

Switzerland

Nature-based Solutions Profile



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Climate & Geography

Switzerland is a landlocked country situated in central Europe. Switzerland's topography is shaped by three main geographic regions: the Central Plateau, the Jura Mountains, and the Alps. The Alps dominate the southern part of the country, while the Jura range lies to the northwest, and the Central Plateau stretches between them as a region of rolling hills, plains, and lakes. Notably, around half of Switzerland's surface area lies over 1,000 metres above sea level. The country experiences a temperate climate, which varies significantly with altitude and region. Precipitation is generally well distributed throughout the year, supporting Switzerland's abundant freshwater resources ([ClimateADAPT, 2025](#)).

Policies incorporating NbS

Switzerland has included NbS in national legal, policy and planning frameworks concerning climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation — both in documentation submitted under the Rio Conventions and in institutional arrangements and governance at the national level.

Submitted under the Rio Conventions

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2031–2035 ([UNFCCC, 2025](#))

Switzerland's second NDC, approved in January 2025, emphasises the role of NbS by aligning with global efforts to conserve, protect, and restore ecosystems, including forests and coastal areas, as vital components in achieving climate goals. It also underscores the importance of sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns, which are supported by healthy ecosystems.

Swiss Biodiversity Strategy ([CBD, 2012](#))

The Strategy outlines strategic goals to conserve biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. The strategy integrates NbS by promoting ecological infrastructure, such as green corridors and protected areas, to maintain ecosystem services that contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation. It also encourages the integration of biodiversity considerations into sectoral policies, including agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning.

Key Domestic Policies

Swiss Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan – Phase I (2017–2024) & Phase II (2025–2030) ([FOEN, 2025](#))

Initiated in 2017, Phase I of the Action Plan implemented measures to promote biodiversity across domestic planning and integrate biodiversity considerations into sectors like agriculture, spatial planning, and transport. Commencing in 2025, Phase II of the Action Plan aims to address existing shortcomings by

enhancing the effectiveness of biodiversity activities. It plans to fill knowledge gaps, test promising approaches, and bolster alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

National Adaptation Strategy – Action Plan (FOEN, 2020)

The Swiss Federal Council's action plan for 2020–2025 outlines 75 measures across various sectors, including water management, agriculture, forestry, and biodiversity. The plan supports NbS by promoting sustainable land use, enhancing ecosystem services, and integrating climate considerations into spatial planning to bolster resilience against climate impacts.

Swiss Landscape Concept (FOEN, 2020)

The 2020 updated Swiss Landscape Concept (first adopted in 1997) provides a framework for coherent landscape development, recognising landscapes as spaces for biodiversity, culture, and economy. It mandates federal authorities to consider landscape and biodiversity in their activities, and promotes safeguarding ecosystem functions.

Forest Policy (FOEN, 2021)

The Forest Policy (2021–2024), first adopted in 2011 but continuing into the future, targets sustainable forest management, balancing ecological, economic, and social demands. It includes targets for nature conservation and CO₂ balance through forest sinks and natural resource management, contributing to both climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

At national level, both forest tree species and structure are being modified based on scientific research, stakeholder participation, and bottom-up governance structures.

Communities and forest owners together with researchers and governmental entities are engaging in trials, as well as acting together in forests where climate damage has occurred.

The federal government is improving the information exchange via new technologies for mapping and providing technical inputs to decision making on the ground.

Federal Act on Climate Protection Targets, Innovation and Strengthening Energy Security (FOEN, 2023)

The Act sets the objective for Switzerland to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It provides financial support for green technologies and infrastructure and stipulates general support for the use of NbS, including restoration and urban greening, to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Switzerland has a long-standing tradition of conservation laws that protect wildlife habitats and ecological corridors, support sustainable land use and community-based conservation, and integrate biodiversity goals into regional planning.

Examples include the Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage (NHG), the Ordinance on the Protection of Wetlands of National Importance, and finally, the Forest Act, which promotes multifunctional forest management.

Switzerland has an Ecological Infrastructure Policy which aims to create a network of connected habitats across Switzerland to support species migration and genetic exchange, enhance ecosystem resilience to climate change, and integrate NbS into spatial planning and agriculture.

At the international policy level most relevant to NbS, Switzerland actively participates in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, and the EU Alpine Convention, promoting sustainable development in the Alps.

NbS Finance

Domestic Financing

The total environmental budget of Switzerland for the 2024-2028 period is CHF 2.207 billion. For forests during this period, parliament has allotted CHF 451 million. This funding supports sustainable forest management, biodiversity, and protection against natural hazards. Funds are distributed through programme agreements between the federal government and the cantons, typically over four-year cycles.

Domestically, the Swiss government allocates approximately **CHF 80 million annually** to implement its Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, focusing on ecological infrastructure, species conservation, and habitat restoration.

Additionally, Switzerland has allocated specific budgets for nature and landscape conservation and forest management. The **Adapt+ programme**, building on a decade-long pilot, launched in April 2025 to support the scaling up of proven NbS projects that enhance climate resilience. Furthermore, the **SwissBiz4Nature** initiative, comprising Swiss-based businesses and founded in 2020, aims to implement 100 NbS projects by 2030, demonstrating private sector engagement in NbS.

International Financing

Internationally, Switzerland channels funding through mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund, to which it has pledged **CHF 135 million for 2024–2027**, including support for NbS projects in developing countries. Additionally, **Switzerland contributes to global partnerships** like the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which integrate NbS into disaster risk management. Switzerland's investments support climate action, biodiversity conservation, and social equity on a global scale — contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) plays a central role in implementing forest-related international cooperation, particularly through its thematic Section Climate, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Environment. Key initiatives include:

- Contribution to UN-REDD to strengthen social forestry in the ASEAN region and Africa,

- Contribution to IUCN to support implementation of the Nature 2030 Programme,
- Contribution to the BioCarbon Fund Initiative Sustainable Forest Landscapes,
- Implementation of the Landscape Fire Management in the Western Balkan Programme.

NbS Governance

Switzerland's national NbS governance is guided by **principles of decentralisation and inclusivity**. Environmental governance is shared across federal, cantonal, and municipal levels, allowing policies to be tailored to local ecological and social contexts. Furthermore, key legislation and strategies promote cross-sectoral integration, especially in agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning. Public participation is a legal requirement, and the governance system ensures transparency and equitable involvement of civil society.

Internationally, Switzerland emphasises equity and participation in its support for NbS through development cooperation and multilateral partnerships. Its international governance approach aligns with principles of **locally-led adaptation** and supports the empowerment of vulnerable communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples and marginalised groups in the Global South.

Through mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and bilateral development programmes, Switzerland **champions policy coherence** and environmental justice, ensuring that NbS contribute to both ecological sustainability and human well-being.

Examples of Swiss national alignment with IUCN's Global Standard for NbS:

Cantonal Implementation

- Canton of Zurich: Revitalization of the Thur River to restore floodplains and aquatic biodiversity.
- Canton of Vaud: Agroecological corridors and pollinator-friendly farming practices.
- Canton of Graubünden: Alpine meadow restoration and slope stabilization to prevent landslides.

Sectoral Implementation

- Agriculture: Ecological compensation areas, agroforestry, and biodiversity corridors.
- Forestry: Climate-resilient species selection, natural regeneration, and multifunctional forest planning.
- Urban Planning: Green roofs, permeable surfaces, and urban tree planting to reduce heat islands.
- Business: Holcim and other companies restoring quarry sites and integrating NbS into operations.

Looking Forward

Alpine Ecosystem Restoration

Projects in the Swiss Alps focus on restoring degraded mountain ecosystems, which are vital for:

- Carbon sequestration through alpine meadows and forests.
- Flood prevention by stabilizing slopes and improving water retention.
- Biodiversity conservation by protecting endemic alpine species.

Forest Management and Reforestation

Swiss cantons are investing in:

- Climate-resilient forests with mixed species to reduce vulnerability to pests and drought.
- Natural regeneration and selective logging to maintain ecosystem services.
- Urban greening to reduce heat islands and improve air quality.

Wetland and River Restoration

Projects like the revitalization of the Thur River and Rhine wetlands aim to:

- Restore natural floodplains.
- Improve water quality and aquatic biodiversity.
- Enhance carbon storage in wetland soils.

Biodiversity Corridors and Agroecology

Swiss farmers and conservationists collaborate on:

- Pollinator-friendly landscapes with wildflower strips and hedgerows.
- Agroforestry systems that combine trees with crops or livestock.
- Ecological compensation areas mandated by Swiss agricultural policy.



ENACT



Switzerland

This nature-based solutions (NbS) profile provides a summary of the available information on NbS-related policies, financing, and governance in the context of Switzerland. It has been compiled using data from peer-reviewed academic literature, official government publications, and documentation produced by international non-governmental organisations. This profile is not intended to be exhaustive, and readers are encouraged to consult additional sources for more comprehensive information. Profiles will be updated by the ENACT Secretariat in collaboration with the ENACT partner on an annual basis to ensure information remains current.