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Impact of the Biodiversity Action Plan AP SBS

Executive Summary

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Executive summary

The Federal Council adopted the Swiss Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (SBS Action Plan) in 2017. It divided its implementation into two phases, Implementation Phase I 2017–2023 and Implementation Phase II 2024–2027, designing the measures of Phase II to be dependent on an impact analysis of Phase I.

This report provides an overview of the impact of the SBS Action Plan as of 2022 and presents an initial assessment of the achievement of the objectives of the Swiss Biodiversity Strategy (SBS), while integrating scope for action and guidelines for Implementation Phase II. The focus of the report is on the interim evaluation of the immediate measures, the synergy measures and the pilot projects contained in the SBS Action Plan. The interim evaluation, which was carried out – largely by external experts – in 2021, shows that around one third of the immediate measures, synergy measures and pilot projects were on track, approximately one third were slightly delayed, and one third were severely delayed or had already been substantially modified in terms of content since the project was launched. The interim evaluation found the implementation of the immediate measures to be particularly successful. Although they are part of the SBS Action Plan, they are – unlike the other SBS Action Plan measures and pilot projects – integrated into the established programme agreements between the Confederation and the cantons, thus benefiting from the solid coordination between the FOEN and the cantons. Conversely, where human resources were scarce and/or the processes for implementing a project had to be newly established (as was the case with many synergy measures and pilot projects), the interim evaluation found delays in implementation or a need for adjustments in project planning. It also concluded that the expertise, the high degree of commitment of those responsible, and the material resources available had a positive influence on the impact of the SBS Action Plan. However, according to the assessors, the progress of the measures and pilot projects is being slowed down, particularly due to a lack of human resources. There is potential for optimisation on the part of the Confederation in terms of overall project control and coordination and by involving the federal offices concerned. With regard to Implementation Phase II of the SBS Action Plan, the interim evaluation highlighted a need for increasing human resources, optimising governance of the SBS Action Plan, implementing systematic stakeholder management and establishing regular communication.

The recommendations from the 2021 interim evaluation were implemented promptly. As a result, around 60% of all immediate measures, synergy measures and pilot projects were on track by the end of 2022. The remaining measures and projects showed only slight delays at the end of 2022, and only two projects were still significantly delayed. However, accelerating implementation activities meant fewer targets were achieved, thus the measures and projects had a lower impact on biodiversity than intended or envisaged by the SBS Action Plan.

Conclusive statements on the specific impact of the measures and pilot projects of the SBS Action Plan on the environment or on the achievement of SBS objectives were not possible at the time of the interim evaluation at the end of 2021. However, it is becoming apparent that the immediate measures, in particular, are making a major contribution to SBS objective 2 on the creation of ecological infrastructure.

The interim evaluation of the SBS shows that most of its objectives could not be achieved by the end of 2021. It also makes clear that although the SBS Action Plan is one of the relevant instruments for implementing the SBS, it cannot be the only instrument to achieve the objectives formulated in the SBS.