

Swiss Climate and Energy Policy Framework and Targets

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Abbreviations

CDR	Carbon dioxide removal
EnFV	Energy Promotion Ordinance
EnG	Energy Act
EnV	Energy Ordinance
GHG	Greenhouse gas
KIG	Climate and Innovation Act
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NET	Negative emission technology

Chapter 1

Introduction

This report summarizes the current quantitative climate and energy policy targets that are relevant for Swiss energy system modelling. It has been prepared to provide a consistent policy reference for modelling activities within the SWEET programme and related research projects.

Switzerland has adopted legally binding long-term climate objectives through the Federal Act on Climate Protection Targets, Innovation and Strengthening Energy Security (Climate and Innovation Act, KIG), together with complementary legislation including the CO₂ Act and the Energy Act. These legal instruments establish greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, renewable electricity deployment targets, energy efficiency objectives and other quantitative indicators that guide the transition towards a secure, affordable and climate-neutral energy system.

The objective of this report is to consolidate these targets in a single reference document. It does not prescribe how individual modelling studies should represent these targets. Rather, it provides the legislative context, quantitative values and references that can be used consistently across modelling exercises.

The report distinguishes between:

- legally binding targets established in Swiss legislation;
- quantitative policy objectives and intermediate milestones defined in ordinances;
- policy guidance values relevant for energy system modelling.

Chapter 2

Swiss Climate Policy Framework

Switzerland's climate policy is founded on its international commitments under the Paris Agreement and has progressively evolved into a comprehensive legislative framework aimed at achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. This framework combines long-term climate objectives with legally binding emission reduction targets, sector-specific measures, and implementation instruments that guide the country's transition towards a climate-neutral economy while ensuring economic competitiveness and energy security.

The current policy framework is based on three complementary layers:

- International commitments, primarily the Paris Agreement and Switzerland's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC);
- National climate legislation, including the Climate and Innovation Act (KIG) and the CO₂ Act, which establish legally binding climate objectives and implementation measures;
- Supporting strategies and ordinances, which define intermediate targets, sectoral measures, and monitoring mechanisms.

Table 2.1 summarizes the current Swiss climate policy targets, sectoral guide values, and legal basis described in the following sections.

2.1 International commitments

Switzerland ratified the Paris Agreement in 2017, committing to contribute to the global objective of limiting the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5 °C. Under the Agreement, Parties submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) describing their emission reduction commitments and periodically strengthen these commitments over time.

Switzerland's current NDC commits to reducing GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2030 relative to 1990 levels, with a substantial share of these reductions achieved domestically. The NDC also confirms Switzerland's long-term objective of reaching net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. These international commitments provide the overarching framework for subsequent national legislation and climate policy.

2.2 National climate policy

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the Swiss Federal Council adopted the strategic objective of achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. This objective was formalized in the Long-Term

Table 2.1: Overview of Swiss climate policy targets, sectoral guide values, and legal basis. Percentage reductions are relative to 1990.

Policy dimension	2030	2040	2050	After 2050	Legal basis
Economy-wide GHG emissions	⊖ –50%	⊖ –75%	⊖ Net zero	⊖ Net negative	CO ₂ Act Art. 3(1)(a); KIG Art. 3(1)–(3)
Buildings	◇ –50%	◇ –82%	◇ –100%	—	CO ₂ Ordinance Art. 3(a); KIG Art. 4(1)(a)
Transport	◇ –25%	◇ –57%	◇ –100%	—	CO ₂ Ordinance Art. 3(b); KIG Art. 4(1)(b)
Industry	◇ –35%	◇ –50%	◇ –90%	—	CO ₂ Ordinance Art. 3(c); KIG Art. 4(1)(c)
Other sectors	◇ –25%	—	—	—	CO ₂ Ordinance Art. 3(d)
Agriculture	◇ –20%	◇ –30%	◇ –40%	—	Climate Strategy for Agriculture and Food 2050, Figure 7
International aviation and shipping	✗	✗	✓	✓	CO ₂ Act Art. 3a(2); KIG Art. 3(6)
Minimum domestic reduction share	≥ 2/3	Where possible	Where possible	Where possible	CO ₂ Ordinance Art. 2a; KIG Art. 3(4)
Carbon dioxide removal	—	Complementary role	Balances residual emissions	Net-negative emissions	KIG Art. 3(1)–(2)
Carbon storage capacity	—	Capacity development	Sufficient capacity required	Continued availability	KIG Art. 3(5)

Legend — policy instruments:
 CO₂ Act and CO₂ Ordinance

 Climate and Innovation Act (KIG)

 Climate Strategy for Agriculture and Food 2050
Legend — symbols:

⊖ legally binding economy-wide target ◇ sectoral guide value or strategic objective

✓ included in the target scope ✗ excluded from the target scope

Climate Strategy (Swiss Federal Council, 2021) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which outlines sectoral transformation pathways and identifies the role of energy efficiency, electrification, renewable energy deployment, and carbon dioxide removal (CDR) in achieving climate neutrality.

To translate these strategic objectives into legally binding policy, Switzerland subsequently adopted the Federal Act on Climate Protection Targets, Innovation and Strengthening Energy Security (Climate and Innovation Act, KIG, Swiss Federal Council (2022)), while continuing to implement emission reduction measures through the revised CO₂ Act (Swiss Federal Assembly, 2024) and its associated ordinances (Swiss Federal Council, 2025).

2.2.1 Climate and Innovation Act (KIG)

The Federal Act on Climate Protection Targets, Innovation, and Strengthening Energy Security (Climate and Innovation Act, Klima- und Innovationsgesetz in German) (Swiss Federal Council, 2022) establishes Switzerland's legally binding long-term climate objective of achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. Rather than prescribing individual policy instruments, the Act defines the overall emissions trajectory and establishes intermediate milestones to guide the transition.

The Act specifies economy-wide emission reduction targets for the periods 2031–2040 and 2041–2050, together with sector-specific reduction objectives for buildings, transport, and industry. It also recognises that residual emissions from sectors that are difficult to fully decarbonize may remain in 2050 and therefore allows the use of CDR measures to achieve net-zero emissions.

The KIG serves as the principal legislative basis for Switzerland's long-term climate objectives, while implementation measures are provided through complementary legislation, particularly the CO₂ Act. The Act was enacted on 30 September 2022, approved by public referendum on 18 June 2023, and entered into force on 1 January 2025.

2.2.2 CO₂ Act and CO₂ Ordinance

The CO₂ Act (CO₂-Gesetz) (Swiss Federal Assembly, 2024) originally enacted in 2000, revised in 2024, and also effective from 1 January 2025, provides the principal implementation framework for achieving Switzerland's climate objectives before 2050. It establishes legally binding emission reduction targets for 2030 together with policy instruments covering transport, buildings, industry, aviation, and the financial sector.

The accompanying CO₂ Ordinance (CO₂-Verordnung) (Swiss Federal Council, 2025) specifies the implementation of these measures, including emissions trading, carbon pricing mechanisms, reporting obligations, and sector-specific regulations. Together, the CO₂ Act and CO₂ Ordinance translate Switzerland's long-term climate objectives into operational policy measures and define the intermediate targets that guide emission reductions during the transition towards climate neutrality.

2.3 Climate targets and guide values

The Swiss climate policy framework establishes quantitative GHGs emission reduction targets to guide the country's transition towards climate neutrality. These targets combine long-term objectives defined in the Climate and Innovation Act (KIG) with intermediate milestones and implementation requirements established through the CO₂ Act and its associated ordinances. Together, these legislative instruments establish the emission reduction pathway towards net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.

The targets presented in this section distinguish between economy-wide objectives, sector-specific reduction guide values, and the policy principles governing the use of CDR technologies. While the KIG establishes the long-term vision and legally binding targets beyond 2030, the CO₂ Act provides the implementation framework and intermediate targets for the transition towards climate neutrality.

Throughout this report, a distinction is made between legally binding targets (Ziele) established in legislation and guide values (Richtwerte) that provide sector-specific policy direction or implementation guidance.

2.3.1 Economy-wide greenhouse gas targets

The Climate and Innovation Act establishes the legally binding objective of achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. Under the Act, net-zero is achieved through two complementary approaches: first, GHG emissions must be reduced as far as technically feasible and economically viable; second, the remaining unavoidable emissions must be balanced through the application of negative emission technologies (NETs) in Switzerland and abroad.

In addition to the long-term net-zero GHG objective, the Act defines intermediate emission reduction targets that ensure a gradual and predictable transition. These targets are expressed relative to 1990 GHG emission levels and are complemented by the 2030 reduction target established under the revised CO₂ Act. These targets are summarized in Table 2.2

Table 2.2: Economy-wide GHG emission reduction targets. Based on the Climate and Innovation Act (KIG) and the CO₂ Act

Year/Period	Target	Legal basis
2030	At least 50% reduction relative to 1990	CO ₂ Act
2031–2040	Average reduction of 64%	KIG
2040	At least 75% reduction	KIG
2041–2050	Average reduction of 89%	KIG
2050	Net-zero GHG emissions	KIG

2.3.2 Long-term climate objective beyond 2050

The Climate and Innovation Act extends Switzerland's climate ambition beyond the achievement of net-zero emissions in 2050. It stipulates that, after 2050, the quantity of carbon dioxide permanently removed from the atmosphere and stored shall exceed the remaining GHG emissions. This establishes the objective of achieving net-negative GHG emissions over the long term.

Neither the Climate and Innovation Act nor its implementing ordinance specifies a quantitative net-negative emissions target after 2050. Nevertheless, this provision highlights the long-term role of CDR technologies in contributing to climate stabilization beyond the net-zero objective.

2.3.3 Domestic and international emission reductions

The Climate and Innovation Act establishes that the emission reduction targets must be technically feasible and economically sustainable. Furthermore, it states that, wherever possible, the required

emission reductions should be achieved through measures implemented within Switzerland. However, the Act does not prescribe a quantitative limit on the share of reductions that may be achieved abroad.

For the period up to 2030, the revised CO₂ Act provides more specific implementation requirements. It establishes that GHG emissions shall be reduced primarily through domestic measures, while the CO₂ Ordinance specifies that at least two-thirds of the required emission reductions must be achieved within Switzerland. Consequently, up to one-third of the reductions required to meet the 2030 target may be achieved through emission reduction measures abroad.

2.3.4 Sectoral climate guide values

In addition to the economy-wide emission reduction targets, the Climate and Innovation Act establishes indicative sectoral reduction guide values for the buildings, transport, and industry sectors. These targets provide guidance for the decarbonization of the largest emitting sectors while recognizing that mitigation pathways differ according to technological maturity, infrastructure requirements, and economic feasibility. These targets are summarized in Table 2.3.

In addition to legally binding climate legislation, the Federal Council has adopted sector-specific strategies that support the implementation of Switzerland's long-term climate objectives. These strategies provide policy direction for sectors where the transition to net-zero emissions requires coordinated action beyond legislative instruments.

One important example is the Climate Strategy for Agriculture and Food 2050 (Klimastrategie Landwirtschaft und Ernährung 2050), jointly developed by the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG), the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), and the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) (BLW, BLV and BFE, 2023). The strategy establishes guiding principles and objectives for reducing GHG emissions across the agricultural and food system while strengthening resilience to climate change. It recognises that agricultural production will continue to generate biologically unavoidable GHG emissions and therefore emphasises both emission reduction and carbon sequestration measures within the land-use sector.

Although the strategy is not legally binding, it provides an important policy framework for interpreting the role of agriculture in achieving Switzerland's long-term climate objectives and is relevant for energy and integrated assessment modelling.

Table 2.3: Sectoral GHG emission reduction guide values relative to 1990

Sector	2030	2040	2050	Legislation/Strategy
Buildings	-50%	-82%	-100%	CO ₂ ordinance and KIG
Transport	-25%	-57%	-100%	CO ₂ ordinance and KIG
Industry	-35%	-50%	-90%	CO ₂ ordinance and KIG
Other sectors	-25%	–	–	CO ₂ ordinance
Agriculture	-20%	-30%	-40%	Climate Strategy for Agriculture and Food 2050 (Fig. 7)

2.3.5 Residual emissions and carbon dioxide removal

Despite ambitious mitigation efforts, certain GHG emissions are expected to remain in sectors where complete decarbonization is technically infeasible or economically disproportionate. The Climate

and Innovation Act (KIG) therefore recognises the role of CDR in balancing these residual emissions and achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.

At the same time, the Act establishes a clear mitigation hierarchy. It emphasises that GHG emissions must first be reduced as far as technically feasible and economically viable across all sectors before relying on CDR. In other words, all reasonable emission reduction measures should be exhausted before CDR is used to compensate for unavoidable residual emissions. CDR is therefore not intended to substitute direct emission reductions, but rather to complement them where residual emissions cannot be eliminated.

This principle places the primary emphasis on emission avoidance and reduction, while assigning CDR a complementary role that is limited to offsetting unavoidable residual emissions.

The Climate and Innovation Act further requires the Confederation and the cantons to ensure that sufficient carbon storage capacity is available, both in Switzerland and abroad, to enable the achievement of the net-zero GHG target.

2.3.6 Scope of the climate targets

The scope of Switzerland's GHG targets differs between the Climate and Innovation Act and the CO₂ Act. Under the Climate and Innovation Act, emissions associated with fuels supplied in Switzerland for international aviation and international shipping are included within the target perimeter for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and for the subsequent net-negative emissions objective. In contrast, the 2030 emission reduction targets established under the CO₂ Act exclude emissions from international aviation and shipping.

Chapter 3

Swiss Energy Policy Framework

The Swiss energy policy framework aims to ensure a secure, affordable, and sustainable energy supply while supporting the country's long-term climate objectives. It combines legislation promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electricity security with quantitative targets for electricity generation, energy consumption, and winter supply security.

Although climate and energy policies are closely linked, they pursue complementary objectives. Climate policy focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, whereas energy policy aims to transform the energy system by increasing domestic renewable electricity production, improving energy efficiency, and strengthening security of supply. Together, these policy frameworks provide the basis for the energy transition and the decarbonization of the Swiss economy.

3.1 Energy policy

The current energy policy framework is primarily based on:

- the Energy Act (EnG), which establishes long-term objectives for renewable electricity production, hydropower, energy efficiency, and electricity security;
- the Energy Ordinance (EnV), which specifies intermediate deployment targets and implementation measures;
- the Energy Promotion Ordinance (EnFV), which regulates support schemes for renewable electricity production and associated implementation mechanisms.

3.1.1 Energy Act (EnG)

The Federal Act on a Secure Electricity Supply from Renewable Energy Sources (Energy Act, *Energiegesetz* or “Mantelerlass”)(UVEK, 2024) constitutes the central legislative framework for Switzerland's energy transition. It establishes quantitative targets for expanding renewable electricity generation, maintaining hydropower production, reducing final energy consumption and introduces a policy guideline limiting Switzerland's dependence on electricity imports during the winter half-year. In addition to establishing quantitative targets for renewable electricity generation, hydropower production, energy consumption, and winter electricity imports (Section 3.2), the Act introduces several measures to accelerate the energy transition. These include:

- mandatory photovoltaic installations on new buildings with a building footprint exceeding 300 m², requiring the installation of solar panels on roofs or facades;

- measures to improve electricity grid management and increase system flexibility, including the introduction of dynamic electricity tariffs;
- support for local electricity communities and collective self-consumption schemes to promote decentralized renewable electricity generation and improve the integration of distributed energy resources.

These measures complement the quantitative policy targets by facilitating the deployment of renewable electricity generation and increasing the flexibility of the Swiss electricity system.

Energy Act (Energy Act, Energiegesetz or “Mantelerlass”)(UVEK, 2024)

- Enacted: 29 September 2023
- Effective Date: 1 January 2025 (First package); 1 January 2026 (Second package)

3.1.2 Energy Ordinance (EnV)

Energy Ordinance (Energieverordnung – EnV) (Swiss Federal Council, 2024b) specifies the implementation of the Energy Act and establishes the regulatory framework required to achieve its objectives. In particular, it defines intermediate renewable electricity generation targets, technical implementation rules, and administrative procedures.

The ordinance includes provisions relating to:

- intermediate deployment targets for renewable electricity generation;
- implementation of renewable energy support mechanisms;
- technical requirements for grid integration of renewable energy systems;
- financial support mechanisms for renewable electricity technologies, including photovoltaic systems and heat pumps;
- energy efficiency requirements applicable to buildings, transport, and industrial energy use.

The technology-specific renewable electricity targets presented in Section 3.2 are established through the Energy Ordinance.

Energy Ordinance (Energieverordnung – EnV) (Swiss Federal Council, 2024b)

- Enacted: 2018 (Revised in 2024)
- Effective Date: 1 January 2025

3.1.3 Energy Promotion Ordinance (EnFV)

Energy Promotion Ordinance (Energieförderverordnung – EnFV) (Swiss Federal Council, 2024a) complements the Energy Act by defining the financial support mechanisms used to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy technologies.

The ordinance regulates:

- investment contributions for renewable electricity projects;

- operating support schemes for renewable electricity production;
- financial incentives for photovoltaic installations and other renewable technologies;
- support for innovative energy technologies;
- incentives for electricity storage and flexibility solutions;
- energy efficiency support programmes in the residential, industrial, and transport sectors.

Unlike the Energy Act and the Energy Ordinance, the Energy Promotion Ordinance does not establish additional quantitative policy targets. Instead, it provides the financial instruments that facilitate the achievement of the renewable electricity and energy efficiency objectives established in the Energy Act.

Energy Promotion Ordinance (Energieförderverordnung – EnFV) (Swiss Federal Council, 2024a)

- Enacted: 2018 (Revised in 2024)
- Effective Date: 1 January 2025

3.2 Energy targets

The Swiss Energy Act establishes quantitative targets to guide the transformation of the national energy system while ensuring a secure, affordable, and sustainable electricity supply. These targets focus on expanding domestic renewable electricity generation, maintaining hydropower production, improving energy efficiency, and strengthening security of supply during the winter half-year.

3.2.1 Renewable electricity generation

One of the central objectives of the Swiss Energy Act is to expand domestic renewable electricity generation.. Increasing electricity production from renewable energy sources is essential for supporting the electrification of transport, heating, and industrial processes while reducing dependence on fossil fuels and imported energy. The Energy Act therefore establishes long-term deployment targets for renewable electricity production, distinguishing between new renewable energy sources (excluding hydropower) and hydropower.

To ensure a gradual deployment towards the long-term objectives, the Energy Ordinance defines intermediate technology-specific targets for 2030. These intermediate milestones are reviewed periodically by the Federal Council and provide guidance for the development of renewable electricity generation.

The targets for photovoltaics and wind energy are intermediate deployment milestones established in the Energy Ordinance, whereas the targets for total renewable electricity generation and hydropower production are defined in the Energy Act. The technology-specific intermediate targets entered into force on 1 January 2026 following the revision of the Energy Ordinance.

3.2.2 Winter electricity imports

In addition to renewable electricity deployment targets, the Energy Act establishes a policy guideline aimed at strengthening Switzerland's security of electricity supply during the winter half-year. Article

Table 3.1: Renewable electricity generation targets under the Swiss Energy Act and Energy Ordinance

Technology	2030	2035	2050	Legal basis
New renewable electricity (excluding hydropower)	23 TWh	35 TWh	45 TWh	EnV / EnG
Photovoltaics	18.7 TWh	–	–	EnV
Wind	2.3 TWh	–	–	EnV
Hydropower (net production)	–	37.9 TWh	39.2 TWh	EnG

2(3) states that net electricity imports between 1 October and 31 March should not exceed 5 TWh. This objective refers to net imports over the winter half-year (1 October–31 March).

Unlike the renewable electricity production targets, the legislation does not specify a target year by which this guideline should be achieved, nor does it prescribe mandatory corrective measures if the target is exceeded. Rather, the guideline serves as a strategic planning objective intended to encourage sufficient domestic winter electricity production and reduce Switzerland's dependence on electricity imports during periods of high demand.

Table 3.2: Winter electricity import guideline

Indicator	Target	Period	Legal basis
Net winter electricity imports	≤ 5 TWh	Winter half-year (1 October – 31 March)	EnG

3.2.3 Energy consumption targets

Alongside the expansion of renewable electricity production, the Energy Act promotes improvements in energy efficiency through targets for reducing average per-capita energy and electricity consumption. These targets reflect the expectation that technological progress, efficiency improvements, and behavioural changes will contribute to reducing overall energy demand while supporting the transition towards a low-carbon energy system.

The targets are expressed relative to the year 2000 and distinguish between total final energy consumption and electricity consumption per person.

Table 3.3: Per-capita energy consumption targets

Indicator	2035	2050	Baseline	Legal basis
Final energy consumption per capita	-43%	-53%	Year 2000	EnG
Electricity consumption per capita	-13%	-5%	Year 2000	EnG

The quantitative basis for these targets originates from the ZERO Basis scenario of the Energy Perspectives 2050+ developed in 2020 (BFE, 2020), which formed the analytical basis for the corresponding provisions of the Energy Act.

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