

Press release

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'Pulse of Switzerland': Swiss public calls on companies, the state and consumers to work harder to improve sustainability

Two-thirds of people in Switzerland believe that the responsibility for making the country more sustainable rests mainly with companies. They also think the state and consumers should try to make a difference as well. According to the most recent ['Pulse of Switzerland' survey](#) by Deloitte, over half the population are in favour of state subsidies for businesses that act sustainably. However, three-quarters of respondents also said they want to take action themselves: The most common intention, cited by 57 per cent of respondents in total, is to eat more sustainably in future. The survey results reveal a clear message: To make Switzerland more sustainable, all players in the market need to work together.

Sustainability is something that people in Switzerland are concerned about and is a constant topic of public debate. Promoting sustainable development requires the commitment of various players, such as consumers, companies, the state, the media, charities and NGOs. Deloitte asked 1,900 people living in Switzerland who should play a more active role in creating a more sustainable Switzerland, and which specific measures they think are best.

Two-thirds of respondents (66%) think that companies are responsible for making Switzerland more sustainable. 61 per cent believe the state is responsible, and 53 per cent said they themselves are responsible as consumers (see Figure 1). At 72 per cent, the number of people in French-speaking Switzerland who think companies and the state should take responsibility was above the overall average, showing that their expectations are higher towards these two groups. The percentage of respondents who cited consumers as needing to take responsibility was similar throughout the country. There were no obvious differences based on age or gender.

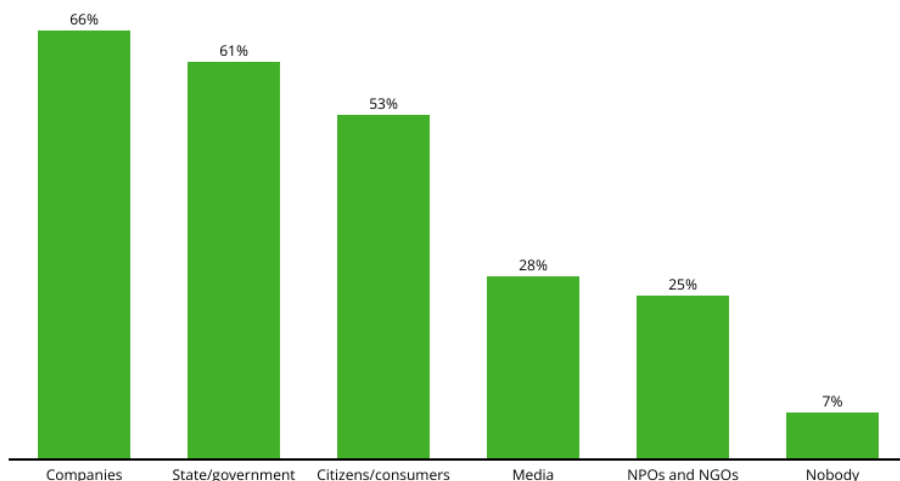


Figure 1: In your opinion, who should be responsible for making Switzerland more sustainable?

“Our survey shows clearly that people are hoping for a greater commitment from companies and the state. At the same time though, they see themselves – the consumers – as having a responsibility to use their influence to make the economy more sustainable. This leads to a classic catch-22 situation, with consumers waiting for companies and the state to act, and companies and the state waiting for consumer demand to drive change,” says Liza Engel, Chief Sustainability Officer at Deloitte Switzerland.

Companies: No clear preference

Exactly what companies should do is less clear from the survey results. None of the measures that the respondents were asked about is a clear front runner: Most people think that companies should use more environmentally friendly materials (57%), emit less CO₂ (51%) and offer more sustainable products or services (51%). They would also like companies to pay more attention to supply chains (48%) and use less energy (47%).

“Some companies look at potential investment in more sustainable production only from a cost perspective and point out current consumer behaviour and the regulations they already abide by. Yet many others – particularly in Switzerland as an expensive country – see consistent investment in sustainability as a way of setting themselves apart and, above all, as an opportunity for innovation,” says Marcel Meyer, Deloitte Switzerland Sustainability Lead.

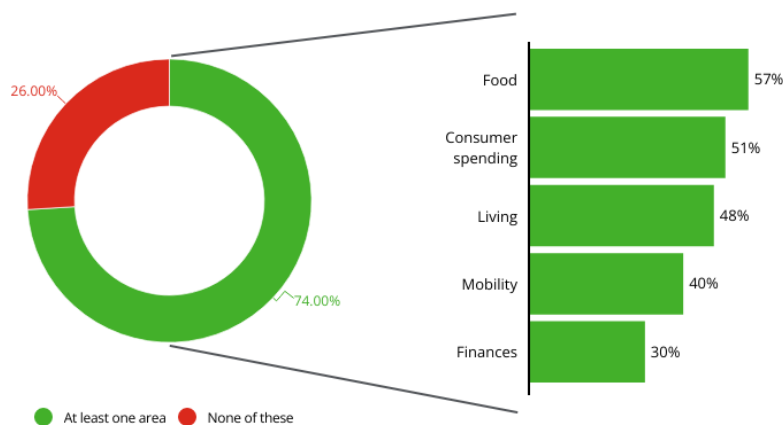
State: Incentives preferred

Opinions regarding state measures to encourage sustainability in Switzerland were clearer. 53 per cent of respondents are in favour of subsidies for environmentally friendly and sustainable behaviour, such as a tax reduction for cycling to work or subsidies for vegan food. Subsidies are particularly popular in the Romandie, with 63 per cent in favour of them. There is also significant interest in research and development (46%) and in using campaigns and school education to teach people about sustainable behaviour and raise awareness (42%). There is less appetite for additional regulations such as more stringent standards for companies and consumers (29%) or taxes on less sustainable products (27%).

Marcel Meyer emphasises this finding: “People in Switzerland prefer incentives to obligations. They want to incentivise sustainable behaviour and thereby send out a clear message. The state has the opportunity, through education in particular, to increase people’s understanding of why sustainability is important.”

Consumers: Actions far from sustainable

Consumers in Switzerland are definitely aware of the key role they play in promoting sustainability. However, many of them are reluctant to take action themselves, especially as there has been no clear initiative by companies and there are



no state incentives. Around three-quarters (74%) plan to change their behaviour in the coming twelve months – particularly those under 35 (89%) and those living in cities (83%) (see Figure 2). 57 per cent want to eat more sustainably, such as by reducing meat consumption or buying local products.

Just over half the respondents (51%) are planning to be more sustainable by reducing the amount of goods and services they consume. In the home, people could save energy and water; just under half (48%) said they were planning this.

Figure 2: In which of the following areas do you plan to be more sustainable over the next 12 months?

“These days, we all tend to put our own needs first. The challenge we face is therefore to identify and consider the needs of future generations as well. This requires us to look beyond our own horizons and to understand that long-term growth and the regeneration of our natural resources are key elements of sustainable development,” says Liza Engel.

About the [sustainability survey](#):

Deloitte’s ‘Pulse of Switzerland’ survey was conducted in November 2023 and covered 1,900 people living in Switzerland. This part of the survey offers insights into people’s thoughts on sustainability. You can find all you need to know about this survey and the topics that have already been published on our [‘Pulse of Switzerland’ overview page](#). All information can be found directly on the website. There is no additional PDF or other additional document.



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