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ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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Contribution by Switzerland

to the CSTD 2024-2025 priority theme on “Technology foresight and technology
assessment for sustainable development”

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1. Has your country conducted ForSTI, TA or both? If yes, what were the reasons for undertaking ForSTI and TA?

Yes, our country has been conducting such studies for a very long time.

The main motivation for these studies is to provide parliament and the public with objective information on the challenges posed by technologies and their prospects.

For example, in 2022 the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI commissioned the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences to conduct a ForSTI, in order to evaluate the ERI players' multi-year planning with regard to the preparation of the new ERI Dispatch.

However, there is also ForSTI and TA on a regular basis conducted by some ERI players as the Technology Outlook of the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences and the publications of the TA-SWISS Foundation.

2. If you have not conducted ForSTI or TA in the past, what were the reasons for this (lack of need or requests for it, lack of familiarity, lack of capacity, lack of funding etc.)? Would you be interested in pursuing either ForSTI or TA as a policy tool in the near future?
3. What agency (or agencies), if any, is responsible for ForSTI and/or TA?

The Swiss Technology Assessment (TA-Swiss) and Swiss academies are responsible for ForSTI and TA.

4. Who was responsible for implementing the ForSTI and/or TA undertaken - national government, sub-national levels of government (state/province or other levels), industry, universities, research institutes or civil society?

Swiss ERI policy follows the subsidiarity and bottom-up principle. This means that the ERI players are free to carry out ForSTI or TA for their own purposes on their own initiative, as SERI (national government) has also done in the example mentioned under question 1.

5. In which sectors and/or for what policy processes have ForSTI and TA been undertaken, or linked to? What SDGs have they related to?

Complementarily to our answer in question 1, TA-Swiss and the academies have made several studies on a big number of sectors. See <https://www.ta-swiss.ch/fr/publications> and <https://akademien-schweiz.ch/fr>

6. What specific methods (tools) and methodologies have been used for ForSTI and/or TA?

For the ForSTI commissioned by the SERI Horizon Scanning was mainly used as method; for the TA-Swiss Studies various.

7. What challenges have you experienced in undertaking ForSTI and TA exercises? Does your country have any specific capacity needs to strengthen the conduct and use of ForSTI and TA?

It was difficult to assess which technologies could be important for Switzerland's economy. Switzerland is often strong in technological niches and the selection of technologies in the well-known international ForSTIs are sometimes not directly transferable to Switzerland.

It would certainly make sense to streamline and coordinate the various ForSTI and TA activities in Switzerland in order to better exploit synergies.

8. Have you conducted combined ForSTI and TA in a single exercise at any time? What were the benefits and challenges of combining ForSTI and TA? Do you see this as a useful and feasible approach?

No, but we would estimate it as a useful approach.

9. Are you involved in any international cooperation or partnerships for ForSTI and TA? Which ones and what are their benefits?

No

10. What role(s) can international cooperation, and the CSTD, play in promoting ForSTI and TA?

It would be of great interest to develop common methodological standards at international level for ForSTI and TA so that national results can be compared.

A common tool for ForSTI and TA would also be welcome in order to identify common challenges.

In general, it would be helpful to develop a common understanding of technological potential, risks and challenges in relation to emerging technologies at international level.

11. What have been some important ForSTI and TA examples undertaken in your country, especially related to national policy (prioritization, design etc.)?

In the Swiss ERI system, it is fundamentally up to the players to anticipate new technological developments, drive them forward and react appropriately. The government and funding institutions steer technological developments only marginally or not at all. Therefore, the impact of ForSTI and TA on national STI-policies is very limited. ForSTI and TA primarily serve to develop an awareness of new developments.

12. Based on your experiences, how have ForSTI and TA improved STI decision making and the prioritization, design and implementation of STI policies?

It helped the SERI to evaluate the ERI players' multi-year planning. Further impact is limited as mentioned above.