

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Provision of information by States parties for the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption: Information requested from States parties in relation to promoting the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) for the implementation of the Convention

Switzerland

Consultation Procedure

A significant instrument for the transparency of decision-making processes and the promotion of public participation in decision-making processes in Switzerland in the sense of articles 10 and 13 (1)(a and b) of the United Nations Convention against Corruption is the so-called “consultation procedure”.

The consultation procedure is the phase in the preliminary legislative procedure during which federal projects of considerable political, financial, economic, environmental, social or cultural importance are assessed in terms of factual accuracy, feasibility, and public acceptance. The cantonal governments, the political parties represented in the Federal Assembly, the umbrella organisations for communes, cities and mountain regions, the umbrella organisations for the economic sector, and other stakeholders relevant to individual cases are invited to participate in consultation procedures. Any parties not directly invited to take part may also give their opinion.

The consultation procedure is principally being carried out online. Participants in the consultation procedure receive an invitation via email to take part in the consultation, and are asked to submit any position statements by email. The information email about the consultation, including the supporting documents, is published online on the Federal Chancellery’s consultation portal. However, since some of these documents are scanned versions of paper documents, this can lead to a change in media within the Federal Administration.

Efforts are currently underway to further digitalise the consultation process and to carry it out completely electronically in the future. The legal basis for this would already be in place.

Civic Tech Report

In May 2020, the Swiss Government, the Federal Council, approved the [civic tech report](#), which shows how digitalisation can strengthen Switzerland’s political system and increase civic engagement. Based on the results of the report, the Federal Council has decided to take three measures and instructed the Federal Chancellery to do the following:

1. **Develop a general technology-neutral data model for political business and related materials**
At present, information relating to items of political business has to be gathered on various web platforms; not all of it is available to the public and it appears in various data formats. A general data model would make it possible to monitor each item of political business throughout the policy cycle – beginning with the proposals in parliament or the decisions made by the Federal Council and the consultation process, going through the parliamentary debates and any referendums or popular votes to the point where new laws or measures are implemented.
2. **Test ‘e-consultation’ and identify practical measures to simplify the consultation procedure**
Using digital tools could simplify the administrative procedure for consultations. The results of digitised and more structured consultation procedures could be more readily interpreted and applied in the subsequent decision-making process. An application is currently being developed that will allow for a more structured input of the participants in the consultation procedure (at article and paragraph level). Such structured feedback will also make it easier to subsequently analyse the submissions. The application is to be available for a first consultation (pilot) in autumn 2022 and will then be further developed on an ongoing basis on the basis of feedback.
3. **Examine the feasibility of setting up a publication platform for petitions**
Until now, petitions submitted to the Federal Administration have not been published. The creation of a platform for petitions is being considered in order to offer a new service in this area. By the end of the second quarter of 2022, the title, date of submission and authors of petitions are to be technically available.

The Global GovTech Partnership

Switzerland is also committed to digitalisation of government procedures at the international level. Together with Austria, it is a donor country to The Global GovTech Partnership Multi-Donor Trust Fund of the World Bank, which aims to increase government efficiency, transparency as well as accountability and to improve service delivery to citizens and businesses by applying technological solutions. The development objective of the program is to support GovTech solutions to enable well-performing governments. In working towards this objective, the project activities organize around three components.

1. Promoting research and case studies

Most countries willing to implement GovTech solutions lack the knowledge to do so. The promotion of research and case studies on best practices provides useful guidance for governments to tackle challenges arising from the implementation of new technological solutions.

2. Providing global public goods

Through the creation of global public goods, the GovTech Partnership makes available cost-free and unrestricted access to tools, knowledge, and solutions. Examples are proof of concepts, prototypes, guidelines, open-source libraries, as well as the organization of summit events, and support to peer-to-peer networking and learning. They strengthen the dialogue between countries, development partners, and private sector representatives.

3. Supporting country and regional activities

This third component supports specific country and regional interventions such as diagnostics, disruptive technology pilots, or capacity building.

Several activities have already started, such as the development of a report identifying the technology trends with the biggest potential and challenges for public administrations or the elaboration of a working paper examining new methods to use GovTech for fraud detection and anti-corruption efforts. A first beneficiary country has received support to perform a digital transformation scoping exercise.

In this context, Switzerland proposes to the Secretariat to invite a representative of the World Bank as a panelist to the thirteenth Session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Prevention, to be held from 13 to 17 June 2022, in order to provide the group with more detailed information on this project.