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STRATEGY FOR COMMUNICATION ABROAD 2025-28

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The present Strategy for Communication Abroad 2025–28, which was approved by the Federal Council on 6 December 2024, is a thematic follow-up strategy to the Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27.

Under Article 3 of the Ordinance of 12 December 2008 on the Cultivation of Switzerland's Image Abroad (Communication Abroad Ordinance: SR 194.11RS 194.11 [link](#) in German, French and Italian), the Federal Council adopts a strategy for communication abroad at four-year intervals.

Foreword

Switzerland's image is a priceless resource that must be defended and strengthened.

Switzerland enjoys a largely positive image around the world, and is one of the most robust national brands internationally. However, we live in a world of increasing instability, greater economic competition and major global challenges. Our task is therefore not only to preserve our image, however it may sometimes be tested. We must also expand our networks to safeguard our interests and refine the way in which we communicate with decision makers, while at the same time maintaining a connection with the general public.

In a world in which image is a decisive factor, Switzerland must communicate strategically, with clear objectives, while remaining true to our fundamental values. Our communication must be factual and coherent to strengthen the credibility of our country. While Presence Switzerland coordinates this strategy, our partners – be they private, public or from our external network – are also vital in helping us adapt communication optimally to individual local contexts.

Our aim for the 2025–28 period is to use Switzerland's communication abroad to serve our country even more effectively, highlighting our strengths, demonstrating our contribution to the common good, and explaining where we stand on international issues. Resources should be focused on those areas that are key vectors of our image.



Recent events remind us of how quickly the world can change. With this in mind, Switzerland's communication abroad must remain agile and adaptable, but with an eye to the long term and our country's strategic needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassis'.

Ignazio Cassis
Federal Councillor
Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Summary

The mission of Switzerland's communication abroad is to convey general knowledge about the country, to promote a supportive attitude towards Switzerland, and to showcase its diversity and attractiveness.¹ Ensuring Switzerland enjoys a good image abroad is not an end in itself, however. It is a competitive advantage in a fast-moving international environment. Many tasks are easier for countries that are well regarded. They are listened to at the political level, can generate understanding for their own concerns, position themselves as attractive and innovative business and scientific hubs, export products, and bring in talent and tourists. In short, they can pursue their own interests internationally.

The strategic objective of Switzerland's communication abroad remains unchanged since the previous strategy. Communication abroad contributes to a positive and nuanced perception of Switzerland and helps safeguard Switzerland's interests abroad using public relations tools. It is important that Switzerland has its own voice. If it does not, other actors will speak up about it and influence how it is perceived. In the present climate especially, Switzerland should not leave it to chance or external opinion formers to decide how it is perceived or if it is noticed at all.

While the overarching aim of communication abroad remains consistent, Switzerland now finds itself in a much-changed international setting. This also impacts on how it communicates with other countries. Coherent and effective communication is becoming ever more important. That is why Switzerland's communication abroad will focus on the following three priorities during the 2025–28 strategy period:

1. Trust: We will strengthen the international community's trust in Switzerland. Our country should be viewed as a credible, reliable and politically and economically stable partner with a clear profile, that has much to offer the world.

2. Innovation: We will raise Switzerland's profile as a leading innovation hub and increase awareness abroad of the quality of the country's innovation ecosystem. This will strengthen Switzerland's economic and scientific competitiveness around the world.

3. Europe and the G20 states: We will increase the visibility of Switzerland's contribution to security, stability and prosperity in Europe. Switzerland will be positioned as a reliable, valuable and competitive partner. Communication will support a more stable and ever-broader bilateral approach with the EU as well as stronger relations with all European states. Beyond Europe, Switzerland will be positioned as a stable, cosmopolitan and competitive partner among the powers and markets that are most politically and economically important to it, especially non-European G20 states.

Switzerland's communication activities in these priority areas will promote its image as an innovative, competitive and trustworthy nation that offers a high standard of living and business environment, and generates added value for others internationally.

Geographically, communication abroad will concentrate on the most important powers and markets for Switzerland globally, with an emphasis on Europe and the G20 states. Key target groups are decision makers and opinion leaders. Relevant networks will be consolidated and expanded so that they can be called upon if necessary.

This Strategy for Communication Abroad will be implemented by means of proven instruments, communication channels and partners from the public and private sectors. Annual foreign policy reports ensure accountability for how the Strategy is being put into action, and what it has achieved.

¹ Art. 1, Federal Act of 24 March 2000 on the Cultivation of Switzerland's Image Abroad, RS 194.1 (in German, French and Italian [link](#)).

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1 Introduction

The international climate for Switzerland is fast-moving, marked by crises and elevated uncertainty. The Foreign Policy Strategy (FPS) 2024–27, adopted by the Federal Council on 31 January 2024, notes that upholding Switzerland's interests is becoming more challenging in this context.² The crucial factor will be to deploy the available instruments strategically and coherently.

Communication abroad is one of these instruments. Communication influences how other countries perceive Switzerland. It should promote its image, generate a supportive attitude, and engender understanding of foreign and domestic policy actions. Communication abroad is not only aimed at foreign governments, however, but also at a broad spectrum of society, including decision makers, opinion leaders, and the population at large in the sense of public diplomacy.³

Switzerland having a good image abroad is not an end in itself, but a key element of soft power at the international level. Positive perceptions enhance Switzerland's attractiveness and persuasive power. In this way, a good image helps to create a conducive environment in which to address Swiss

concerns in areas such as foreign and security policy, diplomatic relations, the promotion of Switzerland as a business location, the economy, the academic sector and tourism. It also helps to mitigate any negative developments.⁴ Communication abroad thus supports effective foreign policy and efforts to uphold Switzerland's security, prosperity and independence.

It is important that Switzerland communicates its values and positions in its own voice. If it does not, its perception abroad, and therefore also its reputation, will be shaped by other actors whose motives are not necessarily benign. In the current context in particular, Switzerland should not leave it to chance or external opinion formers to decide how it is perceived or if it is noticed at all.

Further to Article 3 of the Communication Abroad Ordinance, the Federal Council must define the objectives and thematic and geographical priorities for communication abroad in a strategy published every four years. This then guides where activities are focused, and may be revised if domestic or foreign developments so require.

² FPS 2024–27 ([link](#)).

³ Foreign policy terms such as public diplomacy are explained in the continuously updated FDFA glossary ([link](#)).

⁴ For further reading on the importance and effects of a good image, please consult specialist publications such as Anholt, Simon, *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*, 2007; Dinnie, Keith, *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice*, 2008.

Excursus: Review of the Strategy for Communication Abroad 2021–24

The Federal Council approved the Strategy for Communication Abroad 2021–24 on 18 December 2020.⁵ In this strategy it defined the mission of Switzerland's communication abroad as contributing to a positive and nuanced perception of Switzerland and helping to safeguard Switzerland's interests abroad using public relations tools.

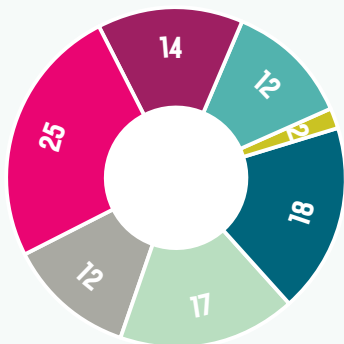
It determined five priorities:

1. Innovation
2. Economy
3. Swiss–European relations
4. Swiss financial centre
5. Sustainability

⁵ Strategy for Communication Abroad 2021–24 [2020 [link](#)].

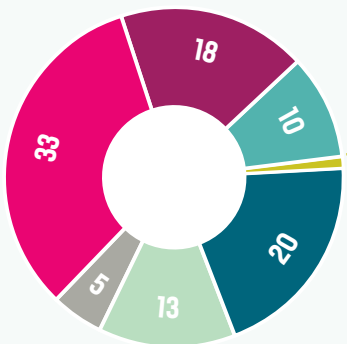
Presence Switzerland communication activities abroad 2021–24 by thematic priority in %

External network communication projects abroad by thematic priority (priorities 1–3, in %)



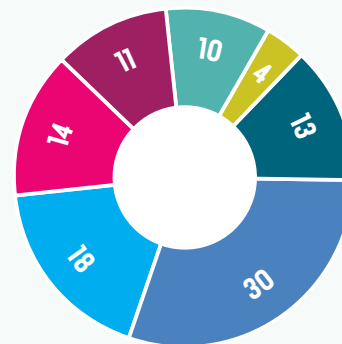
Total 726
2021: 157 projects 2022: 181 projects
2023: 200 projects 2024: 188 projects (as at 18.11.24)

Delegation trips by thematic priority (priorities 1–3, in %)



Total 66
2021: 5 delegations 2022: 18 delegations
2023: 21 delegations 2024: 22 delegations

Digital content prepared for external network by thematic priority (in %)



Basis: weekly digital newsletter from Presence Switzerland (random sample)



Figure 1: Thematic focus of various categories of communication activities during the 2021–24 strategy period.

The strategy was implemented between 2021 and 2024 in accordance with these priorities. Figure 1 shows the thematic distribution of external network projects supported by Presence Switzerland, delegation trips hosted in Switzerland and digital content provided to the network of representations abroad. Strategy implementation work was characterised by closer cooperation with the various Swiss actors operating abroad, and greater coordination to increase the coherence of messaging and its impact. This also enabled the resources deployed to be bundled and synergies to be expanded while at the same time respecting the different mandates of the parties concerned.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a major challenge, hitting Switzerland's communication abroad hard especially at the beginning of the strategy period, as the above analysis shows. The pandemic was also the reason that Switzerland was unable to be present as planned at certain major international events, and not all events with an international reach could be held, such as the Olympic Games, world expos and the World Economic Forum. Some appearances had to be cancelled entirely, for example the House of Switzerland at the Olympic Games in 2020 in Tokyo and in 2022 in Beijing. Since then, Switzerland has been able once again to use these platforms even more effectively for its communication abroad.

The strategy's priorities helped to determine the content of these appearances. Attendance at the following events was used with government and private-sector partners to address both high-level strategic target groups and the general public with the aim of cultivating relationships and promoting perceptions of Switzerland around the world:

- Swiss Pavilion at Expo 2020 in Dubai (01.10.2021–31.03.2022)
- House of Switzerland at the WEF in Davos (2022, 2023, 2024)
- House of Switzerland in Stuttgart (2021)
- House of Switzerland in Milan (2022)
- House of Switzerland, Milan Design Week (2023, 2024)
- House of Switzerland ('Maison Suisse') at the Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games 2024 in Paris (24.07.–11.08.2024 and 27.08.–08.09.2024)

Major events like these had enormous appeal following the lifting of restrictions imposed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitor surveys conducted at Expo 2020 in Dubai and the 'Maison Suisse' in Paris, for example, also demonstrated that Switzerland's core messages had reached their audience. These events also proved themselves as relationship-building platforms. Attendance at major events therefore remains a cornerstone of work to implement Switzerland's Strategy for Communication Abroad. Indeed, it may serve in the relevant regions as a catalyst for important issues. The more flexible 'House of Switzerland' concept, which has been tested since 2021 with the introduction of temporary presences outside of major events, has proved its worth. Milan is one example here. Depending on the resources available, these temporary themed communication platforms should continue to be deployed at appropriate opportunities and key venues.

The previous strategy introduced an additional instrument in the form of campaigns that served to improve perceptions of Switzerland in a particular thematic focus area. They achieved this through shared and combined communication activities, taking a targeted and coordinated approach, with coherent messaging and the involvement of the various public and

private partners concerned. For example, 'swisstech'⁶ was one campaign that was run to promote Switzerland as a place for innovation. Closer cooperation between the actors involved and the synergies that this generated refined core messages, defined target groups more precisely, and amplified the impact of communication.

Experience also showed that not every subject is equally suitable for a campaign as part of Switzerland's communication abroad. This is true, for example, of topics that are relevant across the board. They are better addressed as part of other campaigns and platforms, such as those on the economy or sustainability. This also holds true where it makes more sense for private actors to take the lead (e.g. on the Swiss financial centre), or for targeted and limited communication to be pursued in specific, limited political contexts instead of broad campaigns on, say, Swiss–European relations. One example is the strategic branding of the second Swiss contribution to selected EU member states.

The international climate and also perceptions of Switzerland shifted during the past strategy period following the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022. From the perspective of communication abroad, these events made three things especially clear: first, communication must remain flexible and adapt continually to unforeseen developments; second, at times of elevated tension, well established networks are key. Communication abroad should attach greater importance to this; third, the emotional – and not just the functional – dimension of communication is central to how a country is regarded. Communication activities must address this.

There is room for improvement in the way in which strategy implementation is assessed. At the beginning of the strategy period, indicators and metrics should be determined for the objectives that have been set. These enable the degree of attainment to be analysed.

⁶ <https://www.swiss.tech>.

2 Context

2.1 Perception of Switzerland

Switzerland enjoys a high level of name recognition.⁷ Many people abroad have their own image of the country, but this does not always correspond to reality or how we see ourselves. Yet this image has a bearing on how they behave towards Switzerland, for example whether they believe the statements of Swiss individuals or institutions, buy Swiss products in preference to competing products from other countries, or consider Switzerland as a place to study and work or as a tourist destination. That is why it is important to actively help shape this image.

The international perception of Switzerland is, at present, impressively positive and stable overall. This is evidenced by the analysis of how we are seen abroad, based in part on systematic monitoring of media coverage, as well as an analysis of image studies.⁸ In the respected Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI) 2023, which compares the images of 60 countries, Switzerland has been in the top ten since 2008 and has maintained seventh place since 2020 (see Figure 2).

7 Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index 2023 ([link](#)).

8 Presence Switzerland, Image Monitor 2024 (in German [link](#)).

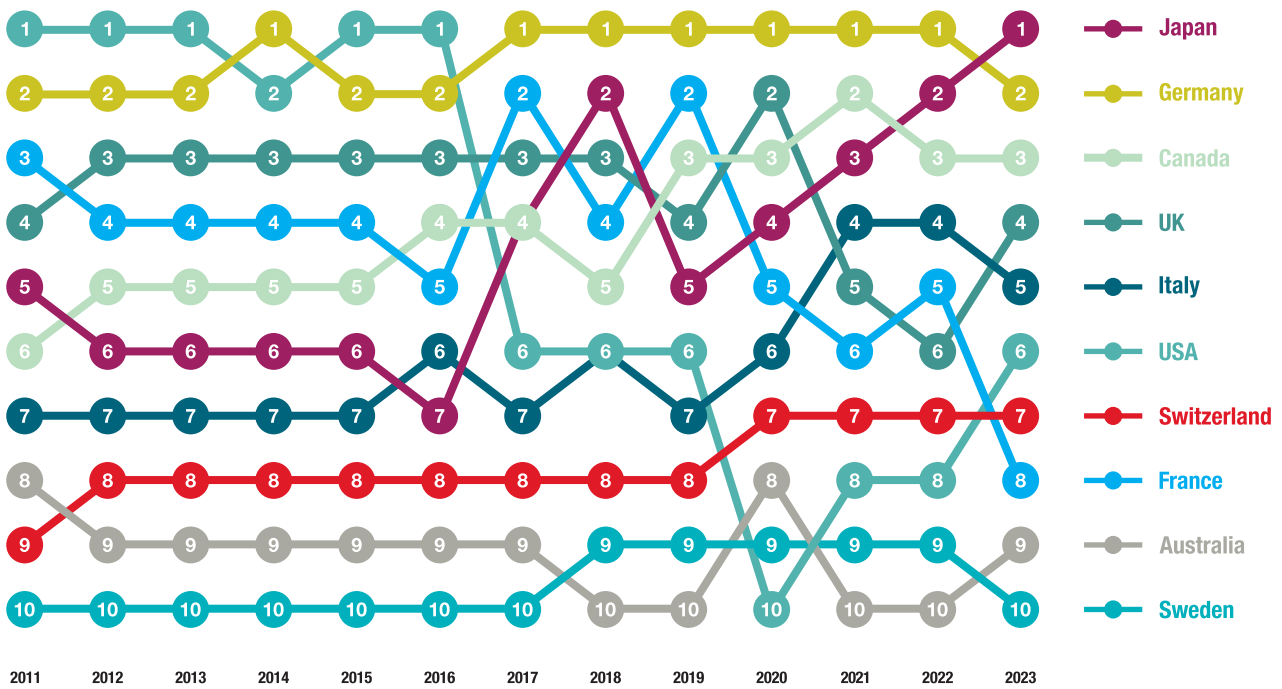


Figure 2: Rankings of the ten best-rated nations in the NBI 2011–23 (source: Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index 2023 [link](#)).

Presence Switzerland Image Monitor

The Presence Switzerland Image Monitor captures Switzerland's image among the general public abroad. The 2024 results are based on a representative survey of a total of 11,130 people in 18 countries, which was devised by Presence Switzerland and conducted between 15 January and 9 February 2024.

The survey has been conducted every two years since 2016 and is designed as a time series study. The aim of the study is to identify developments and trends as to how Switzerland is perceived.

Despite occasional criticism from the European media in particular, such as in relation to the war in Ukraine, Switzerland has to date maintained its excellent image in the world in many areas (Figure 2). The 2024 Presence Switzerland Image Monitor survey confirms this (see box). In representative surveys Switzerland is regularly among the top-ranking

countries on attributes such as business location, quality of life, quality of goods and services, governance and natural beauty. It is also rated positively as a centre for education and research. However, the public abroad still frequently underestimates Switzerland's innovative potential, as image studies demonstrate.

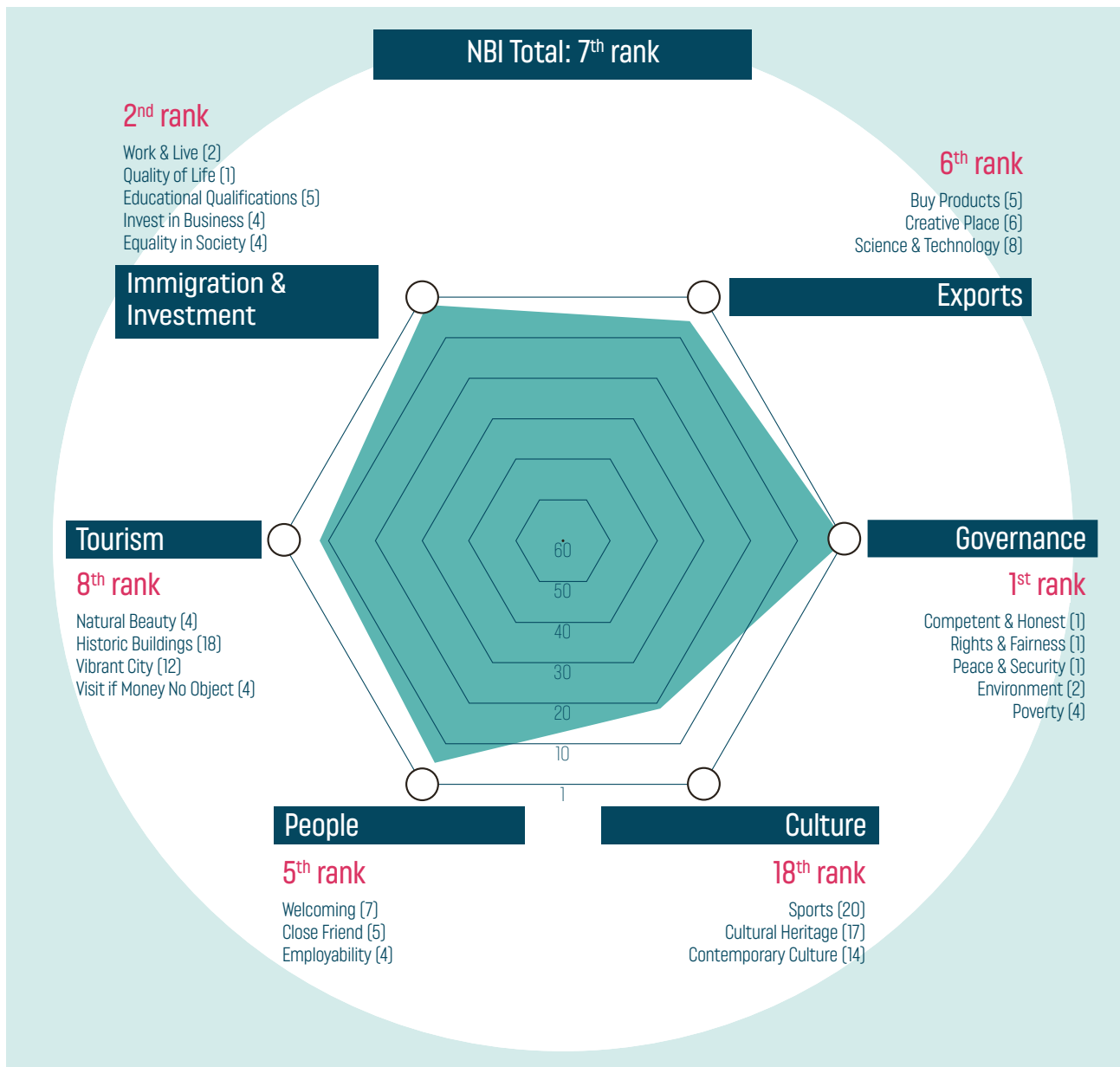


Figure 3: Switzerland's image according to NBI 2023.

The figure shows Switzerland's ranking in the NBI's six dimensions of perception, as well as in each of their respective indicators. For example, under governance, Switzerland ranks first in the views of the general public of 20 countries, because it is seen as having competent and honest government (first rank) that respects rights and fairness (first rank) and works internationally towards peace and security (first rank). It also scores highly on the environment (second rank) and reducing poverty (fourth rank) [source: Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index 2023].

Switzerland is traditionally perceived abroad as a responsible and reliable partner. That said, growing geopolitical polarisation and conflicts in the current global context are affecting how Switzerland is viewed internationally. Global tensions and the war in Europe mean that a spotlight is being shone on Switzerland's actions and its domestic political opinion-forming process. Issues such as neutrality, the export of war materiel and the financial centre have attracted criticism from some quarters.⁹ For example, perceptions of Swiss neutrality among the general public abroad worsened in 2022 following Russia's attack on Ukraine. They have since recovered. It is striking in the findings of surveys in European countries that, compared with other areas, respondents tended to be critical of the role Switzerland plays in Europe, in terms of its contribution to breaking down economic and social inequalities, or ensuring security.¹⁰

Switzerland's image remains steadfastly positive at present. In common with many other countries, Switzerland is monitored closely at international level by governments, media and the public. It must therefore explain its positions not just domestically, but also internationally, and its communication must particularly emphasise those aspects that are important to it.

2.2 Trends

The Federal Council identified core developments around the world in its FPS 2024–27. These include global shifts in power to a world less shaped by the West, a deterioration in security in the regional environment, a bloc-building trend, greater politicisation of economic relations, an increasing trend towards authoritarianism, and major ecological and technological transformations. Polarisation and uncertainty are growing as a result,¹¹ which also impacts on the context for Swiss communication:

- Switzerland is under increasing pressure to position itself clearly. The tone of communication is becoming harsher, and Switzerland's actions have come in for tough criticism. Interference in the information space and the spread of disinformation as a means of waging war are also on the rise.¹²
- Not all issues attract the same attention everywhere. That is why the effect on perceptions of Switzerland differs according to country or region.¹³ This demands a nuanced approach to communication abroad.
- The increasing trend towards authoritarianism is bringing with it stricter controls on the information space in certain regions. This can restrict the scope of Switzerland's communication abroad.
- Digital technologies have made it cheaper and faster than before to produce and distribute information – and disinformation. The growing number of information sources and the unending expansion of available information are making it increasingly difficult for Switzerland to capture attention for its concerns.
- The target audience for communication is often heavily fragmented. Certain target groups can only be reached via specific channels. The influence of once-dominant vectors such as leading media is diminishing. It is therefore vital to choose the right communication channels to target the right audience.¹⁴

In this competitive and confrontational context, coherent communication is more important than ever.¹⁵ It is essential to anticipate potential developments and set clear priorities. This strategy provides the guideposts for doing just that.

9 Presence Switzerland, Switzerland seen from abroad 2022 [\(link\)](#) and 2023 [\(link\)](#).

10 Presence Switzerland, Image Monitor 2024 (in German [link](#)).

11 FPS 2024–27 [\(link\)](#).

12 On 19 June 2024 the Federal Council published a report on influencing activities and disinformation [\(link\)](#).

13 Presence Switzerland, Switzerland seen from abroad 2022 [\(link\)](#) and 2023 [\(link\)](#).

14 Ross Arguedas, A. et al., Echo chambers, filter bubbles, and polarisation: a literature review. 2022.

15 FPS 2024–27 [\(link\)](#).

3 Basic principles

3.1 Mandate

Switzerland's communication abroad should convey general knowledge about Switzerland, promote a supportive attitude towards the country, and showcase its diversity and attractiveness. This core mission is defined in Article 1 of the Federal Act on the Cultivation of Switzerland's Image Abroad and has not changed since the previous strategy. According to the Communication Abroad Ordinance, its principal purpose is to help safeguard Switzerland's interests abroad using public relations tools. This work encompasses the following areas in particular (Articles 1 and 2)¹⁶:

- Promoting the visibility of Switzerland abroad
- Presenting Switzerland's political concerns and positions to a foreign audience
- Expanding and nurturing Switzerland's network of contacts with decision makers and opinion leaders abroad
- Analysing the perception of Switzerland abroad, and reporting on this to the Federal Council and the bodies with responsibility in specific fields

- Managing Switzerland's presence at major international events, such as world expos and the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Submitting communication concepts and content to the Federal Council in the event of threats to Switzerland's image or crises affecting it.

Ongoing communication abroad activities are funded via the FDFA's ordinary budget. Appearances at world expos and at the Olympic and Paralympic Games are funded through the standalone A202.0153 credit facility, covering Switzerland's presence at such expos and major sporting events.¹⁷ Depending on the project, partners such as cantons and the private sector who are involved in communication activities abroad contribute to the costs. Collaboration with sponsors, and the option of bringing in third-party funding, are examined according to the event and theme in terms of their potential benefit. Any such partnership is governed by the FDFA Guidelines on Partnering with Sponsors.¹⁸

16 Ordinance on the Cultivation of Switzerland's Image Abroad. ([link](#), FR).

17 Art. 3, Federal Act on the Cultivation of Switzerland's Image Abroad ([link](#), FR).

18 FDFA Guidelines on Partnering with Sponsors (2021 [link](#), FR).

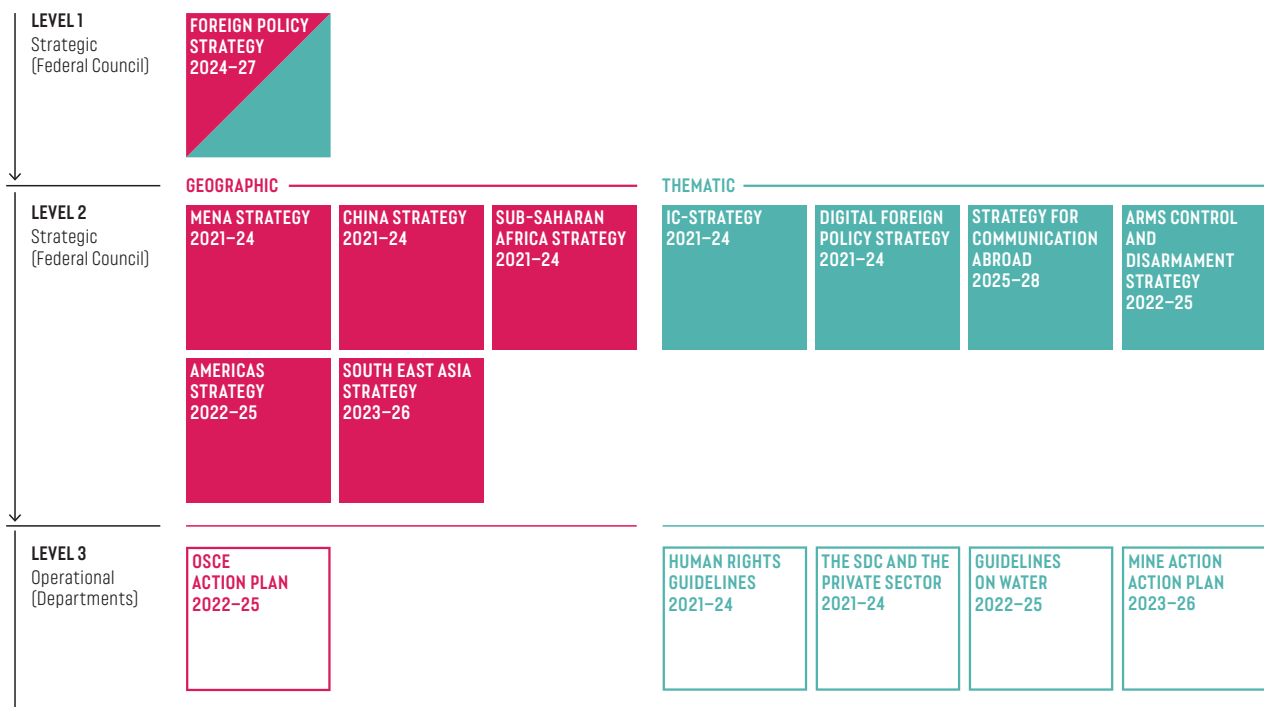


Figure 4: Foreign policy strategy cascade (source: FDFA).

3.2 Coherence

The Strategy for Communication Abroad is a follow-up strategy to the FPS 2024–27. It is an element of the Swiss foreign policy strategy cascade (Figure 4).

Switzerland's communication abroad has a transversal character. According to need and intention, communication draws on suitable topics from the widest variety of fields and all federal government departments to support Switzerland's aims in the areas in question at the international level. In addition to the FPS 2024–27 and its follow-up strategies, other Federal Council strategies and dispatches of relevance

to communication abroad in areas such as foreign economic affairs, the promotion of Switzerland as a business location, financial market policy, security, education, research and innovation (ERI), as well as sustainable development (SDS 2030) and culture all form the framework for the implementation of this strategy for communication abroad (Figure 5).¹⁹ The key question is whether communication abroad can use its instruments to help the federal government achieve its aims in these areas and whether it offers added value. If this is the case, the priorities and content of Switzerland's communication activities abroad are defined in collaboration with the federal government agencies responsible in each case.

19 For example: Foreign Economic Policy Strategy (2021 [link](#)); Dispatch on federal government economic promotion efforts 2024–27 (in French [link](#)); Financial Market Strategy (2020 [link](#)); Security policy report 2021 ([link](#)) and Supplementary report 2022 ([link](#)); Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation (2018 [link](#)); Dispatch on the promotion of education, research and innovation, 2025–28 (in French [link](#)); 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy (2021 [link](#)); Dispatch on the promotion of culture 2025–28 (in French [link](#)).

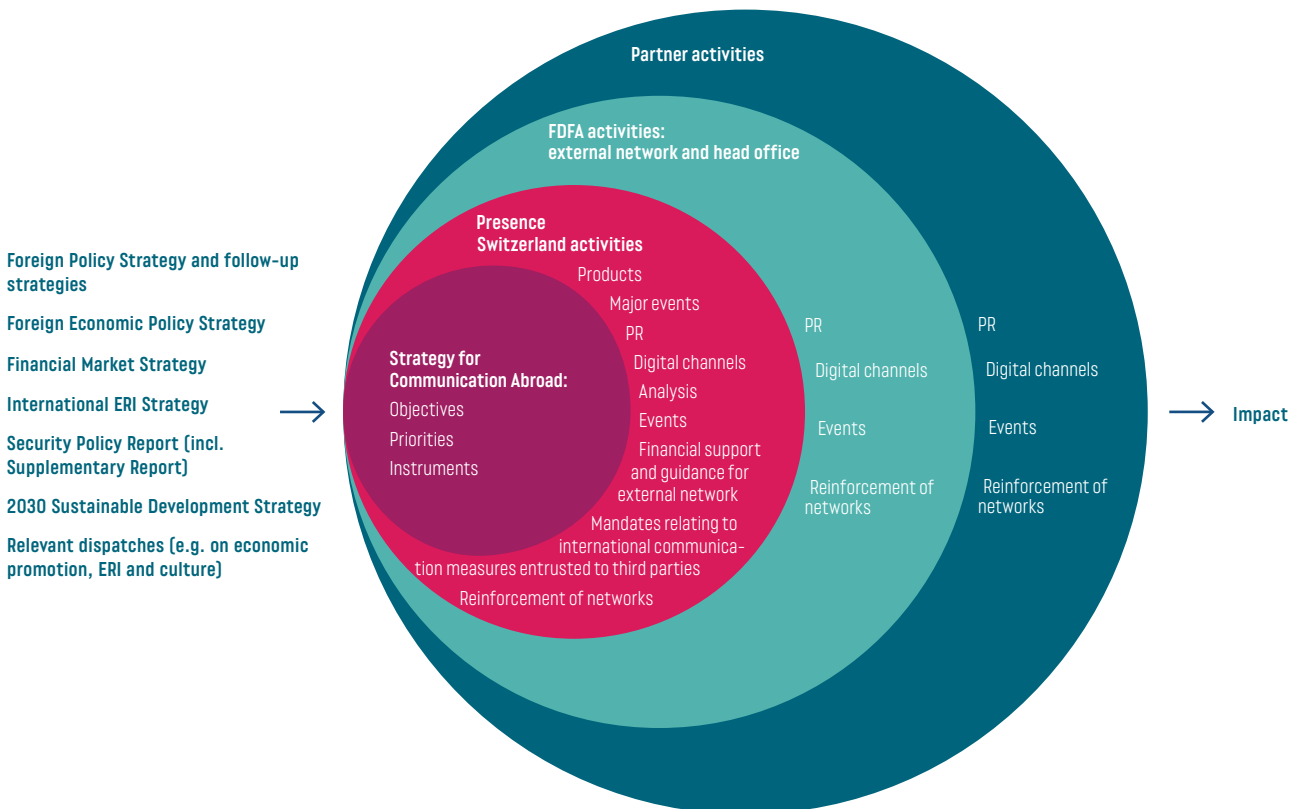


Figure 5: Strategic foundations and activities of Switzerland's communication abroad (source: FDFA).

3.3 Coordination

Collaboration with various partners from the public and private sectors is a proven recipe for successful communication abroad. That is why Presence Switzerland coordinates with all departments and offices, the Federal Chancellery, the cantons, cities and communes, as well as public and private actors from a range of fields: politics, ERI (e.g. universities and other higher education institutions, the Swiss Innovation Park), industry sectors including export and business promotion (e.g. companies and start-ups), tourism, sport, culture and society.

Strategic coordination at the federal level takes place in the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) on Communication Abroad. It is jointly led by the Secretary General of the FDFA and the Vice-Chancellor, who is spokesperson for the Federal Council.²⁰ At the operational level, Presence Switzer-

land coordinates with participating actors in project-specific steering groups or at the bilateral level. Collaboration with Switzerland's representations abroad (embassies, general and honorary consulates, Swissnex locations, Swiss Business Hubs and the federal government's cultural agencies) remains indispensable to coherent communication abroad.

In the event of a threat or crisis affecting Switzerland's image, leadership responsibility falls to the Federal Council, while communication itself is coordinated by the Federal Chancellery. Presence Switzerland is part of the task force, playing its part in early warning and crisis prevention with its monitoring and analysis capabilities. It is able to contribute its expertise on external perceptions of Switzerland and help to formulate concepts and messages. It can also make available its communication channels and networks.

²⁰ All departments are represented in the IDWG on Communication Abroad, as are the Federal Chancellery and any organisations linked to the federal government which have a substantial influence on how Switzerland is viewed abroad. **FDFA**: GS-FDFA/PRS [joint leadership], STS FDFA; **FCh**: Vice-Chancellor [joint leadership]; **FDHA**: GS-FDHA, FOC, FOPH, FSIO; **FDJP**: GS-FDJP, SEM; **DDPS**: GS-DDPS, FOSPO, SEPOS; **FD**: GS-FDF, SIF; **EAER**: GS-EAER, SECQ, SERI, Innosuisse; **DETEC**: GS-DETEC, ARE, FOT, FOEN, SFOE; **External**: Switzerland Tourism, Switzerland Global Enterprise [S-GE], Pro Helvetia.

4 Objective

The focal point of all activities, the underlying objective of Switzerland's communication abroad, is derived from Article 1 of the Communication Abroad Ordinance and remains unchanged since the previous strategy:

Communication abroad contributes to a positive and nuanced perception of Switzerland and helps safeguard Switzerland's interests abroad using public relations tools.

Communication abroad is a factor in ensuring that Switzerland is seen as an innovative, competitive and trustworthy country that offers a high standard of living and business environment and generates added value for others at the

international level as well as for itself. It identifies threats to this image at an early stage and counteracts them. In addition to boosting perceptions of Switzerland generally among the public, it aims to strengthen Switzerland's image in particular among decision makers and opinion leaders, and to expand the relevant networks (Section 6).

The objective of communication abroad is to encourage positive decisions in favour of Switzerland abroad, and to prevent or mitigate negative decisions. To achieve this, it develops and implements targeted communication measures aligned with target groups differentiated by field, country and context, in order to attain set targets.

5 Priorities

In the interests of more focused prioritisation, in view of the above, Switzerland's communication abroad will focus on fewer priorities in the period ahead. This new strategy centres on three themes:

1. Trust

2. Innovation

3. Europe and the G20 states

In doing so it responds to the recent changes in its operating environment. These themes reflect a focus on areas in which there is a great need, and potential, for communication. Geographically, resources for communication abroad will concentrate on the powers and markets around the world that are of greatest political and economic importance to Switzerland, with an emphasis on Europe and the G20 states.

Previously priorities in their own right, the economy and sustainability will now be integrated across all three of this strategy's priority themes. The quality of Switzerland as a business location, and its actors, not to mention Switzerland's commitment to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, remain a rich pool of persuasive content for communication.²¹ Switzerland's financial centre is no longer listed as a separate priority either. After an appropriate period of joint preparatory work involving the federal government and the financial sector, in the future the latter should assume primary responsibility for its own communication abroad. Communication on government frameworks for financial stability and innovation can also be incorporated into the strategy's other priorities.

The necessary flexibility will be maintained. Moving forward, communication abroad must remain agile when the unexpected occurs. Should the need arise to communicate more with other countries, for example owing to political decisions in Switzerland, favourable opportunities or even negative developments on issues that are not at the heart of this strategy, measures can also be taken in these areas.

5.1 Trust

Perception and need for communication

Developments in the international climate affect Switzerland doubly. On the one hand, pressure to position itself and to conform is growing. It comes as no surprise that Switzerland's stance on issues related to the war in Ukraine (neutrality, sanctions and the export of war materiel, for instance) has attracted greater attention, not to mention criticism, abroad. Generally positive attitudes towards Switzerland among the public in some countries declined as a result.²² Neutrality and its utility, in terms of good offices, for example, has come in for greater criticism than before from some quarters (Section 2.1).²³ At the same time, in today's increasingly polarised climate there is a greater need than ever for trustworthy actors that are able to keep dialogue alive.

An analysis of how Switzerland is perceived abroad in the media and among the public reveals occasional uncertainty about its international role. There is thus a need to strengthen trust. Switzerland needs to be seen as a credible, reliable, and politically and economically stable partner that has much to offer the world. This will engender respect for its own policies, even if these are not always congruent with those of its partner countries. This theme is therefore one of the priorities of Switzerland's communication abroad.

Switzerland has a long tradition as a credible, dialogue-ready bridge-builder, and as a well-connected, supportive partner in tackling regional and global challenges (Figure 6). It also has a high-performing national economy that is closely integrated into the wider global economy. It is committed to open, regulated trade, and is therefore an important contributor to prosperity and stability, especially at this time.²⁴

²¹ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([link](#)).

²² Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index 2023 ([link](#)).

²³ Presence Switzerland, Switzerland seen from abroad 2022 ([link](#)).

Presence Switzerland Image Monitor 2022 (in German [link](#)) and 2024 (in German [link](#)).

²⁴ Foreign Economic Policy Strategy (2021 [link](#)).

What Switzerland stands for in the world

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN EUROPE

Switzerland is a supportive partner and constructive advocate of European collaboration.

GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

By acting as a bridge-builder, Switzerland promotes global understanding through dialogue and aims to contribute to the strengthening of trust at international level.



INTERNATIONAL LAW AND MULTILATERALISM

Switzerland is advocating further development of the bases for international relations, and promoting effective multilateralism.

INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

Given the innovative power of Switzerland's research and industry hubs, Switzerland is working to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is implemented and that new scientific findings are put to use for the general public.

Figure 6: Switzerland's profile (source: FDFA).

Communication should spotlight Switzerland's trustworthiness, and improve awareness of its added value at the international level. The country has a substantial track record on which this communication can build:

- As regards peace and security, communication can highlight Switzerland's good offices and its role as host and facilitator for international conferences and diplomatic talks, such as the Summit on Peace in Ukraine and the Ukraine Mine Action Conference which were held in 2024, as well as its role as a protecting power.
- For decades Switzerland has also been committed to both military and civilian peace promotion. Its personal, financial and material contributions are highly valued.
- Its capacity as a host state to international organisations can also be emphasised, specifically in International Geneva. The city is home to over 40 intergovernmental organisations, including specialised UN agencies and international sporting associations, as well as several hundred NGOs. Switzerland also has a tradition as a place for dialogue, governance, science (for example CERN) and science diplomacy (for example GESDA).
- Communication potential can also be found in activities relating to democracy and human rights, in development cooperation, and in humanitarian aid interventions during natural or human-made disasters.
- Where Switzerland participates in international conferences or initiatives, communication can highlight its role in tackling global challenges in areas such as the economy, sustainability, finance and innovation.

Focusing communication on relevant inputs should convey Switzerland's path and voice, expressed in French as 'La voie et la voix de la Suisse'. This should project its profile in such a way that the 'Switzerland' label stands for trustworthiness, reliability and a high standard of contribution to the international community. Communication itself must also be credible. It is the only way to gain the target audience's trust in its content and its originator.

Objectives

1. **Swiss contributions that create trust and demonstrate the country's credibility, reliability and stability, as well as its global value, are given greater visibility, especially among decision makers, opinion leaders and in the media.**
2. **The general public should develop a receptive attitude towards Switzerland. Communication should show that Switzerland plays a positive role in the world and helps to tackle shared challenges as a responsible partner.**

Mesures

- Work with the partners concerned to develop positive narratives surrounding trust, and formulate the corresponding messages.
- Use events and Switzerland's activities such as those described in the areas of peace and security, economy and competitiveness, environment and sustainability, democracy and governance, and multilateralism and International Geneva as a platform for conveying these messages.

Geographical focus

Geographical focus is a product of the priorities and communication needs of the federal government and Swiss political and economic partners, and of opportunities to communicate content. Switzerland's communication abroad centres on the political and economic priorities of the Federal Council, as set out in the corresponding strategies.²⁵

Cooperation

Communication measures are executed in cooperation with the responsible departments, the Federal Chancellery, the cantons, and public and private actors.

5.2 Innovation

Perception and need for communication

An image as a scientifically and economically innovative country generates a positive setting in which to uphold Switzerland's interests. It is gaining appeal as a location for both business and science. The country-of-origin effect means that

products bearing the Swiss Made label achieve higher prices.²⁶ Being perceived as an innovative actor therefore helps Switzerland to position itself as a high-performing, competitive partner and to boost its status in international research and innovation cooperation initiatives.²⁷

Switzerland is an extraordinarily innovative country, as proven by its top placing in respected innovation rankings. For example, in 2024 Switzerland took first place in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Global Innovation Index (GII) for the 14th year in succession. The index measures a country's innovative capacity according to a set of performance indicators. However, Switzerland is not perceived as a highly innovative country, as image analyses such as the NBI 2023 show. Compared with other countries, it achieved only average scores in the survey, which is representative of the general public (see Table 1).

25 FPS 2024–27 ([link](#)) and Foreign Economic Policy Strategy(2021 [link](#)).

26 Anholt, Competitive Identity; Feige S. et al., Swissness Worldwide 2016: Image und internationaler Mehrwert der Marke Schweiz, 2016.

27 FPS 2024–27 ([link](#)) and Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation (2018 [link](#)).

Rang	Performance: actual innovative capacity per GI 2024	Perception: perceived innovative capacity per NBI 2023
1	Switzerland	Japan
2	Sweden	USA
3	USA	Germany
4	UK	China
5	Singapore	UK
6	Finland	Canada
7	Netherlands	South Korea
8	Germany	Switzerland
9	Denmark	France
10	South Korea	Sweden

Table 1: Switzerland's innovative capacity: actual performance vs. perception. According to WIPO's Global Innovation Index (GII), which is based on objective indicators, Switzerland has been the most innovative country in the world since 2011. Yet perceptions among the public abroad differ. According to the NBI 2023, Switzerland only just makes it into the top ten countries globally on the basis of the indicator 'This country makes a major contribution to innovation in science and technology' (sources: Global Innovation Index 2024 ([link](#)), Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index 2023 ([link](#))).

There is room for improvement in bridging this gulf between actual performance and perception abroad. Switzerland should draw greater attention to its actual innovative capacity in order to raise its international appeal. That is why innovation is the second priority theme of communication abroad, following on from its inclusion in the previous strategy. The swisstech campaign was launched in association with various partners such as SERI/Swissnex, Innosuisse, S-GE and digitalswitzerland. An ecosystem has been created that encompasses a brand identity, specific digital channels, and presences at high-profile events such as the Consumer Electronic Show (CES), Vivatech and Slush.²⁸ The campaign offered a platform for start-ups, businesses and those active in science and research, and created numerous opportunities for networking.

Although perceptions of Switzerland on the innovation front have recently improved somewhat,²⁹ national images are slow to change and will generally improve only with determined efforts. What is more, the competition is considerable. Many countries are trying to gain a foothold in this space because innovative capacity and the corresponding perceptions are key elements of soft power. Communication measures must therefore continue in order to position Switzerland as a creative and leading innovation hub in this highly competitive environment. The principles here are to consolidate what has been achieved, and to step up efforts in the future. Switzerland's innovative spirit and its input in progressive solutions should be illustrated by presenting scientific breakthroughs, innovative start-ups and forward-looking developments in the financial sector, for example. Under this priority, suitable content for communication can be found in the part the country plays in managing complex challenges and in encouraging sustainability through more efficient use of resources, as well as in the development of new technologies and sustainable business models.

Objectives

- 3. The visibility and appeal of Switzerland as a hub of scientific and economic innovation, as well as its added value for its partners, are raised among decision makers, opinion leaders and the media.**

- 4. Communication measures around the world among relevant innovation actors raise the profile and attractiveness of the Swiss scientific and economic innovation ecosystem. This consists of institutes of higher education, research institutes, businesses, start-ups and the creative industry, for example. Platforms for communication abroad offer opportunities to nurture relationships between Swiss and foreign target groups.**

Measures

- The swisstech campaign will continue. Elements include participation in high-profile events and trade fairs (CES, Vivatech, Slush), contact with foreign media, a presence on digital channels, and conducting events with the external network, such as projects and delegation trips.
- Activities beyond the swisstech campaign will promote the visibility and attractiveness of Switzerland as an innovation hub. These will include projects with the external network, study and media trips to Switzerland, and communication abroad mandates to third parties.

Geographical focus

Geographical focus is a product of the priorities and communication needs of the federal government and its political and business partners, opportunities to communicate content, and the potential of international markets. Switzerland's communication abroad centres on its foreign economic and innovation policy priorities, in addition to other factors.

Cooperation

To advance these objectives and implement the swisstech campaign, Presence Switzerland works with SERI, including Swissnex, with S-GE and the network of representations around the world, with Innosuisse, the cantons, the Swiss federal institutes of technology in Zurich and Lausanne and other universities, institutes of higher education and research institutes, and with Swiss businesses and start-ups. It also collaborates with respected national and international organisations such as GESDA, CERN and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

²⁸ <https://www.swiss.tech>.

²⁹ Ratings for Swiss innovative capacity improved somewhat in around two thirds of all respondent countries in a 2024 survey compared with a survey in 2022. The greatest gains were found in Italy, Austria and the United Kingdom. See Presence Switzerland Image Monitor 2024 (in German [link](#)).

5.3 Europe and the G20 states

Perception and need for communication

Switzerland is a European country and part of the European community of shared values. It is very tightly interwoven with other European states politically, economically, academically, culturally and socially. At the same time it is cosmopolitan, maintains relations with all countries according to the universality principle, and as an open economy is closely integrated in the global economy. In practice, communication abroad focuses on the powers and markets that are most important to Switzerland. Communication abroad is deployed as a priority where its measures can create a conducive setting in which to uphold Swiss interests, with a particular emphasis on European countries and G20 member states beyond Europe. This leads into the third priority of this strategy.

Where Europe is concerned, the Federal Council highlights that, given the changed global political and economic context, a stable and prosperous European continent has become even more important for Switzerland's own security, prosperity and independence. It therefore declared stabilising and further developing bilateral relations with the EU to be a priority. It specifically also pointed to the importance of relations with Switzerland's neighbouring states, and the significance of border regions. Meanwhile, beyond the EU and its member states, EFTA countries and the United Kingdom are also important partners for Switzerland in Europe in areas such as free trade, financial services, migration and education, research and innovation. Additionally, the Federal Council referenced the situation with regard to Swiss interests in Ukraine and the Western Balkans, etc.³⁰

Against this background, the following measures are to be taken with regard to Europe: first, the stabilisation and further development of relations with the EU in accordance with policy decisions and in coordination with the Federal Chancellery and the government departments concerned. Second, with a view to bilateral relations with European countries there should be even broader communication of the strengths and advantages that Switzerland brings to the table. The contribution that Switzerland makes to security, stability and prosperity in Europe often goes unnoticed, as shown by image surveys conducted in the region.³¹

Appropriate communication measures should counteract this. Communication abroad focuses on topics in which Switzerland's communication needs and the communication potential of the content overlap. It centres on Switzerland's constructive contributions within Europe and on shared interests. It demonstrates that Switzerland generates added value for European countries and coexistence on the European

continent. Topics include the importance of Switzerland as the EU's fourth-largest trading partner and third-largest foreign direct investor, close and mutually beneficial trading relations in border regions, and cultural and interpersonal contact across national borders and throughout Europe.³² This also includes Switzerland's role as a member of EFTA and its close relations with the United Kingdom. Communication might also spotlight Switzerland's achievements as a reliable and supportive partner in the interests of security and stability in Europe. Opportunities here include its involvement in peacebuilding missions such as KFOR or EUFOR Althea, mine action, its efforts to bring stability and prosperity to the Western Balkans, organising peace conferences, its commitment to rebuilding Ukraine, its adoption of EU sanctions and its support to neighbouring states as they cope with natural disasters. The second Swiss contribution to selected EU states should continue to be used for communication purposes in these countries.³³ Switzerland's leading position in education, research and innovation and its associated appeal as a partner to European states also deserve broader attention.

In addition, Switzerland has close political and foreign trade ties at the global level. Diversified relations with the key players, namely the United States and China, as well as other important industrialised and emerging markets in the G20 context, are crucial to upholding Swiss interests. They make the Swiss economy in particular more resilient and thus add to the country's prosperity.³⁴ In a context of widening polarisation especially, this is another instance in which communication abroad can draw the attention of its international target group to Switzerland's strengths. These include its qualities as a business location, its appeal as a trading partner and financial centre, and its world-beating achievements in education, research and innovation. In this way, communication abroad helps to maintain Switzerland's competitiveness and prosperity.

Objectives

- In European countries the visibility of Swiss contributions to security, stability and prosperity in Europe is raised and Switzerland's added value to common interests is emphasised. Switzerland is positioned as a reliable, valuable and competitive partner. The principal target groups are decision makers, opinion leaders and the media.**
- Beyond Europe, Switzerland is positioned among the powers and markets most important to it, and especially among non-European G20 states, as a stable, cosmopolitan and competitive partner. The principal target groups are decision makers, opinion leaders and the media.**

30 FPS 2024-27 ([link](#)), Foreign Economic Policy Strategy (2021 [link](#)), Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation (2018 [link](#)).

31 Presence Switzerland Image Monitor 2024 (in German [link](#)) and Section 2.1.

32 Switzerland-EU in Figures (as at August 2024 [link](#) in French).

33 Swiss contribution to selected EU member states ([link](#)).

34 FPS 2024-27 ([link](#)), Foreign Economic Policy Strategy (2021 [link](#)), Financial Market Strategy (2020 [link](#)), Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation (2018 [link](#)).

Measures

Alongside partners, communication will identify Switzerland's contribution in areas such as the economy and trade, security and stability, ERI, sustainable development and culture. As in the examples given above, content must appeal to the target audience and illustrate the added value that Switzerland offers in the European context. Positive narratives will develop from these themes, with content distributed via the various instruments of communication abroad (Section 7). These include:

- Bespoke communication projects in the external network, such as on the second Swiss contribution to the EU member states concerned, or the importance of political and economic relations with Switzerland in key countries around the world.
- Network events at the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, at the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games 2026 in Milan/Cortina, at Expo 2027 in Belgrade, as well as at the Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games 2028 in Los Angeles (the latter subject to a Federal Council decision on presence with a House of Switzerland at this event).
- Study and media trips in the context of Swiss–European relations and bilateral relations with principal partners around the world.

The special communication platforms that develop from this work will lend greater visibility to Switzerland's added value, create a positive atmosphere for political and business networking and strengthen Switzerland's position with both its European neighbours and non-European G20 member states.

Geographical focus

In Europe the geographical focus is on Switzerland's neighbouring countries and border regions, selected European states both within and outside the EU (such as those holding the presidency of the Council of the EU, and the United Kingdom) and relevant actors in Brussels. Other areas of geographical focus in Europe may be determined according to political and economic need and specific opportunity, such as Switzerland's presence at Expo 2027 in Belgrade. At the global level communication concentrates in particular on non-European G20 members, and on the country holding the G20 presidency at any given time. When implementing the strategy in large countries specifically, it may make sense to focus on certain regions that are of special political and economic interest to Switzerland. Apart from this communication abroad will remain flexible, and even beyond the geographical focus set out here it will use opportune moments in specific countries, such as anniversaries associated with bilateral relations.

Cooperation

Switzerland's actions as part of its communication abroad are instruments that help to achieve the Federal Council's objectives in individual thematic areas. In the European and G20 context especially they are employed where communication supports the achievement of the objectives set out in the Federal Council's strategies (Section 3.2). They are implemented in coordination with the Federal Chancellery, the responsible departments, the cantons, and public and private actors.

6 Target groups

Switzerland's communication abroad is essentially aimed at three target groups:

- 1. Foreign decision makers and opinion leaders**
- 2. Foreign media and disseminators of information**
- 3. General public abroad**

It is vital that target groups are defined precisely to optimise the impact and cost-benefit ratio of communication activities. Depending on the theme and the specific needs surrounding communication they must therefore be mapped before any measures are implemented.

The first task is to identify the group of decision makers (or 'shapers'), as individuals who influence decision-making processes. Opinion leaders and key disseminators of information ('multipliers'), such as the media, must also be determined, as major factors in opinion-forming on a specific topic. Regular analyses allow actors who may be particularly supportive or critical of efforts to safeguard Swiss interests to be identified.

These foreign ecosystems, the way in which they work and their principal members should be recorded at national level on a theme-by-theme basis and updated regularly. Based on this information, the content, tone and channels of communication can be tailored specifically to the interests, expectations and habits of the target groups to maximise messaging impact (Figure 7).

One of the priorities should be to strengthen and nurture networks with decision makers and opinion leaders abroad. To safeguard its interests, Switzerland must ensure that its communication messages reach these target groups and help to shape their perceptions of our country. This also strengthens our ability to exert targeted influence over decisions abroad that affect Switzerland. This is enormously important even in normal times, but when Switzerland's reputation is under pressure, being able to activate networks is crucial.

During this strategy period, Switzerland must continue to expand these networks and promote them strategically using platforms for communication abroad. The network of representations abroad has a fundamental role here in mapping target groups, identifying key individuals in the most important sectors and institutions, and in reinforcing and fostering these networks. This work must be updated regularly so that we can act fast when the need arises.

In addition, emphasis should be given to prominent young public figures. Direct contact with representatives of younger generations with the potential to assume positions of responsibility in the future helps to anticipate opportunities and challenges early on, and to build long-term relationships with this target group.

Objectives

- 7. Lead organisational units at head office and in the external network define precise target groups for their principal communication activities on the basis of current mapping.**
- 8. Switzerland's networks are reinforced and relationships with specific decision makers and opinion leaders deepened.**

WE WANT [WHO] TO THINK [WHAT] IN ORDER [TO]?

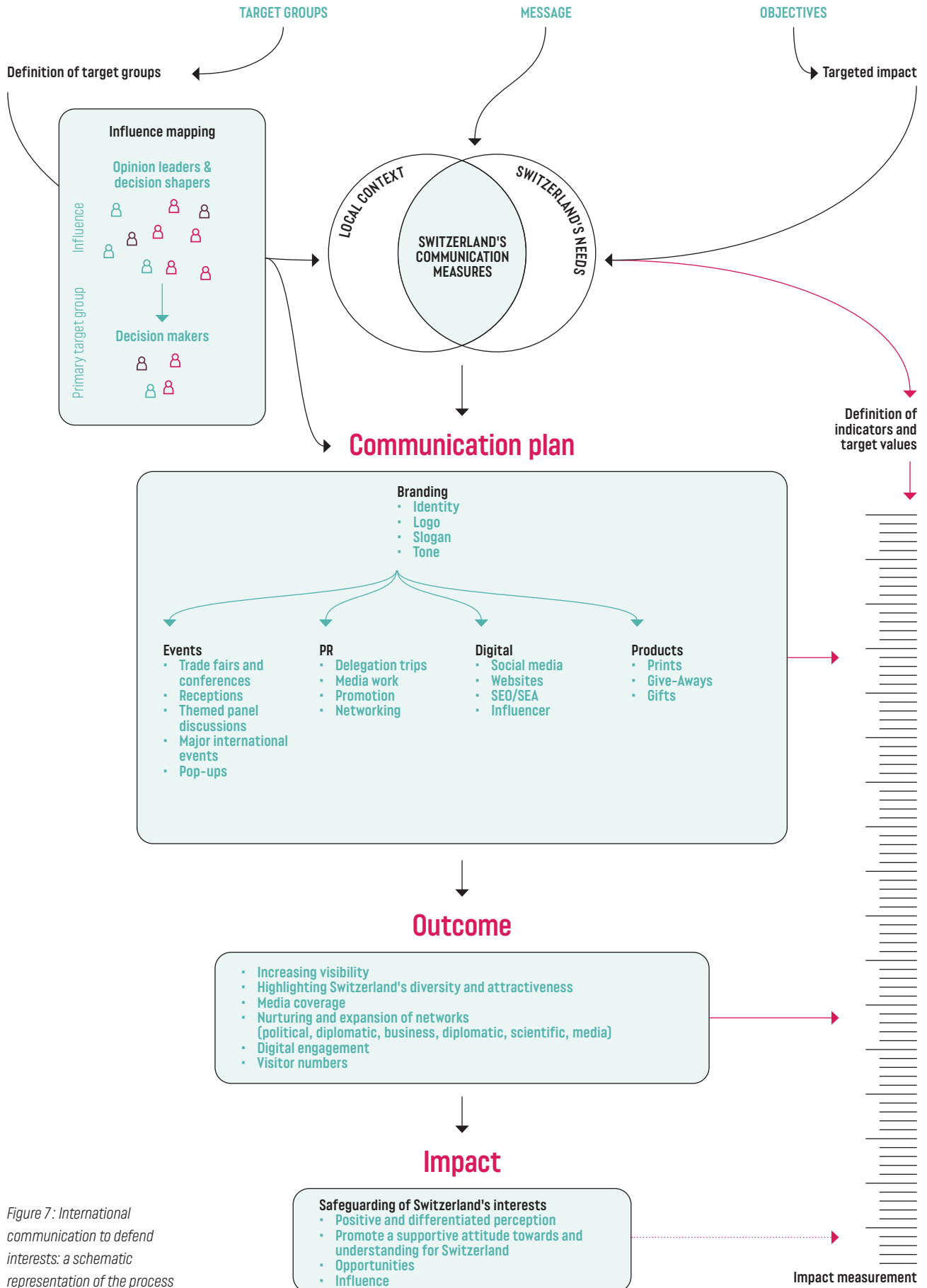


Figure 7: International communication to defend interests: a schematic representation of the process (source: FDFA).

7 Instruments

Switzerland's communication abroad uses a range of proven instruments, platforms and channels. Depending on the intended impact, theme and target audience of communication measures, the right content must be developed and the appropriate channels activated. The correct tone must also be chosen. For example, visitors to the Swiss pavilion at a World Expo must be addressed differently from foreign politicians attending the World Economic Forum. Foreign members of parliament visiting Switzerland for several days as part of a delegation have different information needs than industry representatives stopping by a swisstech lounge at a trade fair to gain a quick overview of the latest innovations and the business potential of Swiss start-ups.

The various instruments of Switzerland's communication abroad translate this strategy into action. The effectiveness of these measures rests on the right mix and coordinated deployment of the different means and channels of communication.

7.1 Content

The way in which communication content is created and curated enables us to convey specific, audience-appropriate messages to a defined target group using images, objects or print media. This content may be published directly or made available to the external network and partners. To ensure transparency the federal government is always clearly visible as the source.

In developing content for communication abroad, Switzerland strikes a balance between the information and message that is to be conveyed, i.e. the content, and the format that is used. The latter must be sufficiently attractive to capture the attention of the target audience. This balance may vary according to subject and audience, but always follows the same principle.

Modular exhibition

The modular exhibition entitled 'Against the current' was developed by Presence Switzerland in collaboration with the SDC. It illustrates the active part that Switzerland plays in human security and prosperity in the world by means of water-based diplomacy (known as 'blue peace') and innovation in the water sector (known as 'blue tech'). The external network can access the content of the exhibition in the form of printable files. These can also be supplemented

with context-appropriate elements that are developed locally. The exhibition was first unveiled by the Swiss embassy in Chile at the Water Congress 2023 and was also opened to the public, in order to encourage dialogue between Switzerland and Chilean representatives on sustainable water access and management and to advance political, economic and academic cooperation in the water sector.

While digital communication has not entirely replaced physical media, its importance has grown further in recent years owing to its speed, costs and sustainability. A hybrid approach combines both, providing digital files for themed exhibitions that are then produced physically where they are needed. This reduces costs and logistical challenges, and means that content can be as locally sensitive as possible.

Furthermore, physical products continue to have a considerable effect especially in an interpersonal context, and because they may last longer than digital elements. Impact, authenticity, usefulness and respect for high production values are some of the criteria that must be examined before deciding to produce such physical information and promotional media.

Newsletter

Each week, Presence Switzerland provides a briefing of content ready for posting on the social media accounts of Swiss representations abroad and partners. It covers the priorities of the Strategy for Communication Abroad, classic public diplomacy, popular subjects on social media, and appropriate news items. The representations then adapt this to their particular contexts, and also develop local content.

Particular attention should be paid to determining needs according to thematic focus areas and to identifying possible content, while synergies must be harnessed more effectively. The costs involved must reflect the potential impact of the content concerned. Close coordination with the relevant public and private partners should ensure that, by identifying complementary resources and through co-productions, synergies can be utilised efficiently while maintaining coherent messaging.

7.2 External network

Switzerland's dense network of around 170 representations around the world plays a key role in communication abroad. Following the cascade structure, the representations draw up their own country-specific communication strategies on the basis of this strategy and in cooperation with the appropriate partner organisations. They also identify the relevant target groups in their host countries in an approach known as influence mapping. This ensures the coherence of communication measures and permits strategic networking.

Projects by the external network

One example of an external network project supported as part of communication abroad was Switzerland's presence as a partner country at the 20th International Symposium Mine Action 2024 in Cavtat, Croatia. The Swiss embassy in Zagreb used the symposium to highlight how Switzerland supported mine clearance in Croatia under the first Swiss enlargement contribution, and to look ahead to future cooperation in connection with the second Swiss contribution. It also positioned Switzerland as the host of the High-level Ukraine Mine Action Conference in Lausanne on 17–18 October 2024.

Presence Switzerland supports the external network in identifying target groups and conducting communication projects and study and media trips. This work also exploits synergies with locally present Swiss actors such as business hubs, Swissnex, Switzerland Tourism, attachés and the private sector, as well as local partners. Project support covers advice, financial grants, knowledge management and the preparation of content. Modular exhibitions that can be adapted to the country concerned are one example here.

Inviting foreign delegations to Switzerland in the context of study and media trips is an effective means of delivering the key messages of the country's communication abroad in a targeted way to selected participants from the fields of politics, government and business, and to foreign media professionals. These delegations are usually coordinated with current projects in the host country.

In addition to showcasing its strengths, this format allows Switzerland to explain sensitive topics. These open exchanges enable participants to form their own impressions of the country. These then help to shape the participants' opinions and their activities in their individual home countries.

Study and media tours

One example of a delegation trip was organised jointly by the Swiss embassy in Washington, D.C., and Presence Switzerland. The 2024 Study Tour: Swiss Innovation Clusters provided a platform for Switzerland to present itself to high-level participants from US think tanks as an innovative country and valuable partner in technological development. Guests visited research institutes (EPFL and ETH Zurich, the University of Bern and the Paul Scherrer Institute) and a number of Swiss companies, and met with representatives of political parties and various federal government departments and offices (e.g. SERI, SECO and the FDFA). The trip resulted in participants publishing positive coverage of Switzerland.

7.3 Stakeholders

In implementing this strategy, Presence Switzerland cooperates with stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. It is these partners primarily who are able to deliver appealing content. A range of topics forms the foundation of effective communication abroad. Examples include conferences in Switzerland, protecting power mandates, humanitarian missions, cleantech innovations that allow businesses and research institutes to tackle global challenges and boost prosperity, and the Swiss contribution to selected EU member states. Stakeholders are encouraged to cover a share of the costs where the thematic area and nature of the event permit.

The task of Switzerland's communication abroad is to present content in an audience-appropriate way. As in the past, in doing so Presence Switzerland coordinates with other departments and offices, with the Federal Chancellery, and with the cantons, cities and communes. It also works with public and private actors from politics, the ERI sector (e.g. universities and other institutes of higher education), business including export and location promotion (e.g. major companies, SMEs and start-ups), tourism, sport, culture and society. Mandates may also be issued to third parties, providing this helps to achieve the objectives of Switzerland's communication abroad.

Both sides benefit from these collaborations. Partners contribute to positive perceptions of Switzerland, while themselves benefiting by association from this affirmative image, and enjoying competitive advantages.

7.4 Platforms and campaigns

'Platforms' are defined as communication measures surrounding an event-based physical presence. They centre on a particular topic or region and their duration varies. The most important platforms designed and run by Presence Switzerland include the Swiss pavilions at world expos and the House of Switzerland during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as at the World Economic Forum.

House of Switzerland

At the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris in the summer of 2024, Presence Switzerland staged the House of Switzerland in Paris, an event platform set up in the gardens of the Swiss embassy in the French capital. Based on the decision of the Federal Council, in addition to supporting the Swiss delegation, the aims of Switzerland's communication abroad in this case were to boost how the country is perceived in France as innovative, efficient and responsible. It was aimed primarily at the Parisian public. It combined a contemporary physical presence with a media and digital communications plan both before and during the event, as well as a varied cultural programme. All in all, it attracted broad media coverage and exceeded its visitor targets. The embassy also used the platform throughout the year ahead of, and during, the Olympics to strengthen bilateral relations. Both the private sector and the cantons were closely associated with the project.

Decisions on the organisation of other platforms are made according to strategic need. These may be part of specific events or separate. In all cases, these platforms should act as accelerators that allow strategic intentions to be pursued at the event in question. The aim is not only to achieve immediate success in terms of attendance and media impact, but also to create opportunities for the Swiss actors involved, to promote how Switzerland is perceived in the host region or on the topics covered, and to expand our network of influence.

Each platform is analysed for its potential impact, its specific objectives and target groups are defined, and a communication plan devised on this basis. The public and private actors relevant to the topic or region are consulted and given the opportunity to join the project.

swisstech

Designed to narrow the gap between the perception and the reality of Switzerland as an innovation hub, the swisstech campaign targets the specialist media, investors and actors in the tech sector. It includes stands at various major events, such as the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Vivatech in Paris and Slush in Helsinki, regular activities in the external network, and digital marketing activities. All are conducted under a single brand. Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE), Innosuisse and the Swissnex network participate in the campaign alongside Presence Switzerland. The measures that are produced or supported combine the dimensions of image, scientific relevance and economic potential. In a highly competitive environment, a permanent presence strengthens the country's image, with a positive effect by association on businesses. They benefit from greater attention, which enables them to boost their own corporate image.

A campaign consists of a set of longer-term, coordinated communication activities that focus on a specific theme. Generally, it includes a brand identity with a distinctive name or logo, digital channels, public relations, a physical presence at relevant events, as well as subject-related content provided to the external network and partners.

To ensure coherent messaging and added value for Swiss stakeholders in the context of a campaign, Presence Switzerland coordinates with the principal public and private institutions in the field concerned. The exact form of this collaboration may vary by campaign, in terms of both governance and cost sharing. Private enterprises may also choose to be involved in all, or only selected, communications activities.

8 Impact measurement

The evolution of Switzerland's image can be tracked with relative accuracy through surveys and various image indices. However, these shifts in perception are usually influenced by numerous factors and only rarely can they be traced back to specific communication measures. This makes it more difficult to gauge the impact of communication abroad. While inputs and outputs – the resources deployed and the number of projects implemented on specific issues – can be recorded in detail, direct impact measurement remains a challenge. However, steps are taken to ensure that activities are aligned with strategic priorities.

The effect on the target audience's perception of Switzerland can nonetheless be established for certain activities. For example, visitor surveys are conducted for Swiss presence at major events such as world expos or the Olympic Games. Systematic surveys for study and media trips also evidence

positive outcomes. Effects on behaviours can only be demonstrated in the form of examples, however. Presence Switzerland must work with partners to determine indicators and targets to assess the impact and cost-benefit ratio of projects more effectively, and to review target attainment.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, Switzerland's communication activities are evaluated regularly, in the Midterm Review, for example. Various formats provide accountability for communication activities abroad. Under the New Management Model for the Federal Administration (NMM), target attainment is reported using predetermined indicators for budgets versus final accounts. Strategy implementation is also reported annually in the foreign policy reports.

9 Annex

Annex 1: Objectives for 2025–28

Priority 1: Trust

1. Swiss contributions that create trust and demonstrate the country's credibility, reliability and stability, as well as its global value, are given greater visibility, especially among decision makers, opinion leaders and in the media.
2. The general public should develop a receptive attitude towards Switzerland. Communication should show that Switzerland plays a positive role in the world and helps to tackle shared challenges as a responsible partner.

Priority 2: Innovation

3. The visibility and appeal of Switzerland as a hub of scientific and economic innovation, as well as its added value for its partners, are raised among decision makers, opinion leaders and the media.
4. Communication measures around the world among relevant innovation actors raise the profile and attractiveness of the Swiss scientific and economic innovation ecosystem. This consists of institutes of higher education, research institutes, businesses, start-ups and the creative industry, for example. Platforms for communication abroad offer opportunities to nurture relationships between Swiss and foreign target groups.

Priority 3: Europe and the G20 states

5. In European countries, the visibility of Swiss contributions to security, stability and prosperity in Europe is raised and Switzerland's added value to common interests is emphasised. Switzerland is positioned as a reliable, valuable and competitive partner. The principal target groups are decision makers, opinion leaders and the media.
6. Beyond Europe, Switzerland is positioned among the powers and markets most important to it, and especially among non-European G20 states, as a stable, cosmopolitan and competitive partner. The principal target groups are decision makers, opinion leaders and the media.

Target groups

7. Lead organisational units at head office and in the external network define precise target groups for their principal communication activities on the basis of current mapping.
8. Switzerland's networks are strengthened and relationships with specific decision makers and opinion leaders deepened.

Annex 2: List of abbreviations

ARE	Federal Office for Spatial Development	G20	Group of 20 (United States, Japan, Germany, China, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Canada, Brazil, Russia, India, South Korea, Australia, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Argentina, the European Union and the African Union)
DETEC	Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications	IC	International Cooperation
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport	IDWG	Interdepartmental Working Group
EAER	Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research	Innosuisse	Swiss Innovation Agency
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	NBI	Nation Brands Index
EPFL	Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne	NMM	New Management Model for the Federal Administration
ERI	Education, Research and Innovation	PRS	Presence Switzerland
ETHZ	Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich	SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
EU	European Union	SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
FCh	Federal Chancellery	SEM	State Secretariat for Migration
FDf	Federal Department of Finance	SEPOS	State Secretariat for Security Policy
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
FDHA	Federal Department of Home Affairs	SFOE	Swiss Federal Office of Energy
FDJP	Federal Department of Justice and Police	S-GE	Switzerland Global Enterprise
FSIO	Federal Social Insurance Office	SIF	State Secretariat for International Finance
FOC	Federal Office of Culture	SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
FOEN	Federal Office for the Environment	SR	Classified Compilation of Federal Legislation
FOPH	Federal Office of Public Health	STS	FDFA State Secretariat
FOSPO	Federal Office of Sport	WEF	World Economic Forum
FOT	Federal Office of Transport	WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
GESDA	Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator		
GII	Global Innovation Index		

Annex 3: Glossary

The FDFA website offers a continually updated glossary of foreign policy terms. Its aim is to foster a common understanding of the terminology used in the strategy context.



Imprint

Editor:
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
3003 Bern
www.fdfa.admin.ch

Date of publication:
06.12.2024

Design:
Presence Switzerland, GS-FDFA, Bern

Cover photo:
swisstech' pavilion at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2024
© Presence Switzerland

Orders:
publikationen@eda.admin.ch

This publication is also available in German, French and Italian. It can be downloaded from the website www.fdfa.admin.ch/publications.

Bern, 2024 / © FDFA

