

Fact Sheet for Planning Levels

Planning level

National level

Planning level	Planning instrument	Content/plan	Legislation	Elaboration	Legal impact	Scale
Federal level	Territorial Concept Switzerland	Abstract spatial strategy for the entire country. Distinguished 12 different action areas.	none	Elaborated by the Federal Office of Spatial Development (ARE). Approved and signed by the cantonal planning authorities.	none	Nationwide
	Sectoral Concept	Covers spatial relevant principles of a specific sector (typically infrastructure such as wind energy, or sport facilities). Must comply with national laws.	Art. 13 SPA & Art. 14-23 SPO	Elaborated by federal department, approved by Federal Council	Legally binding to all public authorities	Nationwide, dependent on the respective content
	Sectoral Plan	Identical to the Sectoral Concept, but additionally includes concrete instructions such as locations for specific tasks (e.g. transport infrastructure or agriculture). Must comply with national laws.	Art. 13 SPA & Art. 14-23 SPO	Elaborated by federal department, approved by Federal Council	Legally binding to all public authorities	Nationwide, dependent on the respective content

Type of plan

Spatial Concept Switzerland



Source: Bundesrat (Ed.) 2018: Raumkonzept Schweiz, cover page

Facts: Spatial Concept Switzerland 2012 (amended in 2018)

Legal basis

N.B. The Spatial Concept's legal basis is not free of controversies.

- Article 75 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation of 18 April 1999 (status as of 7 March 2021) CC 101
- Federal Act on Spatial Planning (SPA) of 22 June 1979 (Status as of 1 January 2019) CC 700

Competencies

- The Federal Office developed the Concept for Spatial Development on behalf of the Federal Council.
- As spatial planning falls with the cantons' field of competences according to the Swiss Constitution, they officially approved the concept. Therefore, they were involved during the process.

Binding force

- In legal theory, the concept has no binding force (it serves as an 'orientation framework'). However, all cantons and the federal government declared that they would comply with it as a voluntary self-commitment. Therefore, the concept is legally binding for public authorities in planning practice.

Tasks and content

- The top-level strategic document contains three nationwide strategies (how the authorities can improve cooperation; enhance settlements and landscapes; and coordinate spatial development, transport and energy).
- The concept outlines planning and its specific challenges within twelve action areas (three metropolitan areas, one capital area, five suburban areas, and three alpine areas).

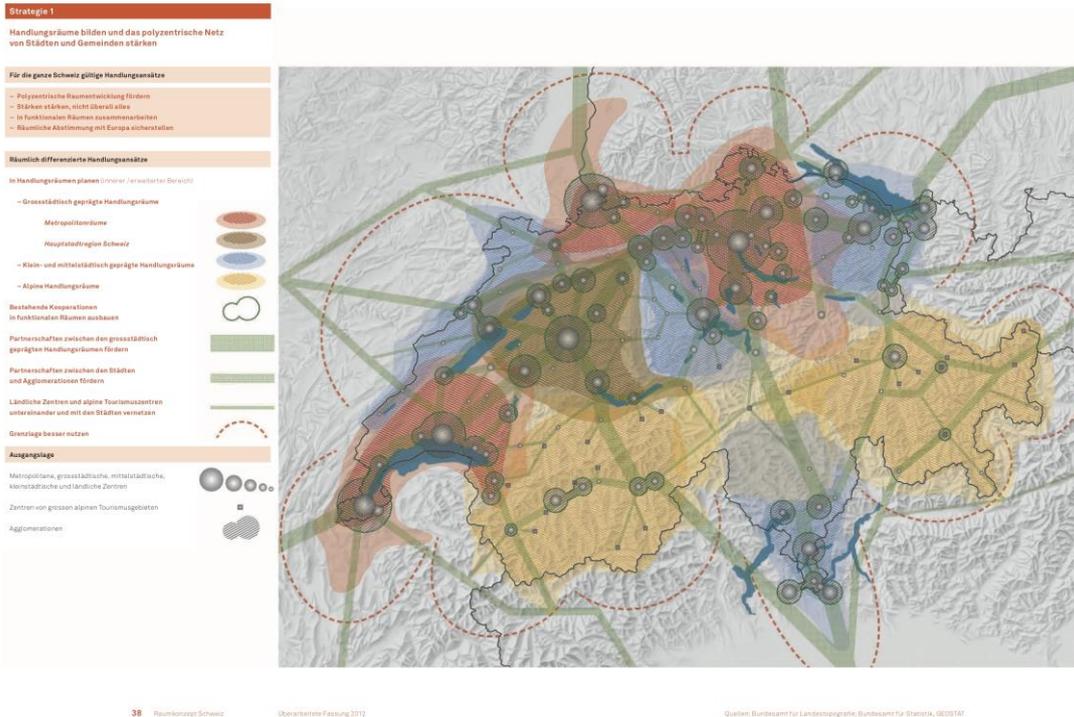
Process, duration, participation

- The concept was subject to broad political discussion involving political actors and essential stakeholders. Furthermore, a general public hearing was organised in the summer of 2011.

Duration of validity

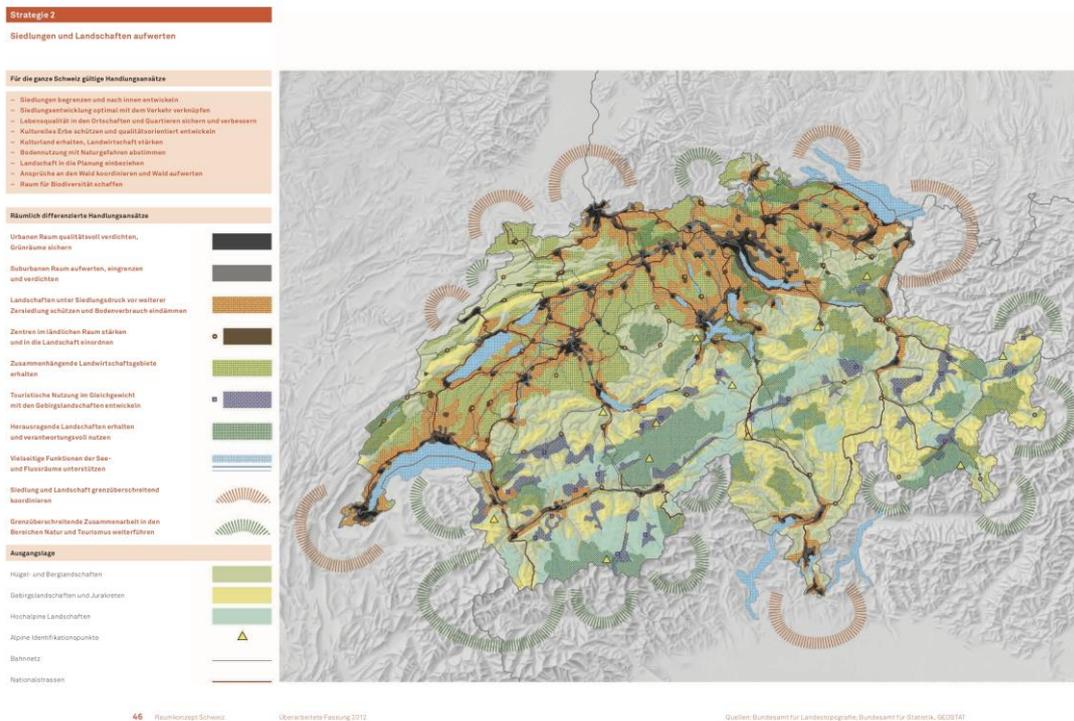
- (Unspecified) long-term planning horizon.

Details of the plan



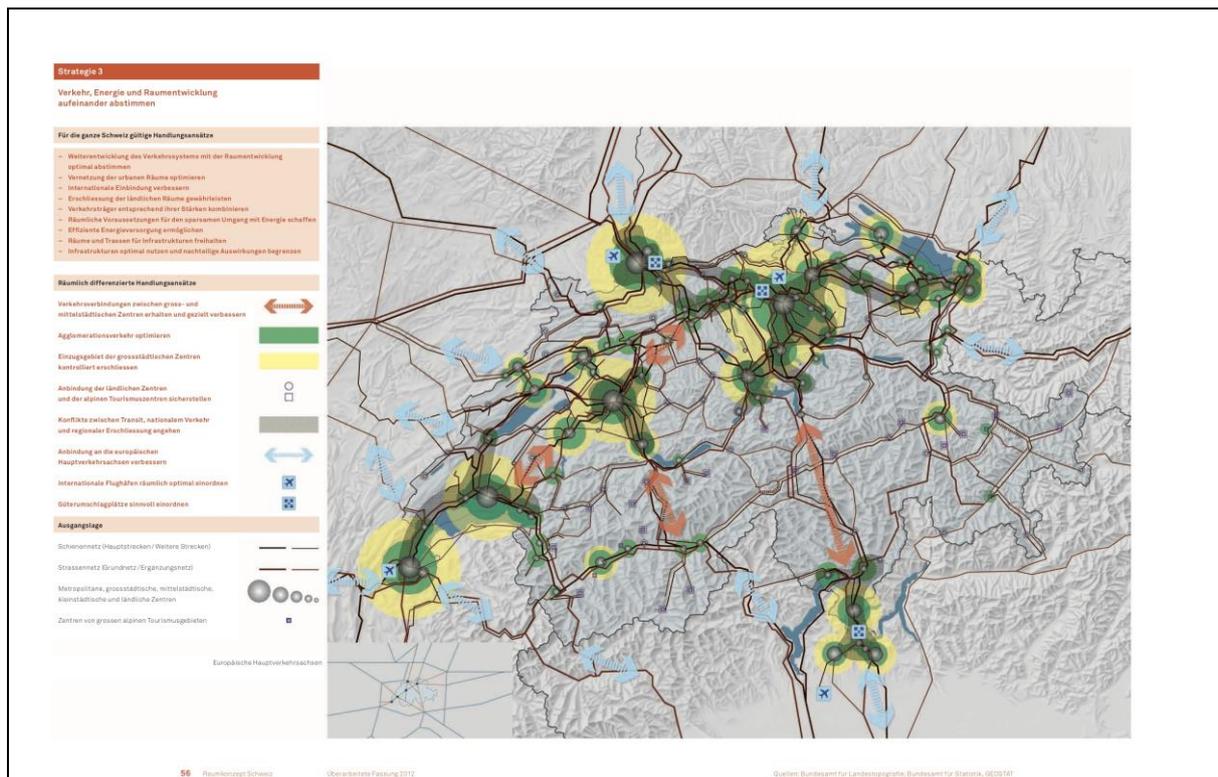
Detail 1: Overall polycentric settlement structure in Switzerland

Strategy 1 shows the action areas: the three metropolitan areas (red), the capital area (brown), the suburban areas (blue), and the alpine areas (yellow). Development corridors within the country (green) and across borders (red dotted) are also shown. Source: Bundesrat (Ed.) 2018: Raumkonzept Schweiz, p. 38-39



Detail 2: Regional characteristics

Strategy 3 shows the regional planning approaches. E.g. densification areas (grey), areas reserved for agricultural production (light green), protection of landscapes of outstanding importance (dark green). Source: Bundesrat (Ed.) 2018: Raumkonzept Schweiz, p. 46-47



Detail 3: Transport and Energy

Strategy 3 shows the main approaches to infrastructure, e.g. measures to strengthen rural centres and Alpine tourist spots (small blue circles and squares), the improvement of passenger connections (red arrows), and freight hubs (blue icon with four arrows inside). Source: Bundesrat (Ed.) 2018: Raumkonzept Schweiz, p. 56-57

Characteristics

Location of the area

The concept covers the entire Swiss territory.

Initial situation

The Spatial Concept is the first such concept; there has been nothing similar on the national level before. After first being published in 2012, it was amended in 2018.

Particularities of the process

First of its kind. The procedure was unclear and subject to controversial debates.

Notes and links

Information on the Spatial Concept by the Federal Office for Spatial Development available in German, French and Italian at: <https://www.are.admin.ch/are/de/home/raumentwicklung-und-raumplanung/strategie-und-planung/raumkonzept-schweiz.html> (Accessed 01 December 2021)