

Swiss Voluntary Actions Announced in Nicosia – Sustainable Tourism

1. Preserve and Valorise Architectural Heritage, Landscape Quality and Biodiversity in the Swiss Tourism Policy

High-quality landscapes and architectural heritage are key to making Switzerland an attractive and productive tourist destination. This requires coordination and cooperation between the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and other sectoral policies, specifically with the Federal Office for the Environment and the Federal Office of Culture. Hence, these offices of three different Federal Departments work together to enhance knowledge-building and exchange as well as to plan and execute projects to preserve and valorise architectural heritage, landscape quality and biodiversity. There are also plans to improve measurability and monitoring.

2. Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change in the Swiss Tourism Policy, by promoting sustainable tourism mobility and sustainable destinations

Specific adaptation measures for the Swiss tourism industry have been defined in the 2020–2025 action plan implementing the Swiss strategy for adaptation to climate change. One of these measures aims at supporting the development of the touristic offer and the diversification of the Swiss tourism sector.

Regarding mitigation measures, the cooperation between the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, responsible for the tourism policy, and the federal offices responsible for mobility issues will be expanded and strengthened in order to promote sustainable tourism mobility in Switzerland. Another measure in the federal government's tourism policy aims at putting a strategic focus on sustainable development at the destination level, as many aspects of sustainable development in tourism are to be addressed at the local level.

3. Launch and Implement the Sustainability Program 'Swisstainable'

Under the 'Swisstainable' sustainability initiative launched in 2021, businesses and organisations that engage on sustainable development are recognised with the 'Swisstainable' label. They are assessed into one of three levels (Level I - committed, Level II - engaged, and Level III - leading) to reflect their degrees of engagement with sustainable development. The target is to increase guest recognition of Switzerland as a sustainable destination by five per cent by the end of 2023 compared with 2020, and to extend the 'Swisstainable' programme to 4,000 entities by the end of 2024. In addition, the 'Swisstainable' programme is currently being developed to allow the labelling of entire destinations.

4. Reduce Food Waste in the Tourism Sector

In April 2022, the Federal Council adopted an action plan with the goal of reducing food waste by half by 2030 compared to 2017. The first phase, until 2025, is based on a cross-sectoral agreement involving the catering, distribution, processing industry and agriculture sectors. The reduction targets are to be achieved through voluntary measures in each of these sectors. The tourism sector in Switzerland, especially GastroSuisse, will enter into such agreements with the Swiss Government that, in turn, will support the deployment of the branch initiatives by removing existing barriers and conflicts of interest. In order to achieve the goal of halving avoidable food losses by 2030, the losses should be reduced by about 25% by 2025. If the scope of the measures is too small and the reduction of food losses too slow, the Confederation can take additional measures in the second phase, after 2025.