

Recommendations for business trips

Taking sustainability into account for business trips

Traffic-related greenhouse gas emissions caused by business trips are a key issue of everyday life at the university. Staff at the University of Bern can play their part in reducing this pollution. In this document, we have put together some suggestions regarding how you can take sustainability into account on your business trips.

Take the train instead of flying

For (short) journeys where the travel time is less than seven hours, take the train instead of flying. When planning your journey, take into account that traveling to and from the airport and checking in etc. also take time. When considering these factors, a train journey for some destinations is only one or two hours longer than a journey by plane (e.g. to Brussels, Rome, Hamburg, Cambridge, London) or sometimes even shorter than this (e.g. Paris, Bologna, Frankfurt, Munich)¹.

Another advantage of train journeys, in addition to climate friendliness, is that the travel time by train can be used for a variety of purposes (for individual work or meetings if you are making a journey as a team).

¹The information about flight durations, including transfers, is based on data provided by www.routerank.com/en/

Direct flights

Planes emit more CO₂ during takeoff and landing than during the flight. By avoiding flights with stopovers, you can reduce the carbon footprint of your journeys.

Economy

Business and First-Class flights produce more CO₂ than flights in Economy Class because of the space required. You can reduce your journey's carbon footprint by booking Economy Class flights.

Video conferences

Business travel can be easily reduced by opting for a video conference or webinar as a cheap alternative to travel. For example, take part in a conference as a guest speaker via video or plan the next conference that you're hosting yourself to be partly or completely based on virtual platforms. Even meetings can be held by video. The University of Bern offers a number of different options and courses along these lines:

- **Webinars:** With Adobe Connect software, you can hold online seminars, lectures or web meetings. Alternatively, external lecturers can host a seminar or a lecture remotely. [More...](#)
- **Video conferences:** Members of the University of Bern have the opportunity to communicate by video in their own workspace or in specially designated rooms. [More...](#)
- **Advice and training:** You can find support and training options [here](#).

Energy efficiency

Compare different routes and modes of transport when planning your journey, taking travel time, costs and energy efficiency/environmental sustainability into consideration. The following tools are very helpful for this:

- www.routerank.com/en/
- www.ecopassenger.org

Planning business trips

You can take sustainability into account when planning your business trips by asking the following questions during your planning process:

- Is it possible to take part in a conference virtually (video conference, webinar)?
- Which delegation sizes make the most sense?
- Can several meetings abroad be combined into one?
- What environmentally friendly modes of transport are available?
- How much of the journey can be spent working?

Planning conferences

When planning a conference or inviting guest speakers to Bern, you can take sustainability into account, as regards how participants and speakers will travel here, by asking the following questions during the planning process:

- Is it possible to use video conferences and/or webinars at the conference?
- Are you able to plan the event so that it is possible for participants and speakers to use environmentally friendly modes of transport?

Point out to the participants or guests invited to your conferences that the University of Bern is within close proximity to Bern train station and that Bern has excellent transport links by train. You can find information from the Welcome Center about public transport in Bern [here](#).

These recommendations were approved by the University Executive Board in June 2019.

You can find more information on questions concerning sustainability at the University of Bern at: www.sustainability.unibe.ch