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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

Vice-Rectorate Quality
**Coordination Office for
Sustainable Development**

Sustainable Development at the University of Bern

Sustainability Report 2018/19

By Dr. Helen Plüss

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1. Introduction

1.1 University of Bern vision

The vision of the University of Bern can be summed up in three words: KNOWLEDGE CREATES VALUE.

The vision illustrates the overriding social developments to which the University of Bern is oriented and the mission it has to fulfill.

Knowledge is one of the most important resources we have as a society and will continue to increase in significance in future. Knowledge is the key to solving the problems facing society and dealing with global challenges. Universities make an indispensable contribution to the development and transfer of knowledge.

The University of Bern aims to provide the skills necessary to gain knowledge and then use the knowledge gained. For this purpose, the University of Bern conducts excellent research and teaching and offers high-quality continuing education and services. Guided by academic interests and social needs, the University of Bern sets disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary priorities.

The University of Bern has set one of these priorities in the area of sustainability and uses its potential to make a substantial contribution to researching and shaping Sustainable Development.

1.2 Sustainable Development – the understanding of the University of Bern

Sustainable Development is a long-term, optimistic guiding principle for how society should develop, centered on people and their needs, abilities, and actions. Crucially, it envisions inter- and intergenerational social and economic justice, while respecting the environmental limits of natural resource use. This interdisciplinary task requires contributions at all levels of decision-making. For this reason, co-determination and participation are a core principle of Sustainable Development. Ideally, all actors agree on and coordinate their specific goals and measures as part of an overall vision. Viewed in this way, Sustainable Development is a continuous process of negotiation and compromise to balance and coordinate diverse environmental, social, and economic interests, and to settle conflicts of interest consensually and peacefully. However, this participation requires players to possess the relevant knowledge and be able to act accordingly, or be enabled to do so. In addition to appropriate institutional frameworks, research and education are key.

1.3 Sustainability reporting

As places of knowledge generation and transfer, it is a university's duty to contribute to Sustainable Development in research and teaching. As institutions, they are also required to use ecological,

economic and social resources carefully. Since 2015, the University of Bern has carried out annual monitoring in which its commitment to sustainability in the areas of research, teaching and operations is recorded. The results of the sustainability monitoring are published every two years as the University's Sustainability Report. This report covers the sustainability monitoring results for 2018 and 2019.

2. Research

2.1 Research profile

The University of Bern has defined five key areas in its research activities that are of significant social and scientific importance. It intends to use its competences to make a special commitment in these areas. The University's position as a comprehensive university makes it possible to address these issues from a number of disciplinary approaches and in inter- or transdisciplinary teams. The University of Bern has set one of these priorities in the area of sustainability and uses its potential to make a substantial contribution to researching and shaping Sustainable Development. It conducts excellent disciplinary, inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching with an international focus on topics such as climate, managing global change (north-south) and trade regulation. Other topics, such as biodiversity and the sustainable use of resources, as well as Gender Studies are also in focus.

The University of Bern promotes sustainability research within the context of specialized, interdisciplinary research centers and, at the faculties, with corresponding professorships. The sustainability-related research centers include:

- the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)*
- the *Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR)*
- the *World Trade Institute (WTI)*
- the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG)*

Together with the support of entrepreneur and patron Hansjörg Wyss and the Canton of Bern, an additional research center was founded at the University of Bern at the end of 2019: the *Wyss Academy for Nature*. By bringing together experts from science, politics and society, the research center for nature and people will explore the impacts of biodiversity loss, accelerating climate change, and land resource claims in an innovative, sustainable, and application-oriented way.

2.2 Promotion of research

The University of Bern creates framework conditions that are conducive to sustainability research. On the one hand, the University does this by promoting sustainability research within the context of specialized research centers and at the faculties with corresponding professorships. In addition, it awards research prizes and breaks new ground in the promotion of research with interfaculty research collaborations:

- **Research prizes:** The University of Bern awards the following research prizes in the field of sustainability:

- **Bernese Prize for Environmental Research:** The prize is awarded every two years to early career researchers at the University of Bern for outstanding academic work that makes a socially relevant contribution or provides a basis for a better understanding of environmental and sustainability problems or their solutions and provides food for thought for practical applications. In 2019 the Bernese Prize for Environmental Research was awarded for the twelfth time (winners: Dr. Clau Dermont and Michael Scheurer). Furthermore, the two long-term sponsoring partners *Energie Wasser Bern (EWB)* and *CSL Behring AG* have further committed their support until 2022.
- **Barbara-Lischetti-Award:** Every two years, early career researchers at the University of Bern are honored for an outstanding dissertation that addresses a gender research topic or uses a related approach. In 2018, Dr. des. Veronika Siegl was awarded the Barbara-Lischetti-Award.
- **Interfaculty research cooperations:** The interfaculty research cooperations (IRC) promote network projects from various academic fields and faculties. This intensifies networked and interdisciplinary research. In 2018, the University Executive Board approved three IRCs in a competitive process, two of which contribute to the key area sustainability: The project “*One Health: Cascading and Microbiome-Dependent Effects on Multitrophic Health*” examines the relationship of environmental, animal and human health. The project “*Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies*” seeks a differentiated understanding of the ambivalent role of religions in conflicts in order to be able to develop adequate strategies for dealing with these conflicts.

2.3 Academic expertise in dialog and as an innovative force

2.3.1. Academic expertise in the regional and global context

The University of Bern makes its competencies in the field of Sustainable Development available to institutions in administration, politics and business as well as to the public, thus acting as an innovative force in the regional and global context: The *Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)* advises and supports both public and private clients, for example, on all issues relating to Sustainable Development as part of its services. In doing so, the CDE links issues at global, national and local level and supports cross-sectoral approaches to solutions.

However, the researchers at the University of Bern not only provide their academic expertise within the framework of services, but also contribute it within international committees. During the reporting period, researchers from the University contributed, for example, to the following global reports on sustainability, climate and biodiversity:

- In September 2019 in New York, Peter Messerli, Professor at the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)*, presented the first World Sustainability Report commissioned by all UN states. The report clearly shows that the current development model is not sustainable and that even the progress made over the past two decades is at risk as social inequalities are increasing and potentially irreversible environmental damage is occurring.
- Bernese climate research has a long tradition of preparing reports for the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*. Bernese climate and environmental researchers already played an important role in the first *IPCC Assessment Report* in 1990. Bernese climate research was also significantly involved in the IPCC report on the ocean and cryosphere, published in September 2019.
- In May 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released its report on the current state of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The researchers involved – including researchers from the *Institute of Plant Sciences (IPS)* and the *Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)* of the University of Bern – proposed a number of urgent measures to policymakers.

2.3.2. Initiatives and cooperations

The University of Bern is involved in national and international initiatives and cooperations in the field of sustainability. The following activities in 2018/2019 are particularly worthy of mention:

- **Copernicus Alliance:** The “COPERNICUS Alliance” is a European higher education network for transformational learning and the transformation to sustainability. Dr. Anne Zimmermann of the *Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)* at the University of Bern is serving as President for the 2019/2020 term of office.
To reduce the carbon footprint of the annual conferences, the “COPERNICUS Alliance” has now decided to hold a face-to-face conference only every two years. From 2019 onward, the conference will only take place online in the alternate years. The format was tested in a pilot conference from Bern in 2019.
- **University Library:** The University Library Bern is taking part in the Swiss-library sustainability initiative “Biblio 2030”. In order to actively participate in the initiative, a working group was formed within the University Library Bern in summer 2018. The working group has set itself the goal of developing activities to promote Sustainable Development within the University Library, as well as informing and raising awareness among staff and the public for Sustainable Development issues (e.g. through exhibitions).

2.3.3. Sustainability Day

The University of Bern regularly holds Sustainability Days, which have been organized jointly with the Bern University of Teacher Education and the Bern University of Applied Sciences since 2017. The second Sustainability Day organized jointly by Bern's institutions of higher education took place in 2019. Its theme was "*Transformation – think imaginatively*". The day showed the approximately 350 visitors how the three universities create innovations for Sustainable Development. Representatives from business, science and politics discussed what is needed to ensure that research results reach politics and society more quickly.

2.3.4. Agora

Researchers at the University of Bern participate in the dialog between science and society. They are involved, for example, in Agora projects of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and in this context communicate the results of their current, sustainability-related research to a non-expert audience. In addition, scientists at the University of Bern develop teaching materials and playful activities that help to impart knowledge in the field of sustainability. The spectrum ranges from interactive exhibitions through interactive learning media and multimedia teaching packages to an app for school excursions:

- **Let's go DanaLand:** The adventure game "Let's go DanaLand" developed by the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)* is embedded in an interactive exhibition and conveys knowledge about a sufficient lifestyle and possible options for action.
- **Exhibition "Our water":** The *Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR)* was the scientific partner of the exhibition "*Our water. Six Models for the Future*" in the Swiss Alpine Museum in Bern. The special exhibition, which was held from October 2016 through to January 2018, won the *Prix Expo 2017* of the *Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)*.
- **Jungfrau Climate Guide:** Call up information on the climate using your smartphone – the Climate Guide 2.0 makes it possible. The app from the *Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR)* offers visitors to the Jungfrau Region background information on the local effects of global warming.
- **Emission Impossible:** The computer game "*Emission Impossible*" was developed as an innovative teaching tool for young farmers to raise their awareness of climate protection.
- **Climate Poker:** The "Great Climate Poker" is an interactive learning tool on the driving factors that influence the climate. The game can be used at various educational levels depending on the goals of the teacher.
- **Learning game "like2be":** The electronic learning game "like2be" and the accompanying didactic material were developed by the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG)* as a way of promoting gender-sensitive career choices.

2.4 Digitalization

The change brought about by digitalization is making the university landscape highly dynamic. The University of Bern is facing up to the opportunities and challenges of digitalization and wants to play an active, critical and sustainable role in shaping the digitalization process. This is why the University Executive Board decided on a digitalization strategy in June 2019.

In order to promote a critical approach to digitalization, a series of events was created which, since fall 2019, have each critically reflected on a topic with a mixture of lectures and workshops, also focusing on sustainability issues. The responsible working group of the Vice-Rectorate Quality approaches faculties, centers and other units of the University in turn to carry out the event. The primary target audience includes all lecturers and responsible employees in central administration.

3. Teaching

3.1 Education for Sustainable Development – the understanding of the University of Bern

Education for Sustainable Development enables all actors of a society to participate in the individual and societal search, learning and design process of Sustainable Development. These learning processes are of great importance in relation to Sustainable Development; thus researchers and especially lecturers at the University have the task of sensitizing their students to the importance of science for society and its future. After completing their studies, graduates of the University can play a decisive role in shaping Sustainable Development in responsible positions in research, teaching, administration, the private sector, civil society and politics. Therefore, university education for Sustainable Development should enable students, among other things, to think in a networked and interconnected manner, to grasp complex society-environment impact structures and processes, and to formulate impact hypotheses about the causes and possible consequences of such processes. Establishing competencies plays a central role in the discussion about education for Sustainable Development.

3.2 Study programs

The challenges posed by Sustainable Development for current and future generations can only be overcome by bringing together a variety of different disciplines and players. The University of Bern thus offers specific study programs to provide its students with the knowledge and methodical skills required to recognize the problems associated with Sustainable Development and to tackle them from an inter- and transdisciplinary perspective.

At the level of Bachelor and Master, the University of Bern offers the following study programs on Sustainable Development: a *Bachelor Minor Sustainable Development* as well as a *Master Minor Sustainable Development*. The two study programs are highly inter- and transdisciplinary and application-oriented, and are aimed at students of all disciplines and faculties. At the doctoral level, sustainability is a core focus of the *International Graduate School North-South*. In terms of continuing education, the University of Bern offers a *Sustainable Development course that leads to a certificate* (CAS Sustainable Development).

In the area of sustainability, the study programs of the University of Bern also include the master's degree programs of the *Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR)*, the *World Trade Institute (WTI)* and the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG)*, as well as their graduate schools.

Centers	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Graduate school	Continuing education
<i>CDE</i>	Bachelor Minor Sustainable Development	Master Minor Sustainable Development	International Graduate School North-South (IGS North-South)	CAS Sustainable Development
<i>OCCR</i>		Master in Climate Sciences	Graduate School of Climate Sciences	
<i>WTI</i>			Graduate School of Economic Globalisation and Integration	Master of Advanced Studies in International Law and Economics (MILE)
<i>ICFG</i>		Master Minor Gender Studies	Graduate School of Gender Studies	CAS Gender Expertise in Migration and Globalisation

Summer schools: Every summer, the University of Bern offers students and researchers the opportunity to explore a specific topic in an international environment in various summer schools. The majority of the summer schools are aimed primarily at doctoral students and postdocs. But an interdisciplinary Bachelor Summer School for Climate Sciences took place in Bern for the very first time in the summer of 2018 under the name “*Confronting Climate Change – from Science to Policy*”. The pilot was a success, and was both continued and expanded in 2019: in addition to the Bachelor Summer School for Climate Sciences, the “*One Health*” Summer School for Bachelor and Master Students took place in summer 2019. The latter offered participants the opportunity to combine knowledge from soil science, microbiology, plant sciences, and human and veterinary medicine to assess the risks of pesticides and heavy metals along the food chain, for example.

3.3 Integration of Sustainable Development in all curricula

The University of Bern understands Sustainable Development as an individual and societal search, learning and design process in which all members of society participate. A participatory process such as this requires all players to possess the relevant knowledge and skills. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is thus a key component of the educational mandate. For this reason, the University of Bern pursues the goal of integrating Sustainable Development into all curricula and has anchored this at the strategic level.

To help lecturers integrate Sustainable Development into their disciplines, the University provides working materials and services. These support services were developed by the ESD team at the University of Bern on the basis of existing experience with teaching on Sustainable Development and are constantly being further developed and supplemented. There is a wide range of support services which extends from teaching materials through workshops and consultations to a funding program:

- **Guide with supplementary subject focus:** The guide “*Integrating Sustainable Development into University Teaching*” is aimed at lecturers from all disciplines who wish to take up and integrate the interdisciplinary topic of Sustainable Development into university courses. It contains brief, basic information on Sustainable Development and education for Sustainable Development. In addition, more in-depth documents are presented that include practical concepts, tools, instructions, notes, examples, links, and slides.
- **Teaching materials:** Sets of slides, learning videos and teaching examples
- **Workshops and coaching:** The ESD team offers various services to lecturers at the University of Bern in order to jointly find the link of their own discipline to Sustainable Development.
- **Funding program:** The competitive funding program “*Promotion of Sustainable Development in Teaching*” supports lecturers at the University of Bern in developing elective courses with a focus on Sustainable Development. From 2017 to 2019, 13 projects were approved in four calls for proposals. The fifth call for proposals was launched at the end of 2019.
- **Online tutorial:** The ESD team at the University of Bern developed a two-hour online tutorial on Sustainable Development, which was published internally at the University in November 2018 and evaluated at the end of 2019 after a one-year trial period. The online learning offer allows students to discover what sustainability is and what it has to do with their own discipline in an understandable and exciting way.

4. Business operations

4.1 Spatial infrastructure

The spatial infrastructure of the University of Bern is created by the *Office for Real Estate and Buildings* of the Canton of Bern, which pays attention to sustainability during construction and renovation. New buildings and conversions in the Canton are certified in accordance with the *Sustainable Building Standard Switzerland SNBS*, which is based on existing instruments (such as MINERGIE® and MINERGIE-ECO® with a focus on building ecology and energy efficiency). The aim is to achieve platinum rating. This does not apply to buildings on unsuitable building sites where certification is impossible. In the case of non-certification, the guideline “Sustainable Construction and Management” of the *Office for Real Estate and Buildings* is used.

The *Building Development Office* at the University of Bern is responsible for the maintenance and expansion of spatial infrastructure. It plans buildings that are use-specific (e.g. laboratory, office, library) but as far as possible are not tailored to specific users (e.g. specific institutes). In this way, it is possible to respond to changes in demand without having to immediately start rebuilding. Furthermore, guidelines are applied which aim to use rooms/spaces economically.

4.2 Total energy consumption

After the total energy consumption per person¹ rose slightly between 2015-17, it fell again slightly in the two years under review and is now at a comparable level to 2014.

In 2018, there was a -3% reduction in total energy consumption per person with a slight increase in the number of staff (+1%). Among other things, the reduction is due to the fact that the first results from the implementation of the large-scale consumer model became visible in district heating. The mild temperatures during the winter have also played their part in the reduction. And, on a positive note, electricity consumption did not increase despite the very warm summer months.

In 2019, total energy consumption per person decreased by -2%, although there was a further increase in the number of persons (+3%) and the colder winter led to a greater heating demand.

In 2017, the University of Bern conducted a consumption analysis in 14 areas as part of the large-scale consumer model with initial potential estimates for consumption optimization. On this basis, a cantonal target agreement with a term of 10 years was concluded with the *Office for Environment and Energy (AUE)* in 2018: An annual increase in energy efficiency of 0.41% (or 4.1% at the end of 10 years) was specified for the University of Bern. This figure takes into account the fact that the

¹ The number of persons comprises the students and employees as FTEs.

University has energy-intensive laboratory buildings with a high proportion of process energy that cannot be influenced. This target agreement was adhered to between 2017 and 2019.

4.3 Energy sources

Since 2016, the University of Bern has obtained electricity from renewable sources (hydropower, biomass, solar energy). The remaining share of electricity without a sustainability certificate, which was still 0.27% in 2017, was replaced as of June 1, 2018, and thus reduced to zero. In terms of total energy consumption per person, the share of electricity from renewable sources was 55% in 2018 and 53.7% in 2019.

The University of Bern mostly uses district heating to heat its buildings: In the two years under review, 93% and 94% respectively of the heating energy came from district heating. The direct use of gas and heating oil was quite low at 7% and 6% respectively.

At the University of Bern, photovoltaic systems are installed on the roofs of Muesmattstrasse 27, Mittelstrasse 43 as well as on the roofs of the research greenhouse, the von Roll University Center, the *Center for Sport and Sport Science (ZSSw)* and parts of the Animal Clinic. While the photovoltaic system on the von Roll building has been contracted out by the Canton to other users, the remaining photovoltaic systems are used for self-consumption, i.e. the electricity from the photovoltaic systems is used by the University itself. When there is a surplus of electricity, the electricity from the photovoltaic systems is fed back into the grid.

In 2019, the operational monitoring of the photovoltaic systems that the University uses for its own consumption was revised. The systems can now be checked remotely, allowing any faults to be rectified more quickly, reducing unproductive downtime.

4.4 Water

From 1995-2012, water use per person was halved despite new buildings and twice as many students. After showing a slight increase from 2014-16, water consumption dropped again in 2017/18 to undercut the levels reached in 2012. In the two years under review, water consumption was maintained at this low level, although the number of persons increased (by +1%, and by +3% respectively).

The University of Bern's commitment to the topic of water extends beyond the operational sphere. Since 2013, the University has carried the "Blue University" label, which is awarded by the Canadian NGO "Council of Canadians". As a Blue University, the University recognizes the human right to water, pays attention to sustainable water use, and works to ensure that water supply and use remain in public hands. The University fulfills its responsibility in this regard in a variety of ways: It is involved

in a number of national and international projects, underpinned by its many years of research into water and water management. Meanwhile, it conducts research into and teaching on the topic of human rights, thus helping to underscore the fundamental right to water. It also maintains a sustainable approach to water and offers its own carafes and recyclable drinking bottles for students and employees to fill up. In collaboration with the student cafeterias ZFV, “Blue University” stoppered glass bottles made of recycled material were purchased in 2018 for events of up to 30 people.

4.5 Waste

The University of Bern attaches importance to reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste and to fully exploiting the possibilities of waste recycling. Since 2010, it has had a waste disposal policy that takes sustainability into account and is based on the integrated product policy, which considers products along their entire life cycle.

At the University of Bern, sustainable waste management includes, for example, the following: Depending on the type, waste can be handed in to the Facility Services or the special waste collection point, after which it is sent for further recycling in accordance with the regulations (e.g. electrical scrap, illuminants, batteries, scrap metal, various chemicals). In addition, since the end of 2015, most University locations of a certain size (especially those open to the public) have been equipped with recycling boxes (paper, PET, aluminum cans, residual waste).

Recycling measures were further expanded in the years under review: The recycling of empty toner cartridges and waste toner containers, which previously took place only occasionally, has been gradually extended to other properties since the end of 2017. In addition, various solutions for recycling “Corning tubes” made of PP were evaluated in 2018. In 2019, the material started to be collected accordingly at the *Institute of Geography*. Future plans include evaluating the recycling of other plastic laboratory materials.

With regard to the volume of waste, the following statements can be made for the reporting period: In 2018, the volume of waste decreased by 8% with a slight increase in the number of staff. In 2019, the volume of waste increased slightly (+2.6%). This was due to moves and the associated triage and disposal of stored materials.

4.6 Sustainable food

The ZFV student cafeterias are committed to continuously improving in economic as well as social and environmental aspects of sustainability. However, the student cafeterias not only take sustainability into account in their operations and in the design of their offerings, they also organize various activities throughout the year during the lecture period that focus on sustainability. An overview of the various activities can be found in the sustainability calendar of the student cafeterias.

Regionality and seasonality are just as much a concern of the ZFV as “Fair Trade” and “Food Waste”. In addition, attention is paid to healthy nutrition in menu planning: The guidance system indicates allergens and nutritional values in the menu plans, thus ensuring transparency in menu selection. Vegetarian and vegan dishes are a regular feature in the student cafeterias and are on the menu every day. In addition, the entire “Il caffè due” cafeteria went completely vegan in September 2018. At the start of the fall semester 2019, the reCIRCLE system was launched in all ZFV dining halls and cafeterias at the University of Bern. In the future, all takeaway menus will be available in reusable containers. When it comes to hot beverages, the “bring your own cup” initiative is an incentive for students to bring their own cups with them and thus reduce disposable tableware.

4.7 Climate neutrality

Climate protection is an important concern of the University of Bern. For this reason, it is developing a comprehensive climate neutrality strategy for both business travel and the university as a whole, including monitoring, reduction measures and appropriate climate compensation.

In 2019, the focus was initially on business travel (especially air travel) and the associated CO₂ emissions: In June 2019, the University Executive Board approved recommendations to enable employees of the University to make their business travel more sustainable and thus reduce CO₂ emissions. The recommendations include important information on travel alternatives and more environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

Among the various ways in which travel miles, and thus environmental impact, can be reduced is the use of video communication. Various software solutions as well as video conference rooms and mobile video equipment are available at the University of Bern.

Furthermore, in 2019 the University of Bern took an innovative path in the implementation of conferences: The “Copernicus Alliance Conference 2019”, held from September 9 to 11, 2019, and hosted by the University of Bern and the CDE, was conducted entirely by video link. Over 90 participants from more than 30 countries, including Australia and Jamaica, gathered in an online space to attend the virtual conference. Experiences made with this innovative format were reviewed after the conference by the *COPERNICUS Alliance* and CDE scientists at the University of Bern, and guidelines for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of online conferences were developed.

4.8 Biodiversity

The gardeners of the University of Bern tend to and renew the outdoor areas of the University properties. Since 2018, they have been following a concept that takes sustainability (especially biodiversity) into account. The employees of the nursery are trained accordingly.

In principle, the University of Bern likes to leave its outdoor areas as natural as possible. Chemical pesticides and fertilizers are not used, neophytes are controlled mechanically. The University's gardeners take into account, promote and incorporate native fauna and flora. Wild hedgerows, for example, are tended and supplemented with native plants to increase diversity. Whenever new plants are required, native plants are used whenever possible.

In addition, new high-trunk fruit trees are planted; old fruit trees are upgraded with professional pruning. The lawns are not fertilized and irrigated, resulting in species-rich areas. Whenever possible, flower lawns and flower meadows are created.

Small structures, such as piles of branches, piles of rocks and leaves, borders, and ponds, are welcomed and incorporated. Work is being carried out to ensure good links between the individual elements that serve as important food and shelter bases for small animals.

Since 2019, the nursery has been informing employees and students, as well as residents and passers-by, about the newly created habitats with appropriate boards and providing tips for gardens.

5. Professional and social context

5.1 Gender equality

The University of Bern is committed to gender equality for men and women. It promotes the success of both men and women in academia with effective instruments of gender equality and career models. The aim of the gender equality policy of the University of Bern is for all faculties, departments, institutes as well as administration to perceive gender equality issues and observe them in practice. The Commission and the Office for Gender Equality, both of which have existed since 1990, advise and support those responsible in this process.

Action plans: The University of Bern has had an action plan for gender equality since 2013. The first action plan, from 2013-16, has now been replaced by the “*Action Plan 2017-20*” which comprises 56 measures in eight spheres of activity. However, the promotion of gender equality is not only anchored in action plans at university level, but also at faculty level: Since 2016, the faculties and the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)* have had their own gender equality plans, each with a duration of four years. Since 2018, this is also true of the *World Trade Institute*.

Gender equality measures: The gender equality measures at the University of Bern cover a broad spectrum. They include not only quality assurance in employment procedures and the promotion of female early career researchers, but also measures on the reconcilability of studies, profession and care², as well as on the combating of discrimination and stereotypes. Various new measures were launched in these areas in the two years under review and the following highlights on existing measures were recorded:

- **Quality assurance in recruitment procedures:** In 2019, the guidelines “*Gender equality in the appointment procedure*” were published in an updated version. Furthermore, the Office for Gender Equality collaborated with animation film maker Martine Ulmer to make a video on gender quality in the appointment procedure. Under the title “*Lady Professor Wanted*” (Professurin gesucht), it contains concise tips on how to approach the appointment procedure.
- **Promotion of female early career researchers:** Since 2017, the Office for Gender Equality has been running the career program “*COMET – Coaching, Mentoring and Training for Women Postdocs*”, which complements the faculty mentoring programs and provides individual career planning support to around 20 women postdocs and habilitation candidates each year. In order to evaluate the COMET program, the first COMET participants were asked about the content of the program using a questionnaire in 2018.

² Measures on the reconcilability of studies, profession and care can be found in section 5.4. of this report.

- **Horizontal segregation:** 2018 saw the launch of the cooperation project sponsored by Swiss universities “*chance_be: Equal opportunities in career and study choices at Bern universities*”, in which the University of Bern is leading house. The project connects and networks the University of Bern, the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and the Bern University of Teacher Education in the areas of career and study choice. The practice/theory dialog focuses on the questions of which subjects are particularly segregated by gender, why this is so, and what additional measures the three universities need to take to counteract this.
- **International cooperation:** The Office for Gender Equality initiated the founding of a “Gender and Diversity Group” with “*The GUILD*”. This group met for the first time in Bern in November 2019.
- **Equal opportunities prize “Prix Lux”:** The University of Bern has been awarding the “Prix Lux” since 2017 to individuals or entities that actively promote equality in the field of gender and diversity. The “Prix Lux” 2018 went to Prof. Dr. med. Mihai Constantinescu and his team from the Department of Plastic Reconstructive Medicine at the Inselspital. And in 2019 the “Prix Lux” was awarded to the Student Body of the University of Bern (*Studierendenschaft der Universität Bern, SUB*).³
- **Gender-neutral language:** In 2017, the brochure “*Gender-neutral language. recommendations for the University of Bern*” was published in German. The French version “*Le guide du langage inclusif*” was published in 2019.
- **Transidentity:** Since 2018, students, doctoral students and employees of the University of Bern who are undergoing (or have undergone) a transition process can register with their everyday name in University systems as far as possible, in deviation from the official first name and gender entry.
- **Website:** Since 2018, best practice measures and events relevant to equality have been presented on the equality website⁴.

Gender share: The University of Bern pursues the goal of achieving an appropriate proportion of both genders at all levels. At the professorship level, the University has defined the following target values: By 2020, the aim is to have 25% of full and associate professorships held by women, and 40% of assistant professorships with tenure track.

In the case of assistant professors with tenure track, the proportion of women is some way below the target value of 40% with a value of 26.1% (2018) and 34.2% (2019) and is subject to fluctuation. In the case of professorships and associate professorships, however, a slow upward trend has been observed for several years now, with the proportion of women stagnating at 20.7% in 2018 but rising

³ See www.prix-lux.unibe.ch

⁴ See https://www.unibe.ch/university/portrait/self_image/equality/index_eng.html

again slightly to 21.9% in 2019. Looking at things positively, the figure is now above 20% but the target value of 25% has still not been reached.

5.2 Diversity

The University of Bern is committed to implementing the principles of equal opportunity and enabling students with disabilities and / or a chronic illness to participate equally in university life. In order to ensure that the university facilities and services can be used by as many groups of people as possible, the University takes the following measures:

Adjustment of the study situation: The *Admissions Office* provides support for students and prospective students. It is the first port of call and helps students to find the right person to contact (e.g. for compensating for disadvantages in academic attainments or performance assessments). The Admissions Office also provides support in the preparation of the application for compensation for disadvantages. Employees from the Admissions Office also accompany students to academic student advice meetings if a student so desires.

Lecture halls: In construction projects, attention is paid to obstacle-free buildings and lecture halls. Information on obstacle-free accessibility (such as wheelchair accessibility and induction systems) can be found in the study profile sheet (KSL) under the details of the lecture halls in the “Building for All” section.

Accessibility: The website of the University of Bern was designed and implemented in accordance with the latest accessibility guidelines and can be read by screen readers. However, individual areas of the university web landscape are not (yet) barrier-free.

5.3 Promotion of early career researchers

The University of Bern offers a wide range of research fields and achieves international excellence in several of them. The University depends on motivated, curious and critical early career researchers so that findings of great scientific and social relevance can continue to be obtained in the future. For this reason, it places great emphasis on the sustainable promotion of early career researchers, enabling them to develop their full potential. The diverse support measures include a wide range of contact points, courses on offer and funding instruments.

Reforms: In accordance with its “*Strategy 2021*”, the University of Bern is characterized by the targeted promotion of early career researchers: The University aims to make it easier for intermediate staff to embark on an academic career and to create appropriate, internationally competitive employment conditions. In the context of changes to the higher education landscape as well as national and international support conditions, the University of Bern, together with faculties and the intermediate

staff association, has worked on improving framework conditions. These conditions should make it easier to plan academic career paths so that opportunities and prospects can be identified at an early stage. The University Ordinance was revised on February 1, 2019, in order to implement these improvements, a key component being the improvement of employment conditions for young researchers.

Completing a doctorate at the University of Bern: As a comprehensive university with eight faculties, the University of Bern offers early career researchers attractive structures for a promising doctorate. Early career researchers can complete their doctorate either in one of the eight graduate schools or in one of around 30 doctoral programs or as part of an individual doctorate. Graduate schools and doctoral programs are arranged on an interdisciplinary and/or interuniversity basis in many cases. In addition to research-related training and intensive support, these also offer excellent opportunities for networking within the academic community.

The goal of doctoral education at the University of Bern is not only the academic qualification, i.e. the dissertation, but also the acquisition of interdisciplinary competencies in order to prepare doctoral students for a challenging activity inside and outside the university. Therefore, various offices and institutions at the University of Bern offer events for career planning and the acquisition of key skills, such as the free course program “Transferable Skills” for (post)doctoral students.

Funding instruments: The University of Bern supports researchers at doctorate and post-doctorate level with specific funds:

- The *fund for the promotion of young researchers* supports networking activities of young researchers from the doctoral level onwards.
- With the “*UniBE Initiator Grants*”, early career researchers at the University of Bern are supported after their doctorate in the preparation of applications for external funding. These applications can be intended for individual promotion (personal promotion) as well as for the promotion of individual projects (project promotion).

Points of contact: Early career researchers will find advice and support at various points of contact at the University of Bern:

- The **Coordination Office for the Promotion of Early Career Researchers**, created in 2013, is a central point of contact for doctoral and postdoctoral students from all faculties. It coordinates projects across the university, organizes specific funding schemes, and, by advising young researchers, is part of the Grants Office. In addition, since 2016 it has been supporting the development and implementation of a university-wide strategy and a package of measures to improve academic career conditions at the University of Bern.

- The **Grants Office** is the central point of contact for all researchers at the University of Bern and ensures the necessary support from initial advice to final completion of the project. Advice and support is provided for national and international funding vehicles of public funding agencies.
- The **intermediate staff association of the University of Bern MVUB** represents intermediate members of the University in their academic and professional interests with respect to the University as well as boards and authorities outside the University. It sees itself as a point of contact and service center for intermediate staff.
- The **Career Service** supports students and doctoral students at the University of Bern in their transition from studies to professional life. The numerous offers include seminars, workshops and training sessions as well as the *Career Entry Forum* which has been held annually since 2019.

5.4 Working conditions

5.4.1 Balancing career and family

The University of Bern is aware that the professional and academic paths of its students and staff are influenced by family, private and job-related circumstances. They are involved not only in their professional field of activity but also, for example, in caring for children, in their partnerships, in caring for relatives and in voluntary work. The University of Bern wants to take the personal circumstances of its employees and students into account in the working and study conditions and therefore takes correspondingly wide-ranging measures, which are constantly being expanded and further developed by the *Office for Gender Equality*.

Useful information on the subject of *reconciling work/study and private/family life* has been compiled on a website.⁵ The services offered range from counseling and courses to support services and infrastructural measures:

- *KIHOB, the foundation offering childcare for institutions of higher education in Bern*, promotes and ensures additional family care and support for children of members of the University of Bern and the Bern University of Teacher Education and other people from areas associated with the university.
- The two-year pilot project “Plan B” was launched in 2019: The pilot project initiated by the *Office for Gender Equality* and the *KIHOB Foundation* is an emergency care service provided

⁵ See www.vereinbarkeit.unibe.ch/index_eng.html

by caregivers of the KIHOB Foundation at a person's place of residence in the case of extraordinary bottlenecks such as illness, absence of partners, lack of family support, exams or graduation or professional absences of university staff.

- A child- and family-friendly infrastructure is specifically provided and expanded by the University of Bern. The corresponding infrastructure includes parent/child rooms, changing tables, medical and breastfeeding rooms, children's highchairs in student cafeterias and dining halls, and play boxes. Since 2016, a roadmap has provided an overview of all family-friendly locations at the University of Bern. The range of family-friendly locations and the roadmap are continuously being expanded, for example, in 2019 new parent/child rooms were opened in the main building of the University and in the "Uni Mittelstrasse".
- The *Office for Gender Equality* offers coaching on reconcilability in collaboration with the "UND Office – Families and Gainful Employment for Men and Women". The offer is aimed at all employees and students of the University of Bern and their partners.
- The University of Bern strives to give its employees the opportunity to work in contemporary work models. That is why it welcomes and encourages job sharing. Guidelines on job sharing at the professorship level have been in place since 2015. Since the beginning of 2019, the University of Bern has had a relief pool for professors with care responsibilities and for job-sharing tandems.
- As part of the "Dual Career" program, the University of Bern has been supporting partners of newly arrived foreign academics (from postdoc level) in their new career start in Switzerland since 2016. In 2018, the University signed the "Letter of Intent" for the *Swiss Academic Dual Career Network (S-ADCN)*. The network supports cooperation and networking between the participating institutions with the aim of creating more attractive framework conditions for dual-career partnerships in the Swiss higher education and research landscape.
- The University of Bern has been a member of the association "Familie in der Hochschule" (Family at the University) since 2016. It was the first Swiss university to sign the international charter "*Familie in der Hochschule*" (Family at the University) and thus became a member of the Best Practice Club – a network of 120 universities.

5.4.2 Health and safety

Occupational safety, health protection and environmental safety: The University of Bern attaches great importance to occupational safety, health protection and environmental safety. A corresponding risk management system is established at the University and is supervised by the *Risk Management Office*. The Office advises and supports the University Executive Board as well as the faculties, institutes and administrative departments with regard to risk management, occupational

safety, health protection, environmental safety and crisis management. The Office also offers the following courses and projects:

- The *Risk Management Office* offers employees annual courses in occupational safety, health protection and environmental safety.
- Since 2017, the *Risk Management Office* has offered advice on designing workplaces to ensure furniture and screens suit personal needs. In addition, employees of the University have been able to qualify as an internal “Ergonomics Consultant RMO” since 2018.
- Since 2012, the *Risk Management Office* at the University of Bern has coordinated the national Pro Velo Switzerland campaign “bike to work”. The University pays the “bike to work” participation fee. Since 2018, the University of Bern has also been giving away internal prizes in addition to the many prizes that “bike to work” awards.
- In 2018, the University launched a new website that provides important information on protective measures at work during pregnancy.

University Sports: With its varied sports and exercise program, University Sports makes an important contribution to promoting the health and well-being of students and employees. The offer includes a wide range of supervised training, courses, competitions and events. In addition, University Sports offers advice and provides infrastructure for independent training. Since 2015, University Sports has had an official mission statement that specifies guiding principles for sustainability.

The University of Bern supports proven top athletes with flexible curricula so that they can combine their studies and sport in the best possible way. Furthermore, the subject of combining top-class sport with studies has been added to the University's website as an additional advisory service, and contact persons in the individual faculties have been named.

The “co-opera” integration project of the *Swiss Labor Assistance SAH Bern* together with the Bern University of Teacher Education, the *Institute of Sport Science at the University of Bern (ISPW)* and the *Sport Science student representative body* has been running an annual project week for refugees on the subject of “Sports and exercise” since 2018. The aim is to give participants an insight into different sports and the chance to interact with Swiss people.

5.4.3 Continuing education

As a strong and growing institution of continuing education, the University of Bern supports lifelong learning and encourages its employees accordingly. The Human Resources Office publishes a dedicated list of providers of personnel development measures and additional information on the topic on a website.

- **University course program:** The University's offerings include numerous internal continuing education courses, ranging from subject and methodology courses to leadership, personal and social skills, as well as topics such as health and safety. The courses are offered by various university units, such as the *Centre for University Continuing Education*, the *Office for Gender Equality* and the *Risk Management Office*. These courses supplement the courses offered by the Cantonal Human Resources Office and are geared to the needs of the employees.
- **Cantonal course program:** As an employer, the Canton of Bern supports the broadening and deepening of the professional skills of its staff. In the central course program of the *Cantonal Human Resources Office*, employees of the cantonal administration will find courses that support and facilitate their daily activities with concrete and practical content.

6. Finances and Governance

6.1 Finances

6.1.1 Funding

The University of Bern is financed by the annual cantonal contribution as well as by other sources of funding, in particular basic and investment contributions from the federal government, contributions for students from intercantonal agreements (IUV) and external funding.

Basic funding: The share of the sponsoring canton has remained constant at 35.8% in 2018 and 35.1% in 2019. This balanced and reliable basic funding is an essential prerequisite for the independence of the University and its researchers. The contributions of other cantons in accordance with the *Intercantonal University Agreement (IUV)* and the basic contributions of the federal government expand the foundation of university independence. They were also stable in 2018/19, accounting for a total of around 23% of total funding.

External funding: The share of external funding has remained relatively constant and is at a high level at 37.3% in 2018 and 38.3% in 2019. The high proportion of competitively acquired external funding from the public promotion of research is considered proof of success for high academic performance: The researchers at the University of Bern were very committed and successful in competitively acquiring funds.

Transparency: For accounting purposes, the University of Bern applies the Swiss GAAP FER accounting standard. The overriding principle of Swiss GAAP FER is to present a true and fair view of the net assets, financial position and results of operations.

6.1.2 Sustainable procurement and financial assets

Sustainable procurement: The University of Bern strives to increasingly consider sustainability criteria in procurement. It has already developed and implemented corresponding projects in the areas of cleaning agents and paper.

Since February 2019, the University of Bern has had an online shop with over 50 items ranging from hoodies to power banks. The online shop takes environmental and social sustainability aspects into account when selecting products and provides information on the sustainability commitment of its suppliers on its website: The store partner Pandinavia, for example, pays attention to compliance with fair working conditions when choosing products. In addition, the online shop has purchased all items ordered through Pandinavia in a CO₂-neutral manner since September 2019.

Financial investments: The University is also committed to sustainability in the area of financial investments and therefore, in 2018, decided to invest only in sustainable financial products in its asset management mandates.

6.2 Governance

Sustainability Management: The University of Bern takes its ethical responsibility seriously and is committed to integrating sustainability as an interdisciplinary issue across all areas of the University and promoting the careful use of ecological, economic and social resources. The University has thus accordingly incorporated the subject in its *Mission Statement* as well as in its “*Strategy 2021*”. It also has a *sustainability mission statement* defining the principles to which the University wants to orient itself long term in the areas of research, teaching and business operations.

In order to be able to continuously develop further in the area of sustainability, the University sets itself corresponding goals, takes appropriate measures and reviews their implementation. Sustainability monitoring, which the University conducts annually, is the basis for this systematic process of quality assurance. Based on the findings obtained in the monitoring process, the University of Bern sets itself goals and defines measures for a period of four years. The current sustainability goals are specified in the University’s “*Quality Strategy 2018-21*”. The measures and responsibilities are defined in the University action plan as well as the faculty action plans. Quality reviews are conducted during annual strategy meetings with the faculties and centers.

Organizational structure: In the organizational structure of the University of Bern, sustainability is anchored at a high level – the Vice-Rectorate Quality. Since 2012, there has been a *Coordination Office for Sustainable Development* as well as a permanent *Commission for Sustainable Development*. All faculties, the University Executive Board, the intermediate staff, the students as well as the administrative management and the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)* are represented in the latter.

Participation: Participation is a central instrument for shaping Sustainable Development. The University of Bern accordingly attaches great importance to participation and promotes co-determination among employees at all levels as well as students. The University involves its members in self-governance and includes them in decision-making processes. This is reflected in the structure of the University: All levels are represented in the University commissions and in the Senate.