



SWITZERLAND



Population: 7.5 million
Capital: Bern
Language: German, French, Italian, Romansch
Currency: Swiss Franc (CHF)
GDP per capita: \$39,800 (2008)

WATER & WASTE WATER

Water is the only major resource that Switzerland has. 4,000-5,000 km of watercourses (roughly 10% of the entire Swiss water distribution network) have been deviated to generate hydroelectric power. Moreover, settlement areas, agriculture, businesses and industry all influence the natural water cycle and their emissions can pollute valuable water resources. Particularly in the densely populated and intensively used Central Plateau, analyses from a large number of monitoring stations indicate contamination with nitrates, pesticides and hydrocarbons, which generally result from intensive farming (mainly from manure, tilling of the ground and pest management) as well as from settlement and urban areas (use of pesticides). In the "Transport and Industry" program, the substance most frequently detected in groundwater was methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), closely followed by the halogenated hydrocarbons tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene. 80% of all drinking water in Switzerland comes from groundwater sources. In general, groundwater quality is good enough that 50% of the groundwater abstracted can be supplied as drinking water without being treated.

Over the past 50 years, water quality in surface and groundwaters has been significantly improved thanks to the construction of wastewater treatment facilities. In the years ahead, further challenges will have to be addressed, such as the problems associated with micropollutants or the need to design sustainable urban water management systems. The 26 cantons (counties) are responsible for enforcement of the Water Protection Act, e.g. specifying conditions for discharges, monitoring wastewater treatment works and implementing the polluter-pays principle. The federal authorities oversee the enforcement of the Water Protection Act and issue implementing regulations.

WASTE & RECYCLING

Since the introduction of the landfilling ban on January 1, 2000, all non-recycled combustible waste in Switzerland must be incinerated in appropriate plants. Since the Thun Municipal Solid Waste Incineration (MSWI) came on stream in 2004, a total incineration capacity of 3.29 million tons has been available in Switzerland. In 2007, 19 million tons waste was produced in the country. Most of the waste, 12 million tons, was construction waste. Municipal waste accounted for 2.6 million tons and hazardous waste for 1.2 million tons. Some 4.1 million tons of waste was recycled. The total electricity production of all 28 Swiss MSW incinerators, is sufficient to meet the energy requirements of at least 250,000 households. Moreover, the heat thus generated can replace imports of around 215,000 tons of oil derivatives a year for heat generation purposes. In 2007, the total amount of recycled waste from households and small businesses accounted for 2.8 million tons. The country recycled 76% of PET bottles, 95% of glass, 77% of paper waste and 66% of batteries. Nearly 21,432 tons of waste was imported.

REMEDIAION & BROWNFIELDS

Careless handling of environmentally hazardous substances and wastes over many decades has left its mark on Switzerland's substratum. The country is now cleaning up the legacy of the environmental misdeeds of the past. Today there are around 50,000 polluted sites nationwide. These include contaminated sites, which in the short or long term pose a hazard to human health and the environment through the release of harmful substances. As this risk is not acceptable over the long term, the federal

government has called for this undesirable legacy of past practices to be neutralized by 2025. In the remediation of contaminated sites, the federal authorities are guided by specific objectives concerning the protection of human health and by the extent of the hazard posed to environmental assets such as soil, air and water.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

There are about 120 Swiss manufacturers and 80 consulting/engineering firms active in the market. Swiss manufacturers benefit from the country's R&D activities and support and, therefore hold a strong position on the highly developed and demanding domestic market. The Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) allocates USD 3.3 million per year to support the development of pilot and demonstration plants and further efforts required to bring new technologies to the markets. In addition to the financing of research projects, the Swiss government actively encourages innovation in other ways. An example of this support is the development of the eco-net.ch program, which is designed to strengthen the environmental technology sector in the country and to serve as a central source of information for companies in the industry.

INDOOR & OUTDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Human health is a priority environmental policy issue in Switzerland. Protecting people against harmful effects – excessive exposure to noise, dangerous substances and organisms, non-ionizing radiation and air pollution – is an established objective of environmental legislation. The areas of greatest concern for indoor air quality in private households, office buildings, hospitals, manufacturing sites, etc. are the increase of non-ionizing radiation, energy production, fine particles, chemical substances contained in building materials and cleaning products, damp, radon, etc.

In general, the implementation of environmental policy based on objectives set by law, have produced good results as regards combating pollution (air, water and soil), protection of the ozone layer, and waste processing. However, although the objectives in certain areas were attained, others require further effort to ensure compliance with national legislation and international obligations. For instance, atmospheric emissions of ozone precursors or fine particles are still too high, as are greenhouse gas emissions. Air quality needs to be improved further because of excessive emissions of nitric oxide, ozone and suspended dust.

TRADE EVENTS

ILMAC in Basel; September 21-24, 2010, www.ilmac.ch

Umwelt in Zurich, September 2010, www.umwelt08.ch

AVAILABLE MARKET RESEARCH

Air Pollution Control and Monitoring Equipment (2007)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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