability of transport enterprises, by enhancing the transparency of funding, providing free access to networks, increasing accessibility, integrating the network into Europe, improving customer orientation and services, and hence increasing capacity utilization. Environmental concerns are addressed by the reduction in energy consumption owing to infrastructure modernization, increased railway capacity utilization, a reduction in pollution as a result of shifts between modes of transport, and a decrease in congestion as more traffic is taken off the roads. With regard to social sustainability, the provision of basic services and greater customer orientation will play an important role.

■ **Measure 17:** *New policy on road safety*

The risks of serious road accidents are to be reduced as far as possible without restricting mobility. The Federal Council's integrated «Vision Zero» aims for no deaths or serious injuries at all on Switzerland's roads. Over the next ten years, it therefore intends to introduce measures designed to reduce the number of accident-related fatalities by at least 50%, from 600 to 300. Initially, a number of tried-and-tested measures are to be more vigorously supported and implemented (introduction of 30 km/h zones, daytime headlight use, adjustments to street furniture, integration of non-motorized traffic). In addition, the Federal Council intends to raise awareness among road users by means

of instruction, training and checks, and to use telematic traffic control systems for accident prevention.

3.9 Action area 9: Development cooperation and the promotion of peace

Sustainable development faces the challenge of growing economic and social inequalities worldwide and new North-South interdependencies, which in turn are closely linked to the phenomenon of environmental degradation. Internationally accepted strategies need to be found so as to facilitate sustainable development for all people and nations. As a medium-sized open economy, Switzerland is profoundly affected by global processes. In addition, sustainable development can only be achieved in cooperation with the international community. For these reasons, the Federal Council acknowledges the importance of expanding Switzerland's international commitments. In general terms, the Federal Council will seek to ensure that sustainable development becomes more firmly rooted in multilateral institutions and processes. Both multilateral and bilateral efforts are to be stepped up to enable poverty and hunger to be successfully eliminated over the long term and to tackle the causes of migration. The aim of development cooperation is thus to combat poverty by helping partner countries to help themselves. Since peace and security are essential prerequisites for sustainable development, Switzerland's civilian and military contributions to conflict prevention, peace-keeping, peace promotion and reconstruction efforts are to be increased, within the limits imposed by the resources available. In recent years, the Federal Council has responded to the wide range of challenges in this area with a number of different initiatives:

- In the foreign policy report of 15 November 2000, the policy of opening up the country – already defined in 1993 – was consolidated, and the following specific objectives and priorities were formulated for Swiss foreign policy:
 - a) peaceful coexistence of nations
 - b) respect for human rights and promotion of democracy
 - c) safeguarding of Swiss economic interests abroad
 - d) alleviation of need and poverty in the world
 - e) preservation of natural resources.
- The Federal Council's report on Swiss security policy (7 June 1999) is based on a broad conception of security, encompassing not only military but also non-military and natural risks to security. Accordingly, cooperation is to be intensified both domestically and in foreign relations. One aspect of the implementation of this policy was the early partial revision of the armed forces act (Militär-gesetz), approved in a referendum held in 2001, which was designed to increase the effectiveness of military contributions to peace. At the same time, the objectives of security policy in the civilian sphere were given greater weight and the relevant instruments were expanded.
- In Switzerland's relations with developing and transition countries, efforts to combat poverty are of central importance as a means of promoting sustainable development. In the aforementioned foreign policy report, the Federal Council confirmed its objective of increasing official development assistance to 0.4% of GNP by 2010.



**Development financing:
fruitful public-private
partnerships.**

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New guiding principles for Switzerland's international cooperation, which are to be elaborated in 2002, will replace the North-South model of 1994.

In future, the Federal Council intends to refine its development cooperation and peace promotion efforts with the aid of the following measures:

■ **Measure 18:** *Participation in the formulation and implementation of a multilateral sustainability policy*

In recent years, international organizations have become increasingly important as forums for the elaboration of global and regional approaches to promoting sustainable development. In the view of the Federal Council, multilateral efforts offer advantages over bilateral relations in defining a comprehensive sustainable development strategy, since a multilateral system has a universal presence and can consolidate and regulate international cooperation. In addition, with a multilateral approach, civil society can much more readily be involved in the relevant processes, which is an important consideration given the increasing significance of dialogue and partnership with international scientific, industrial and social parties in multilateral networks.

The Federal Council intends to expand multilateral policy instruments and integrate them more effectively into foreign policy so as to give greater emphasis to the concerns of sustainable development at the global level and play an active part in implementing new, innovative solutions. It plans to proceed on three different levels:

- Switzerland will press for active codetermination in the policy-making of international organizations, with sustainable development being taken fully into account.
- Via a multilateral approach, Switzerland will specifically support the concerns of the poorest developing nations.
- In order to increase political and public acceptance of multilateralism in Switzerland, the Federal Council will support partnerships with organizations and with representatives from the political, social, private-sector and scientific spheres.

■ **Measure 19:** *New forms of development funding*

In OECD countries, the ratio of official development assistance (ODA) to GNP decreased from 0.33% to 0.22% between 1992 and 1997. 1998 and 1999 saw a stabilization of this trend at a low level, and in 2000 ODA amounted to 0.34% of GNP in Switzerland. For its part, the UN has called for an ODA/GNP target ratio of 0.7%. The Federal Council takes the view that sustainable development demands an appropriate level of international burden sharing. In addition to the increase in ODA/GNP ratio to 0.4% by 2010, which has already been approved, the Federal Council considers that increased flows of private capital to the poorest countries (i.e. via direct foreign investments or through public-private partnerships) represent an important form of addition-

al development funding. Switzerland will also seek to open up new sources of funding within a multilateral framework. Finally, it is also important that the effectiveness of international development efforts should be improved. A crucial factor in this respect is the political will on the part of partner countries to mobilize their economic resources for the benefit of their own development – for example, by structuring their taxation systems appropriately.

■ **Measure 20:** *Civilian peace promotion, conflict prevention and reconstruction*

While recent decades have seen a decline in the number of traditional military conflicts between individual nations, the incidence of violent conflicts of an internal or cross-border nature, involving non-governmental parties, has increased. In many cases, these conflicts are directly connected with the ownership and use of natural resources (e.g. water) or with social inequalities. This is frequently associated with the disintegration of governmental and social structures, loss of legal security, and major suffering among the civilian population. As peace and security provide the essential basis for sustainable development, the Federal Council will endeavour to promote conditions, both globally and regionally, that enable existing problems to be resolved in a non-violent manner. In the political and diplomatic sphere, the emphasis is to be placed on mediation, confidence-building and conflict prevention efforts; accordingly, within the limits imposed by available resources, the Federal Council will support the establishment of efficient and professional administrative expertise in Switzerland. Action programmes and members of the Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peace Building (SEP) are to help persuade the key parties in crisis-hit regions to settle conflicts peacefully, in compliance with political and legal guidelines, with the aim being to strengthen democratic, institutional and civil society structures at the same time. The Federal Council's priorities in the area of development cooperation are the elimination of structural causes of conflicts, the provision of emergency humanitarian aid, and social, economic and environmental reconstruction.

3.10 Action area 10: Methods and instruments



**Measurable success:
credible policy.**

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In order to promote sustainable development, there is a need not only for practical policies, but also for a scientific set of methodological instruments for the evaluation, modification and refinement of specific measures. In the interests of transparent decision-making procedures, the Federal Council considers it vital that interested parties be regularly informed as to the extent to which goals have been attained and the effectiveness of the sustainable development policy. This should enable social players to participate in the debate in a focused and efficient way. Monitoring (with the aid of indicators) and specific assessments of efficacy are key instruments in meeting these requirements. In order to integrate sustainable development more effectively into all policy areas, the Federal Council also intends to assess the impact of new laws, schemes, concepts, and projects on sustainable development and report its findings. To this end, it proposes to introduce the following measures:

■ *Measure 21: Monitoring of sustainable development*

Since the promotion of sustainable development is a constitutional requirement for the Confederation, appropriate instruments are needed to measure the extent to which this mandate is being fulfilled. The Federal Council is therefore calling for sustainability indicators to be prepared on a regular basis. The establishment of a system of indicators for the assessment of the sustainable development process will enable the Federal Council to inform the public and decision-makers on a regular basis about the current situation and trends with regard to the economic, environmental and social dimensions. This will also make it possible for potential problems to be identified at an early stage and for the success of the measures taken in the various policy areas to be verified. Within the Federal Administration, the relevant foundations are being elaborated, definitions formulated and a set of indicators developed. For the Federal Council, it is already clear that, if these are subsequently to be implemented in an effective and convincing manner, the following conditions will need to be met:

- The indicator data will have to be regularly updated and the results transparently communicated in a comprehensible form via an information platform tailored to the needs of the target group.
- The structure of the indicator system is to be based as far as possible on existing data sets. However, certain key areas lack a sound statistical basis for decision-making. To ensure that sustainability policy is based on objective circumstances, it is essential that these deficiencies are remedied.
- As sustainable development is a process subject to change, the system of indicators needs to be continuously adapted to altered requirements and issues.

■ *Measure 22: Sustainability assessment*

Numerous projects and concepts from a variety of fields are currently subsumed under the heading of sustainable development, but no suitable instrument is as yet available to specifically assess this aspect of a project. In order to establish more binding criteria for sustainable development, so that it can exert a greater influence on action taken at various levels and be systematically taken into account in sectoral policies, the Federal Council intends to examine the feasibility of a set of methodological instruments. The aim is to develop a tool that can be used to evaluate the effects of draft legislation, concepts and projects in terms of the three dimensions of sustainable development and to indicate potential deficiencies. The Federal Council would thus be able to assess and refine federal projects on the basis of transparent and objective criteria. Before a sustainability assessment can be established and implemented, the Federal Council wishes to investigate the following questions:

- What activities could be subject to a sustainability assessment and what level of impact should such an assessment address?
- At what stage of a project would such an assessment have to be initiated?
- Should new instruments be developed, or can existing assessment tools be expanded by incorporating additional criteria?
- How is a specific sustainability assessment to be differentiated from existing or planned assessment instruments?
- Are the results of a sustainability assessment binding, and who has decision-making authority?
- Into what processes can the sustainability assessment be embedded?

4 Implementation and supporting measures

The 2002 strategy is conceived as a dynamic process. Guidelines for sustainable development in Switzerland have been presented above, together with the action areas and measures proposed. If these are to be implemented, a number of conditions will need to be met. In particular, the next steps will need to be established and a timetable, funding and partnerships will have to be arranged. This will enable coordination and cooperation to be reinforced as a cross-sectional federal task. At the same time, it will be possible to intensify interaction between the various parties involved in sustainable development in Switzerland – in particular, the cantons, towns, and interested parties from civil society and the private sector. Thus, the strategy not only identifies measures to be taken at the federal level, but also creates a framework for the application of the concept of sustainable development across the board, at the cantonal, regional and local levels.

4.1 Responsibilities and structures

Political responsibility for the strategy rests with the Federal Council, which will provide regular information on the status of implementation and comment on the results of the evaluations.

In general terms, no new, additional structures are envisaged for the implementation process. Instead, the measures will be put into action via the Administration's existing structures.

Responsibility for ensuring that the strategy is rigorously pursued lies with the IDARio, which will take on the following tasks:

- Ensuring the coherence of the policies of the various federal agencies.
- Analyzing assessments on behalf of the Federal Council.
- Submitting proposals for improvements, if necessary.
- Defining common principles for the provision of information and communication regarding the strategy and the measures in question.

The IDARio thus serves as an information, coordination and discussion platform with regard to all federal activities and processes of relevance to sustainability. To this end, the committee will hold regular meetings, chaired on a rotating basis by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) and one of the offices of the Federal Department of Home Affairs. The Board of the IDARio, comprising representatives from these institutions and from the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE), prepares decisions for plenary meetings and is responsible for transparent communication.

Responsibility for the implementation of individual measures lies with the lead agency in each case. If necessary, to promote consistency and effectiveness, these agencies may organize meetings with the partners from the IDARio working groups who are responsible for overseeing implementation of the measures. The lead agencies will report annually on the status of activities.



Transparency and openness: debate and ideas welcome.

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The secretariat of the IDARio is operated by the ARE. It performs the following tasks:

- Ensuring liaison between federal agencies, e.g. by organizing meetings of the IDARio.
- Drawing up a detailed strategy implementation programme.
- Reporting on the progress of implementation on the basis of communications from the agencies concerned, and coordination of evaluation efforts.
- Engaging other partners, especially the cantons and towns, in a closer dialogue.
- Communicating the strategy both horizontally, at the federal level, and to the other parties involved.
- Establishing and maintaining interchange with European partners regarding national strategies.¹⁷

Fundamental questions of sustainable development are discussed by the Council for Spatial Planning (ROR), appointed by the Federal Council¹⁸. Responsibility for the secretariat of this extra-parliamentary body is shared by the ARE and seco.

4.2 Schedule, monitoring and evaluation

A separate schedule is to be determined for each measure. Overall, the strategy is designed to cover a period of six years. An interim report on the status of implementation will be issued at the end of the 1999–2003 legislative period. Any improvements prompted by the results of evaluations may be implemented at this point. The strategy will then be extended for another four years and incorporated into the plans for the 2004–2007 legislative period. In due course, it is envisaged that the strategy will be reviewed and revised for the subsequent legislative period.

While the agencies concerned are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the measures implemented, the ARE is to produce an annual report, with a concise summary of the results, on the basis of the information that these agencies provide. Having been reviewed by the IDARio, this information will be made available to the Federal Council, Parliament and the Federal Administration.

To facilitate an interim assessment at the end of 2003 and the in-depth evaluation of the strategy in 2007, a system of indicators is to be developed on the basis of the project on the monitoring of sustainable development in Switzerland (cf. Measure 21). With the aid of national and international studies, a system of indicators is to be elaborated which will track the progress of sustainable development in Switzerland. This will make it possible to investigate in a systematic and objective manner how economic efficiency, the sense of environmental responsibility and social solidarity have developed. This will also give an indirect indication of the extent to which the measures specified by the federal strategy are targeted correctly and whether any adjustments are necessary. The system of indicators will also permit international comparisons.

¹⁷ Depending on the specific topic, the SDC, seco or SAEFL will be responsible for general questions of sustainable development within the context of foreign policy, and especially at the global level.

¹⁸ In 1998, a Council for Sustainable Development was established under the 1997 strategy. Following the administrative reform and the creation of the ARE at the beginning of 2001, its operations were merged with those of the Council for Spatial Planning, which now advises the Federal Council on matters of both spatial planning policy and sustainable development.



4.3 Financing

Essentially, sustainable development is to be achieved not by expanding government activities but primarily through the prioritization and reallocation of existing resources. The aim is thus to reorient existing Administration activities towards sustainable development. However, implementation is only viable within the framework of a sustainable financial policy.

No decisions on financing are associated with the present report. Details of the costs and financing of measures are to be elaborated for individual cases as the work progresses. Financing of individual measures must be secured via ordinary budgetary processes.

4.4 Partnership-based approach and communication

The principles of the national strategy can only be put into practice by involving all the interested parties at the national, cantonal, regional and local level. Cooperation within the federal State is to be optimized with the aid of the Sustainable Development Forum established in June 2001 (cf. Section 2.6 above). The cooperative partnership with industry and the general public should also be strengthened. The present report is intended to provide a starting point for a close dialogue between the federal government, other public sector bodies, civil society and the private sector, which are to be involved in fleshing out and implementing the measures. This will also require greater communication efforts, using methods to be defined by the IDARio.

Relevance of measures included in 1997 strategy to 2002 strategy

Action area/measure in 1997 strategy	Findings of the Federal Council's Interim Report of 11 December 2000	Relevance to 2002 strategy
Action area 1: International commitment		
<i>Measure 1</i>		
Creation of a common basis for international policies on sustainable development	With the approval of the base commune, the measure has been implemented. The content, serving as a guideline, remains an ongoing responsibility.	As it has been implemented, the measure will not be pursued any further. However, the 2002 strategy includes several follow-up measures (in particular, 1, 12, 18, 19, 20).
Action area 2: Energy		
<i>Measure 2</i>		
Continuation and reinforcement of energy-related action	The measure is in the process of implementation. The energy and CO ₂ acts are in force. The «EnergieSchweiz» programme is being prepared and will be launched in Spring 2001.	Measures 3 and 9 follow on from the earlier measure.
Action area 3: Economy		
<i>Measure 3</i>		
Reinforcement of procurement guidelines	The measure has yet to be completed. Awareness of the need to consider environmental and sustainability criteria in procurement activities is to be raised among the officials responsible and support is to be provided in the form of appropriate tools. The results achieved in cooperation with the OECD are to be made available to procurement offices. Efforts to implement the federal resources and environmental management programme (RUMBA) are to be continued, together with the analysis of purchasing activities in the various organizational units. At the same time, incentives for «green» purchasing are to be considered. In addition, Switzerland will call for the interests of sustainable development to be taken into account in the implementation of WTO agreements, specifically the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA).	The measure is to be pursued and implemented independently of the 2002 strategy, in the course of normal Administration activities. A related measure introduced in the 2002 strategy is that of the integrated product policy (Measure 4).
<i>Measure 4</i>		
Extension of programmes to promote the economy and business activity	The measure has yet to be completed. An assessment of open-ended federal support measures has been carried out, and a report has been published. However, this does not exhaust the options for support measures promoting sustainable development. Further efforts are required.	The measure is not being pursued in this form. In a general way, however, Measure 22 is designed to analyze the contribution to sustainable development made by all federal activities.
Action area 4: Consumer behaviour		
<i>Measure 5</i>		
Promotion of transparency, internalization of costs and harmonization at international level	Key steps have been taken on the path to implementation of the measure. However, it remains an ongoing responsibility, given the far-reaching nature of the requirement.	The measure is to be pursued under Measures 1 and 18.

Action area/measure in 1997 strategy	Findings of the Federal Council's Interim Report of 11 December 2000	Relevance to 2002 strategy
Measure 6		
Recognition and promotion of labels	The report on the recognition and promotion of labels has been approved by the Federal Council. With this approval and the request that the activities in question be pursued as an ongoing responsibility, implementation of this measure is assured.	The measure is to be pursued in the course of normal Administration activities.
Action area 5: Security policy		
Measure 7		
Demonstration of the connections between sustainable development and the general security of existence	The measure is in process of implementation.	The measure is to be pursued in a modified form under Measure 20.
Action area 6: Ecological tax reform		
Measure 8		
Energy taxation and reduction of charges on employment	It was not possible for the measure to be implemented. It remains an important element of a progressive environment, climate protection and energy policy.	The measure is to be pursued through Measure 3.
Action area 7: Federal expenditure		
Measure 9		
Further development of a plan for financing public transport	The measure has been implemented in part. Further steps are required, given its far-reaching nature. In particular, a sustainable mobility development plan is to be drawn up. The proposed pilot project on the use of pricing to influence demand for personal transport is to be assessed and appropriately implemented in an agglomeration.	A «Mobility» action area has been included in the 2002 strategy, involving various measures, e.g. the guiding principles for sustainable mobility (Measure 15).
Measure 10		
Continuation and consistent implementation of agricultural reform	The measure has been implemented in part. The Agricultural Report, which is to appear annually from 2000 onwards, and the findings of evaluation projects will make it possible to draw clear conclusions on the progress made by agriculture in the area of sustainability. Initial evidence already suggests that support for ecological performance provided as a result of the agricultural reforms is having a positive impact on nature and the environment. The tide is turning. However, additional efforts are still required in certain areas to resolve environmental problems (nitrates in groundwater, quality of ecological compensation areas).	Following the fundamental reforms of agricultural policy in line with the principles of sustainable development, further efforts will be made independently of the sustainable development strategy.
Action area 8: Implementation and monitoring		
Measure 11		
Creation of a Council for Sustainable Development	The measure has been implemented. With the merging of the Councils for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development, effectiveness and efficiency will be enhanced.	Since it has already been implemented, the measure is not being pursued any further.

Orders

Ordering the Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy 2002

Further copies of this booklet, **Swiss Federal Council: Sustainable Development Strategy 2002, report dated 27 March 2002**, Bern 2002 (44 pages including cover), are available free of charge in English, French, German and Italian from:

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Johannesburg 2002

«Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can – in a global partnership for sustainable development.»

Thus begins the Preamble to Agenda 21, the action plan for the implementation of sustainable development, adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The fact that heads of State and government from all over the world, as well as high-ranking delegates from cultural, business and non-governmental organizations, recognized the need for a new way of thinking and behaving made the Earth Summit a historic milestone. This is also true of the second Earth Summit, to be held in Johannesburg (South Africa) at the end of August 2002, which will focus on the question of how sustainable development policies can be integrated into all sectors.

The Swiss Federal Council has not only specified priority areas for its contribution to the international implementation process before and after the Conferences, but also wishes to press ahead with domestic implementation of Agenda 21. To this end, it has adopted a strategy – the second since 1997 – which includes 22 specific measures in 10 different action areas. The present publication includes the full text of the strategy and also describes how it relates to the 1997 strategy. The strategy demonstrates the Federal Council's commitment to future generations.