

Integrated Forest and Wood Strategy 2050

Abridged version of the Federal Council strategy



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

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View from the Albis ridge over the Zurich-Sihlwald peri-urban nature
reserve and Lake Zurich.

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relating to the implementation of the strategy.*

Strategy overview

The Swiss forest is of great importance for the society, environment and the economy. However, the Forest Report 2025 shows that weather extremes and harmful organisms are just some of the factors that can severely affect the forest and jeopardise its functions and services. The Integrated Forest and Wood Strategy 2050 aims to preserve the forest long term in a diverse, healthy and close-to-nature state, and to manage it sustainably in order to maintain its functions and diverse services, such as the efficient utilisation of wood as a domestic resource.

The Swiss forest not only provides wood, it also protects against natural hazards such as avalanches and landslides, provides a habitat for numerous animals and plants, is a place for recreation and helps to regulate the climate. The Forest Report 2025¹ highlights the current challenges facing our forests; heat, drought, storms, the risk of forest fires and harmful organisms have all taken their toll over the last ten years.

Moreover, the economic dimension of sustainability (that is, the production, use and valorisation of wood) has been a problem field for decades. An efficient forestry and wood industry is needed to ensure that the forest can continue to provide its many functions and services. Going forward, Swiss timber will be utilised in a more holistic and pragmatic approach, yet always in compliance with the applicable legal regulations – such as those relating to wood supply, close-to-nature silviculture, and the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

With the **Integrated Forest and Wood Strategy 2050 (IFWS 2050)**, the Federal Council, along with the cantons, aims to ensure that Swiss forests remain healthy, diverse and close to nature. Furthermore, the forestry and wood industry will receive the support it requires to ensure that the range of forest functions and services can be provided over time.

IFWS 2050 sets out how the forest can be protected yet still exploited productively in the long term. It coordinates the approach to social, ecological and economic demands on forests and wood and sets the path for all parties involved to follow. The strategy makes a contribution to the maintenance of our forests, to ensuring they can provide their diverse functions and services and to Switzerland's policies on climate, energy and the environment.

IFWS 2050 was drawn up in close consultation with the relevant federal and cantonal authorities, national associations and interest groups.

Structure

IFWS 2050 covers the period from 2025 to 2050 and comprises three parts:

1. Strategy report setting out the vision, objectives, focus areas and actions;
2. Indicator report containing target values as a basis for controlling and assessment;
3. Action plan setting out the measures to be taken over an eight-year period, initially for the years 2025 to 2032.

This abridged version provides an overview of IFWS 2050 and primarily summarises the contents of the strategy report. Only the original documents are binding for all matters relating to strategy implementation.

The strategy documents and additional information are available online via the following link:

• www.bafu.admin.ch/ifws

¹ www.bafu.admin.ch/forest-report-2025



Luigi Frigerio fells trees
Picture: Franca Pedrazzetti

Vision and objectives

The Integral Forest and Wood Strategy 2050 aims to preserve the forest as a healthy, close-to-nature ecosystem, to ensure forest functions through sustainable management and resource-efficient wood utilisation and by creating suitable conditions for an efficient and innovative forest and wood industry. The strategy contains Vision 2050, which focuses on a balanced relationship between protection and use. Specific objectives are derived from this vision, which are developed into key areas of action.

Vision 2050 aims to preserve the Swiss forest as a close-to-nature, resilient and adaptable ecosystem in its area and spatial distribution. In this vision, the **forest** is managed in such a way that it fulfils its diverse functions and services sustainably and to the same degree, even under changing climatic conditions.

Wood, as a local resource, is utilised sustainably, i.e. efficiently and according to the cascade principle, with the highest possible added value. The forest and wood value chain is environmentally and socially compatible, regionally established and economically competitive. Wood utilisation makes an important contribution to maintaining our diverse forests and maintaining their functions and services.

Forest and wood play a role in Switzerland's sustainable development and to its climate, energy and environmental policies. Together, forest and wood have a climate protection effect and contribute to achieving Switzerland's net-zero climate target.

A range of objectives are set, based on the vision:

- The six **safeguarding objectives** serve to secure the forest and wood system – to preserve the forest as a close-to-nature, healthy and resilient ecosystem with the entirety of its natural components and to ensure a sustainable forest and wood value chain in Switzerland.
- If achieved, the four **performance objectives** will ensure that forest services are preserved and forest products remain available.
- The five **transversal objectives** relate to several areas and contribute to achieving the safeguarding and performance objectives.

The term 'integrated' stands for IFWS 2050's holistic approach: it brings together various previously separate areas and fosters cooperation between the actors.

A global approach to forest and wood

Efficient forest management is essential to ensure forests continue fulfilling their functions and providing ecosystem services. This involves using domestic wood resources more efficiently. To achieve this, the Forest Policy and the Wood Resource Policy, previously separate strategies, have been combined into a single strategy.

Harmonising protection and utilisation

There is careful coordination between protection of the forest ecosystem on the one hand and sustainable exploitation of the forest and use of wood as a resource on the other.

Links with other policy areas

The strategy also takes into account associated topics such as climate, biodiversity, energy, spatial planning, agriculture, natural hazards and safety.

Greater cooperation

The Confederation, cantons and other players from the forest and timber sector work more closely together.

Outlook 2050

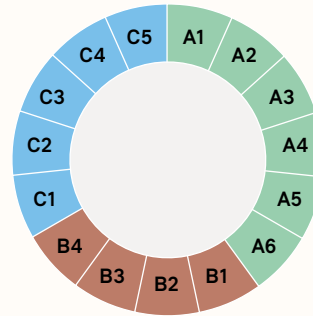
Vision

The Swiss forest is maintained as a healthy, close-to-nature, resilient and adaptable ecosystem. The area it covers and its spatial distribution is preserved. It is managed in such a way that it can fulfil its diverse functions and services even under changing climatic conditions.

Wood, as a local resource, is utilised sustainably. Wood is utilised in a resource-efficient manner in line with the cascade principle – i.e. wood should be used multiple times – and with the greatest possible value added. The forest and wood value chain is environmentally and socially compatible, regionally established and competitive. Wood utilisation makes an important contribution to maintaining our diverse forests and safeguarding their functions and services.

Forest and wood make a contribution to sustainable development and to Switzerland's climate, energy and environmental policy. Together, forest and wood have a climate protection effect and contribute to achieving the net-zero target set by Switzerland's federal act on climate protection.

Objectives



A. Safeguarding objectives







- A1 The area of forest is preserved, as is its spatial distribution.
- A2 By practising close-to-nature silviculture and fostering and interconnecting ecologically valuable habitats, biodiversity is preserved and improved in a focused and effective way.
- A3 Forest can regenerate and develop even under changing climatic conditions.
- A4 The Swiss forestry and wood industry is efficient, innovative and competitive.
- A5 Forest is protected from abiotic and biotic hazards.
- A6 The quality of the forest soil and groundwater and tree vitality are maintained.

B. Performance objectives

- B1 Forest serves a protective function, protecting people and significant material assets against natural events.
- B2 Forest and wood utilisation contribute significantly to climate, energy and environmental policy, including to Switzerland's 2050 net-zero target.
- B3 Swiss wood is harvested sustainably to meet market needs, is processed efficiently and enjoys growing demand.
- B4 Forest provides space for leisure and recuperation as well as for other outdoor activities; these uses are in harmony with the multifunctionality of the forest.

C. Transversal objectives

- C1 There is a sufficiently trained workforce for the forestry and wood industry.
- C2 There is a strong research, development and innovation environment.
- C3 Partnerships are established and synergies exploited at various levels.
- C4 The public is informed about the connections, opportunities and challenges relating to forest and wood.
- C5 Switzerland is actively involved in international discussions and participates in international processes.

Focus areas	Actions
	F1 Sustainable forest and wood value chain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F1.1 Improve synergies between forest management and wood industry. F1.2 Establish cascade and circular use of wood. F1.3 Strengthen and capitalise on the long-term climate benefits of forests and wood. F1.4 Optimise the harvesting and use of wood from Swiss forests. F1.5 Enable forest sector to address economic challenges. F1.6 Boost research, development, innovation and knowledge transfer along the forest and wood value chain. F1.7 Create attractive working conditions and flexible training paths.
	F2 Protection against natural hazards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F2.1 Maintain and improve the protective effect of the forest in specific areas. F2.2 Consider protection forest equally in integrated risk management. F2.3 Consider risk reduction in the context of protection forest management.
	F3 Forest and adaptation to climate change
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F3.1 Ensure sustainable forest regeneration and forest development, regulating the impact of wildlife and taking climate change into account. F3.2 Develop and strengthen close-to-nature silviculture. F3.3 Transition and, where necessary, transform climate-sensitive stands. F3.4 Develop a risk-based approach to forest-specific hazards. F3.5 Develop precautions to deal with major climate change.
	F4 Forest biodiversity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F4.1 Promote and connect ecologically valuable habitats in the forest. F4.2 Conserve and promote national priority habitats and species. F4.3 Boost biodiversity and thus forest resilience and ecosystem services.
	F5 Forest vitality and health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F5.1 Protect forest against harmful organisms (biotic hazards) and minimise the use of environmentally hazardous substances. F5.2 Prepare forest for the effects of drought, storms and forest fires (abiotic hazards). F5.3 Understand the cumulative effects of different hazards (biotic and abiotic) and develop appropriate tools to repair damage and regenerate the affected forest. F5.4 Reduce nitrogen inputs into the forest in order to comply with critical load limits.
	F6 Forest, wood and the general public
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F6.1 Spatially coordinate and direct forest activities. F6.2 Differentiate the right of free access and clarify liability. F6.3 Raise public awareness of issues relating to forest and wood and increase public participation. F6.4 Gain value from tree and forest services and ensure their sustainability.

Strategic priorities for forest and wood

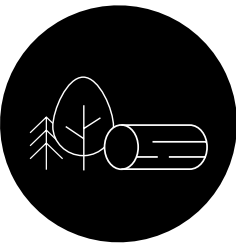
Measures have been drawn up to pursue the IFWS 2050 vision and achieve the strategy's objectives. Existing tasks were analysed in greater depth in those areas with the greatest discrepancy between the current situation and the objectives set. Six focus areas were identified in which the need for action is greatest.

When defining the six focus areas in the IFWS 2050, the challenges posed to forest and wood in Switzerland by prevailing megatrends were taken into account. At the same time, relevant policies such as climate, energy, sustainability, natural hazards and safety, environment and health present numerous opportunities for the forest and the domestic resource of wood; these should be utilised.

The focus areas relate to several overarching objectives of the strategy. This also includes coordination within the forest and wood sector, from strategy and forest planning to silvicultural planning in forest management.

Focus area 1

Sustainable forest and wood value chain

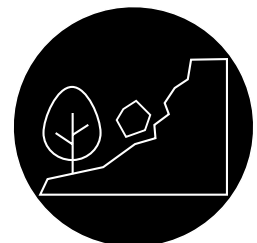


The Swiss forest and wood value chain should be further developed. Cascade utilisation and the circular use of wood must be established. This requires investment in more processing capacity to meet a higher demand for Swiss wood. There needs to be efficient, climate-friendly utilisation along the entire value chain and the support of research, development and attractive working conditions. In addition, the climate services provided by forests and wood must be fostered and valorised in the market economy.

Focus area 2

Protection against natural hazards

In order to ensure its long-term effectiveness, protection forest requires appropriate site-specific and climate-adapted management. Priority is given to forest regeneration. Protection forest should also be better integrated into risk management and considered as a risk reduction factor in planning.



Focus area 3

Forest and adaptation to climate change

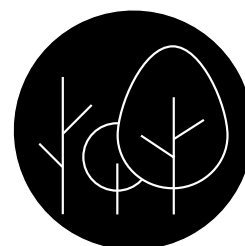


Natural regeneration remains a priority but can be helped along if necessary. The aim is to ensure a high level of genetic diversity in order to maintain the adaptability of the forests. Game populations must be regulated to enable adequate natural forest regeneration suited to local site conditions. Close-to-nature silviculture is developed and climate-sensitive stands are adapted. Contingency measures are being prepared for more severe climate change.

Focus area 4

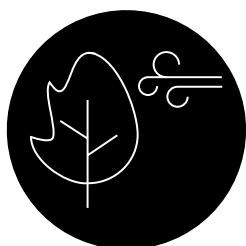
Forest biodiversity

Of key importance are the preservation, interconnection and upgrading of ecologically valuable habitats in the forest (e.g. forest reserves, waste wood islands, habitat trees and transitional habitats). The instruments for promoting species protection are improved. There is greater exploitation of synergies between the integrative promotion of biodiversity in close-to-nature silviculture and risk reduction relating to climate change.



Focus area 5

Forest vitality and health

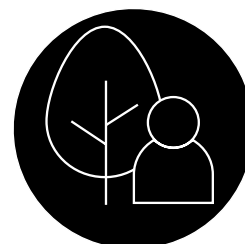


Integrated risk management is required to protect forest and mitigate the cumulative effects of drought, storms and harmful organisms. Environmentally hazardous substances should be avoided and nitrogen inputs from other areas reduced. There is greater support for research, monitoring, knowledge transfer and awareness-raising. The aim is to prevent forest damage where possible and allow regeneration.

Focus area 6

Forest, wood and the general public

Leisure, education and recreation in the forest are becoming more popular and require better spatial coordination in order to avoid conflict and damage. The right of access must be regulated in a differentiated manner and legislation made clear. There is greater public involvement and awareness of forest services. There should be more recognition of forest services such as recreation and health. The aim is to achieve a balanced approach to the forest as a natural, recreational and economic space.



From plan to practice

Timeline and action plans

The **implementation** of the IFWS 2050 will take place in three stages with action plans for the years 2025–32, 2033–40 and 2041–50. Scheduling is designed to ensure the efficient use of resources. A distinction is made between ongoing tasks and time-limited projects. Clear prioritisation of the actions allows for realistic planning and structured implementation.

The **action plans** are drawn up jointly with the cantons and contain specific measures and projects to achieve the objectives. The action plan setting out the measures for the first stage (see page 3) shows the distribution of tasks between the Confederation, cantons and other actors. Permanent tasks such as enforcement and forest monitoring are not explicitly listed, but they remain part of implementation. The action plans will be updated every eight years.

Programmes, instruments and cooperation

The implementation of IFWS 2050 is based on existing instruments such as the Forest and Gravitational Natural Hazards programme agreements, the Wood Action Plan, Promotion of Forest and Wood Research in Switzerland (WHFF-CH) as well as supplementary funding instruments, action plans and strategies such as the Climate Change Adaptation programme and the Swiss Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan. These can be extended if required.

The Confederation and the cantons are jointly responsible for implementing IFWS 2050. The FOEN has the lead, while other federal offices are involved depending on the topic. Cooperation takes place via existing committees or project-related working groups. Forest owners, communes, forestry enterprises, the timber industry, research institutes, training and further education institutions and the general public also play a key role; their commitment and involvement are crucial to the strategy's effectiveness.

Review, controlling and evaluation

An **indicator system** is used to monitor success. On the basis of qualitative, quantitative and time-related criteria, it measures the extent to which objectives are being met and measures implemented. The results are incorporated into planning and steering processes. The indicator system is based primarily on the Forest Report, which is published every ten years (most recent publication in 2025).

A comprehensive evaluation will be made before 2050 to assess the implementation and impact of the IFWS, on the basis of which forest and wood policy will be developed after 2050. Partial evaluations may already take place when the action plans are updated.



Buissons Passerelle, Bulle (FR).
Picutre: Vincent Jendly

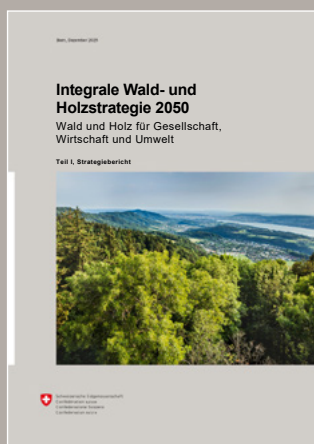
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Reports for download:

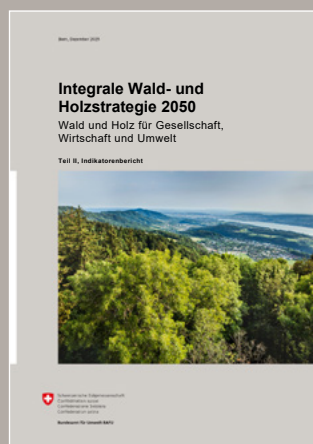
www.bafu.admin.ch/iwhs

(available in German, French and Italian)

Strategy report



Indicator report



Plan of measures

