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Plenary sessions

- *Rules of procedure*
- *In-depth discussions and formal decisions*
- *Social events and technical excursions deepen the team spirit*

PLANAT operates according to the rules of procedure set by the Federal Government. Three annual plenary sessions, each lasting 1.5 days, are held. Social events and the informal exchange of information are as important as the formal meeting, where decisions are taken and reports authorized after in-depth discussions. A half-day excursion and a dinner are excellent occasions to provide the ambience for deepening the corporate spirit.

Steering committee

- *Prepares the plenary sessions*
- *Sets guidelines for working groups*
- *Supervises the action plan*

The steering committee meets under the chairmanship of the president in three annual half-day meetings to prepare the plenary sessions. It supports the president in strategic questions, supervises the working groups and external project managers, is involved in consultations for laws, regulations and guidelines and can launch pilot projects.

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Presidency and secretariat

- *Integrative leadership personality*
- *Well linked to all governmental levels and sectors*

The president has to be a highly involved, motivating and integrative leader, preferably with a high position in a governmental office. The president chairs the PLANAT plenary assembly and the steering committee. He can rely on a closely linked, permanent secretariat, headed by a permanent secretary who is tasked to support the platform and its organs.

Peculiarities

- *Working groups and mandates for specific tasks*
- *www.planat.ch as common web portal*
- *PLANAT Science Award*

Actually, PLANAT acts with three working groups covering its main tasks. The working groups consist of PLANAT members and may integrate or mandate external experts for specific tasks, especially with regard to the implementation of the PLANAT strategy. The secretariat runs the Internet platform www.planat.ch, which also hosts other institutions. Every year, the best PhD thesis with a topic related to natural hazards from a Swiss university is awarded with the PLANAT Science Award.

Natural hazards – a social challenge

- *Solidarity*
- *Social, economic and ecological demands*
- *Comparable level of safety for everyone*
- *Risk-based approach*

One of PLANAT's first and most important tasks was to define a vision and a strategy on how to cope with natural hazards and how to protect Switzerland and its people against these threats. It is a risk approach based on solidarity and sustainability.

The protection of life is the overriding purpose of the efforts to provide protection against natural hazards. Every person in Switzerland can expect a comparable level of safety, wherever they are in the country. The protection of buildings and other properties and infrastructure has second priority. Decisions are based on the most effective use of the means available. Risks from natural hazards exist alongside with technical, ecological, economic and sociopolitical risks. Decisions about security and the protection of people have to be taken in an overall context. The importance of climate change is increasing.



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Key strategy – integral risk management

- *Risk concept brings transparency into decision making*
- *Joint effort of public and private sector*
- *Strategic controlling as risk-coping barometer*
- *Risk dialogue for awareness building*

Integral risk management as key process against natural hazards is based on protective measures of comparable standard, including prevention, intervention or recovery and reconstruction. As the protection against natural hazards has to be a task carried out jointly by the public and private sector, it also assumes that people take personal responsibility.

The main aim of risk management is to achieve a transparent culture of coping with risk across disciplines and departments to allow better planning, response, and reduction of risks. It makes it possible to analyse and assess risks, as well as taking risk reduction measures based on a coherent risk concept.

With strategic controlling the risk situation and the costs and benefits of measures get checked. A continuous risk dialogue is of vital importance for the public risk awareness and for the acceptance of the necessary risk reduction measures.

Improvement of basic principles, guidelines and data

- *Implementation by mandated projects*
- *The risk concept coherent with technical risks*
- *Nationwide, statistical evaluation of risks and resources*
- *Guidelines for practitioners (quality assurance guidelines)*

The Swiss Federal Department for Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) has the lead to implement the PLANAT strategy. DETEC mandated PLANAT with strategic projects along an agreed action plan. PLANAT itself mandated private companies and research institutions with the execution of projects.

The necessary funding for these projects is provided by a number of Federal Offices. A nationwide evaluation of risks and resources, for the first time, brought insight into the overall risk pattern of Switzerland and the partition of money spent to cope with natural hazards. A consistent risk concept has been developed inline with technical risk-handling procedures. Guidelines, e.g. for quality assurance, support the practitioners.



Current projects

- *How to set comparable levels of safety*
- *Risk communication and public risk awareness*
- *Guidelines for integral risk management*

Methodologically sound approaches are developed for the assessment of risks, particularly for the risk aversion, and for the estimation of direct and indirect damage. To achieve a comparable level of safety from natural hazards all over Switzerland, uniform protection goals must be set, covering life and limb, property, and important infrastructure. To successfully influence the public attitude and understanding of risk, a comprehensive exercise in communication is required. This is built around a targeted communications concept, and is part of an effective implementation. All stakeholders participate in wide-ranging dialogue and consensus building. A document is in preparation to demonstrate the practicability of the PLANAT risk concept when applied to different natural hazards and risks.



**PLANAT
Swiss National Platform
for Natural Hazards**



1997–2007: Ten years of experience

**How to create
and run
a platform?**

Sharing experience

- *Folder as summary*
- *Brochure with more details*
- *www.planat.ch*

For centuries, Switzerland has been confronted with natural hazards. Increasingly dense settlements, heavier traffic, tourism, complex infrastructures, climate change, etc. are further aggravating the situation. Having experienced a couple of severe catastrophes and inspired by IDNDR's Yokohama Strategy in 1994, the Swiss Federal Government in 1997 created PLANAT as the Swiss national platform to deal with natural hazards.

In line with the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005–2015 and with the Millennium Development Goals, PLANAT aims at sharing the positive lessons, learned over the past 10 years, to create and run a national disaster risk reduction platform, and it encourages interested nations to build such a platform.

The folder summarizes some essential aspects and the necessary steps to be taken to create and run a platform. Reference is made to a closely linked, more elaborate brochure, highlighting the PLANAT experiences, and to www.planat.ch.



Why is PLANAT needed?

- *For a paradigm shift with a uniform vision and strategy*
- *As a national forum for discussion*

Even though Switzerland is a highly industrialized, rich country, both resources and the political will to deal with natural hazards are limited. Safety is – also in Switzerland – affordable only to a certain extent, and not every hazardous situation can be eliminated. Actual catastrophes result in increasing damages. Specialists from various sectors and disciplines are involved during the events, but also for recovery and reconstruction.

Therefore, it became obvious that a platform was needed to address emerging threats and strategic questions, to look for more synergies and harmonization in the disaster risk reduction process and to bridge gaps between all governmental levels (Federal agencies, Cantons, communities), science, insurances and the private sector.

Furthermore, the platform should provide a forum for discussion among the various stakeholders, also to learn “to speak the same language” and to make a common effort at achieving a paradigm shift to handle natural hazards from a risk perspective and not just as threats that require elimination.

Who created PLANAT?

- *A “bottom-up process”*
- *The team spirit and leadership of a highly motivated group*

A number of high-level Federal and Cantonal government officials and experts from research, insurance and the private sector intensely discussed the need for a multi-sector, national platform. Starting a first meeting with only a few enthusiastic, initiative people trying to find common goals, the number of participants kept growing and a team spirit formed.

The Federal Government constituted PLANAT in late 1997 as an extra-parliamentary commission. No additional legal base was required for this step as existent regulations for Federal commissions could be applied.

What is the mandate of PLANAT?

- *Policy guidance*
- *To make the most of synergies*
- *To harmonize and prevent duplications*

PLANAT as a strategic, consultative body brings disaster risk reduction to the attention of the Federal Government, provides policy guidance, harmonizes strategies, reveals gaps, identifies synergies and coordinates activities. It is a national forum



What is the institutional setup of PLANAT?

- *An extra-parliamentary, non-political commission of the Federal Government*
- *A consultative body for policy guidance*
- *Not active on an operational level*

PLANAT is an extra-parliamentary commission and as such a consultative body to the Federal Government, but not linked to the Parliament. It has no executive or legislative power and is not active on an operational level. PLANAT is formally attached to the Federal Ministry for Environment, Transportation, Energy and Communication DETEC. The permanent secretariat is hosted at the Federal Office for the Environment FOEN to secure a close link to the actual president.

How is PLANAT financed?

- *Line budget and seed money*
- *Common will and leadership most important*

PLANAT gets an annual line budget by FOEN, to cover running costs for administrative support, as seed money for strategic projects and other cross-cutting activities. If needed, additional support comes from other agencies. However, most important is not money but the will to move into the same direction.



Who is a member of PLANAT?

- *20 members from all stakeholder groups*
- *Gender and language minorities represented*

PLANAT members are high-level representatives from Federal line ministries, Cantons, science, insurance and the private sector; all involved in disaster risk reduction. The Federal Government nominates them for a four-year term, renewable for another term. Gender and language minorities are represented.

How is PLANAT organized?

- *Plenary sessions*
- *Steering committee and working groups*
- *PLANAT presidency and secretariat*

The PLANAT plenary session as supreme board discusses all business of relevance, selects the steering committee, takes decisions on strategic projects and mandates working groups out of PLANAT members and external experts with specific tasks. The steering committee attends to PLANAT's interests together with its president. For the risk dialogue they rely on a permanent secretariat with an executive secretary and a public relations manager.

The Swiss Federal Government created PLANAT in 1997 as a national organization to deal with natural hazards, with a focus on the enhancement of risk prevention and mitigation. As an extra-parliamentary commission, PLANAT is working on a strategic level and is highly involved in the efficient protection of the Swiss population, considerable material assets and critical infrastructure against natural hazards. PLANAT commits itself to a change of paradigms in handling natural hazards within an overall risk culture.

Mandate PLANAT Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards
SDC Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

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