

Guidelines concerning climate neutrality at the University of Bern

The University Executive Board,

based on Article 2 (5) and Article 39 (1) (a) and (k) of the Act Governing the University (UniG) of September 5, 1996, as well as Article 6 of the Statute of the University of Bern of June 7, 2011 (UniSt),

has decided as follows:

Preamble

Successful sustainable development necessitates all players to make a contribution to be able to realize the corresponding goals. In terms of sustainability, the University of Bern sets a focus on climate protection: It has set itself the goal, and has been commissioned by the cantonal government, to become climate neutral as an institution in all areas on which it has direct influence.

Art. 1 Purpose

¹ These guidelines define the framework and the modalities of the procedure to ensure the University of Bern attains its desired goal of climate neutrality. For this purpose, the greenhouse gas emissions (expressed in CO₂ equivalents) of the University are to be reduced and, if no further reduction is possible, compensated for by the University or offset by an appropriate climate protection contribution.

Art. 2 Climate neutrality

¹ The University of Bern is aiming to become climate neutral.

² As far as possible, the goal of climate neutrality should be attained through measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the administrative, operational and construction area.

³ If the reduction measures are insufficient, emissions resulting from air travel are to be offset in accordance with the cantonal personnel regulations as part of compensation projects to be financed.

⁴ A climate protection contribution is made for the amount of the remaining unavoidable emissions, which is primarily achieved by financing internal projects.

Art. 3 Carbon footprint

¹ The amount of emissions is calculated centrally by the University. The Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development is responsible for this. All organizational units support the Sustainable Development Office in this work, namely by providing the necessary data.

² Emissions for each calendar year are calculated during the following calendar year and are converted into CO₂ equivalents (CO_{2eq}).

³ Business trips taken by University members must be booked using the travel platform of the University as well as SBB Business Travel so the emissions can be calculated. The University business trip guidelines apply here.

⁴ The University may involve third parties to calculate its emissions.

Art. 4 Reduction measures

¹ The University takes the necessary and financially sustainable operational measures to lower the emissions as far as possible through reduction or avoidance.

² The Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development is responsible for compiling possible reduction measures in a roadmap. The organizational units and the University members support the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development in this work, e.g., in the development of measures in the areas of the organizational units.

³ The organizational units and University members in question are responsible for implementing the measures. The Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development supports the organizational units and University members in this work, e.g., with information on emission development and best practices.

Art. 5 Contribution toward climate protection with internal projects

¹ The University initiates and supports the University's own projects to reduce University emissions or to make a different contribution toward climate protection. In such cases, it can work together with third parties.

² The Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development is responsible for identifying and supporting relevant projects. The Vice-Rectorate regularly informs the University members on the suitability and selection of projects as well as on their progress during implementation.

³ Suitable contributions toward climate protection are selected in internal selection committees; the participation of external experts is permitted.

⁴ The type of projects that are generally permitted are set out in separate implementation regulations by the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development. These must be approved by the University Executive Board.

⁵ A CO₂ price is specified in separate implementation regulations by the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development and must be approved by the University Executive Board.

Art. 6 Compensation with external projects

¹ Emissions resulting from air travel are to be offset by quality climate protection projects in accordance with the cantonal personnel regulations. This can be organized by purchasing carbon offset certificates.

² Suitable compensation projects are selected by internal selection committees; the participation of external experts is permitted.

³ The criteria the compensation projects or carbon offset certificates have to fulfill are listed in a separate implementation document by the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development. This document must be approved by the University Executive Board.

Art. 7 Time for compensation and contributions toward climate protection

¹ If possible, the necessary compensation and contributions toward climate protection equivalent to the amount of unavoidable emissions of the University's carbon footprint are undertaken in the current year for the emissions of the previous one.

Art. 8 Coverage of costs

¹ The costs for the reduction of emissions as well as the costs for compensation and contributions toward climate protection equivalent to the amount of unavoidable emissions of the University's carbon footprint are covered by the University.

Art. 9 Reporting

¹ The Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development reports back to the University Executive Board at regular intervals on achieving the climate neutrality target.

Art. 10 Entry into force

¹ These guidelines come into force on November 1st, 2024.

Bern, October 8, 2024

For the University Executive Board

The Rector

Prof. Dr. Virginia Richter

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Implementation regulations on the Guidelines concerning climate neutrality at the University of Bern

The Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development,

based on Article 5 (4) and (5) and Article 6 (3) of the Climate neutrality guidelines of the University of Bern of October 8, 2024,

has decided as follows:

1. General

Art. 1 Scope of application

These implementation regulations define which projects and measures for achieving climate neutrality at the University of Bern are permissible within the framework of the guidelines.

Art. 2 Responsibility and organization

¹ On an annual basis, the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development checks whether the project types and criteria defined in the implementation regulations have to be realigned with market conditions in terms of compensation and climate protection contributions. If necessary, the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development submits an updated version of these implementation regulations to the University Executive Board for approval.

² When inviting tenders for external projects for compensation and implementing internal projects as a contribution toward climate protection, the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development is guided by these implementation regulations and informs the project selection committee of any changes.

2. Project types and criteria

Art. 3 Compensation

¹ The permissible compensation projects are geared toward the framework for international offsets of the Paris Agreement from 2015 or the UNFCCC regulations (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), i.e., as a minimum, they fulfill the following criteria:

- a) Quantifiability: the measure must result in a quantifiable abatement of CO₂ emissions (or a CO₂ equivalent CO_{2eq})
- b) Additionality: the measure is only being carried out for the purpose of achieving an impact on climate protection; it would not be carried out in the absence of incentives to perform offsetting
- c) Permanence: that the CO_{2eq} abatement actually achieved must be long-lasting
- d) The abatement or savings have already been achieved, meaning that the project is being assessed ex post instead of ex ante
- e) Monitoring, meaning transparency and audits by an independent third party, are ensured

² Furthermore, the compensation projects should also have a connection with the University of Bern (e.g., regional or with respect to research).

Art. 4 Contribution toward climate protection

¹ As far as possible, the projects admissible as a contribution toward climate protection should be internal projects, in other words have a direct impact on the University's carbon footprint or the sustainability activities of the University of Bern or be implemented in cooperation with originator groups of the University's greenhouse gas emissions.

² All measures that can be taken to have a positive impact on the global climate are permissible. Transdisciplinary projects which make a contribution to the transformation of society toward sustainable development and, if at all possible, show a CO₂ reduction reference are also possible. These could include investments in new technologies, climate protection projects, research projects on reducing CO_{2eq}, projects on how to adapt to the consequences of climate change, social innovations, etc.

³ The ability to recognize these in the carbon footprint (quantitative compensation of the emissions) is limited with these projects.

Art. 5 CO₂ price

¹ The unavoidable emissions of the University's carbon footprint can be converted into a budget using a CO₂ price which is used to finance projects whose emission reduction cannot be determined or cannot be determined sufficiently well in quantitative terms. This means the scope of the contribution toward climate protection is linked to the amount of unavoidable emissions of the University; the ability to recognize these in the carbon footprint (quantitative compensation of the emissions) is not possible with these projects.

² The CO₂ price is calculated from the following sources:

- a) CO₂ price from emissions trading CH¹
- b) CO₂ price from emissions trading EU²
- c) CO₂ price similar to that of, for example, UniNE and UZH³

¹ <https://industriemagazin.at/artikel/in-elf-laendern-europas-gibt-es-schon-eine-co2-abgabe/>

² Current stock market value on 2/7/24 at 10:14 am: <https://www.boerse.de/rohstoffe/Co2-Emissionsrechtepreis/XC000A0C4KJ2>

³ <https://www.sustainability.uzh.ch/en/campus-operations/air-travel.html> <https://www.unine.ch/durable/contributiondurabilite#cid7478f789-d2cf-4b45-b8ea-a490e1ce07a0>

³ At the current implementation level of the measures, it is not necessary to define a CO₂ price, as the connection described in Article 5 (1) has no role to play in the initial phase of the reduction measures. As soon as a CO₂ price is required, these implementation regulations will be supplemented in this respect and come into force once approved by the University Executive Board.

Art. 6 Negative emission technologies, CO₂ capture and storage

A wide portfolio of different approaches of projects that take CO₂ out of the atmosphere and store it long term is currently being researched, tested and in some cases implemented worldwide. The criteria for admissibility are geared primarily to Annex L “Eligible and ineligible project and programme types” in the publication “Offsetting CO₂ emissions: projects and programmes” from the Federal Office for the Environment FOEN⁴, which “gives a non-exhaustive list of project and programme types, classified by category, whose emission reductions can be taken into account and for which attestations can be issued, provided that the requirements of the CO₂ Ordinance are met.”

3. Entry into force

Art. 7 Entry into force

These implementation regulations are an Appendix to the Climate neutrality guidelines of the University of Bern and will come into force once approved by the University Executive Board.

Bern, October 8, 2024

For the Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable
Development

Vice-Rector:

Prof. Dr. Heike Mayer

Approved by the University Executive Board:

Bern, October 8, 2024

For the University Executive Board

The Rector:

Prof. Dr. Virginia Richter

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⁴ <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/climate/publications-studies/publications/offsetting-co2-emissions-projects-and-programmes.html>