

# Terms and conditions for the implementation of the Students4Sustainability project grant programme

*The Board of Students4Sustainability, in consultation with the responsible bodies of the Bernese Higher Education Institutions (University of Bern [UniBE], Bern University of Teacher Education [PHBern], Bern University of Applied Sciences [BFH], Bern University of Teacher Education [PH-Institut NMS Bern], together 'the Bernese Higher Education Institutions') resolves:*

## 1. General

Extracurricular student engagement makes a key contribution to promoting sustainable development (SD) at Bern's higher education institutions (HEIs)<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, *Students4Sustainability*, administratively represented by the Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern, offers funding for student projects in the field of SD at the four Bernese HEIs.

### 1.1 What is Students4Sustainability?

*Students4Sustainability* offers students at Bern's HEIs (University of Bern [UniBE], Bern University of Teacher Education [PHBern], Bern University of Applied Sciences [BFH], Bern University of Teacher Education NMS Bern [PH-Institut NMS Bern]) content-related and financial support for their engagement for SD. The support offered ranges from topic-specific workshops and events to individual coaching. Students can submit project proposals for financial support. A maximum of CHF 10,000 gross per project can be applied for from *Students4Sustainability*. In addition to financial

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<sup>1</sup> See Lipscombe, BP (2008). Exploring the role of the extra - curricular sphere in higher education for sustainable development in the United Kingdom. *Environmental Education Research* 14:4, 455-468. DOI: 10.1080/13504620802278803  
UND Drupp et al. (2012). Change from below – student initiatives. In: L.W. Filoh (Hg.) (2012). *Sustainable Development at Universities: New Horizons*. Peter Lang Scientific Publishers, Frankfurt.

support, HEIs may also award student projects with benefits in kind, including, for example, the use of equipment, facilities and other resources (ICT infrastructure, etc.).

### 1.2 What is the goal and impact of Students4Sustainability?

The aim is to motivate students from all disciplines at the Bernese HEIs listed in section 1.1 to get involved in SD, to lower the barriers to such involvement and to build a cross-HEI student sustainability community.

When calling for project submissions, emphasis is placed on ensuring that the student teams are as interdisciplinary as possible and/or that cross-HEI cooperation is planned within the framework of the projects. The projects should contribute to institutional, formal, non-formal or informal learning<sup>2</sup> and strengthen links between HEIs, for example with the help of the above-mentioned inter-HEI project teams and/or by making project outputs available to all HEIs involved.

### 1.3 What is meant by sustainable development (SD)?

SD is a long-term, optimistic model for social development that focuses on people, their needs, abilities, and actions. The goal is to achieve intergenerational and intragenerational social and economic justice while respecting ecological limits. This cross-cutting task requires contributions at all decision-making levels. Consequently, co-determination and participation are core principles of this model. Ideally, all actors coordinate their specific goals and measures in line with the overarching vision. From this perspective, SD is a continuous process of negotiation and compromise to weigh up diverse ecological, social, and economic interests, coordinate them amongst different actors, and resolve conflicting goals peacefully in a consensus-oriented manner. This requires that the actors have the necessary knowledge and capacity to act or are enabled to acquire or expand this knowledge and capacity.

## 2. Participation requirements and content

The project submission is open to all bachelor's and master's students at the University of Bern, BFH, PHBern, and PH-Institut NMS Bern enrolled at one of the aforementioned Bernese HEIs at the time of project submission. The project lead must be an enrolled student. In justified exceptional cases, project collaborators may also be external parties.

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<sup>2</sup> See UNECE (2005). UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. In: *CEP*(ed.) AC. 13. Vilnius: Committee on Environmental Policy.

The projects submitted can take various forms. Anything is possible, from charitable projects to educational offerings to business ideas. What is important is the connection to SD (see point 1.3) and a cross-HEI approach (products, events, etc. resulting from the projects must be available or accessible to all students at the Bernese HEIs).

Special provisions apply to projects that aim to develop web applications. In this case, the project application must specify how the application will continue to be operated after the funding from Students4Sustainability has expired. Furthermore, web applications may constitute only a part of the project, and the nature and duration of the web application must be explicitly regulated.

For follow-up projects or second project submissions, it must be explained how long-term financing will be secured, which additional sources of financing have already been requested, and which new, innovative elements the follow-up project contains compared to the original project. This information must be provided in the project application.

### 3. Form and objectives of the grants

The project team can consist of students from any of the above-mentioned HEIs. Each project must be submitted by the main applicant (project manager) and confirmed by a co-applicant (see point 6). The project duration is limited to a maximum of two years. The project should start within four months of the submission deadline.

The project ideas must demonstrate the intended contribution to sustainable development (SD) and the development of individual skills of the project staff. The expansion of skills refers to personal knowledge in the field of SD, diverse learning experiences, and project management skills. The experience gained must be recorded in a final report after completion of the project.

## 4. Process

### 4.1 Project submission and review

First, the completed project application form must be submitted to [bern@students4sustainability.ch](mailto:bern@students4sustainability.ch) by the deadline. All information about the forms and the process can be found on the website <https://www.students4sustainability.ch/forderung>.

Once the project applications have been received and their completeness confirmed, they will be reviewed and evaluated by an evaluation committee (see point 7). The committee also has the option of awarding only part of the requested grant amount and/or granting conditional funding.

### 4.2 Committee decision and project launch

After the evaluation committee makes its decision, project management will be informed in writing of the funding decision and its rationale. There is no legal entitlement to receiving a grant, and legal

recourse is not an option. Following a positive decision, the project management will sign the project agreement. If the project is approved with conditions, the project management team has four months to fulfill them.

#### 4.3 Midterm reporting and discussion

At the halfway point of the project, the project management submits a midterm report which includes the current budget. In addition, there is a telephone or face-to-face exchange between the project management and *Students4Sustainability*'s management team.

#### 4.4 Final reporting and completion of the project

Upon completion of the project, the project management team shall submit a final report with a final statement of accounts no later than one month after the end of the project, which must be signed by the co-applicant (forms will be sent to the project management team). Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the funds having to be repaid. In addition, a final meeting will be held between the project management team and the responsible parties at *Students4Sustainability*, either by telephone or in person.

The project duration can only be extended in exceptional cases that are clearly justified. If a project is continued after the official term (e.g., in the form of a spin-off), this shall be done completely separately and independently of *Students4Sustainability*.

Upon successful completion of the project, the project management has the right to receive written proof from *Students4Sustainability* confirming the successful implementation of the project.

#### 4.5 Grant

Once approved, the project lead submits a finalised budget to the *Students4Sustainability* management team and reports to them on current and final expenditures in both interim and final reports.

Significant changes during the project, namely the transfer of the project lead to another person, changes to the project duration, and shifts between budget categories of more than 10% of the funding amount, require a written request to *Students4Sustainability*. Shifts between budget items, even those of less than 10% of the funding amount, must be reported.

At the end of the project period or if the project is terminated, any unused funds must be returned to the *Students4Sustainability* funding program.

a) Material resources

The **material costs** shown in the budget are made available to the project management at the start of the project as an advance payment. Projects are required to collect the relevant invoices, receipts, or supporting documents for each expense, file them carefully in the designated MS Teams folder, and enter them in the budget overview. Expenses are submitted quarterly via eForms. The complete statement of accounts (with all receipts) must be submitted no later than one month after the end of the project. If receipts are missing, the corresponding amount will be reclaimed.

In special cases, deviations from this rule are possible in consultation with the management team and the CDE finance department.

b) Personnel resources and external services

**Personnel resources for the project team** are paid in the form of lump sums (gross amount minus social security contributions, accident insurance, and any other deductions) and must be requested by the project management using a lump sum form via the management team from the CDE finance department. The lump sum compensation is determined by the project team itself within a specified range of CHF 25.00/hour to CHF 50.00/hour so that the objectives specified in the project application can be achieved with the budgeted funds. The maximum compensation is CHF 50/hour and the minimum compensation is CHF 25/hour. The performance of project tasks as personal contributions is permitted and must also be included in the budget. Up to a total payment amount of CHF 2,500 per year, no social security deductions will be made unless expressly requested by the insured person (in accordance with Art. 34d of the AHV Ordinance). Double earnings are not permitted. The industry-standard salary must be observed for the financial compensation of external experts. The HEIs have no obligations as employers for persons who are called upon by the project team to perform their services and who are not HEI employees.

**External services** must be invoiced directly through the University of Bern. If the service provider is self-employed (with AHV confirmation/commercial register entry), the invoice can be sent directly to the University of Bern via [kreditoren@unibe.ch](mailto:kreditoren@unibe.ch). If the fee is for someone who is not registered as self-employed, it must also be invoiced as lump-sum compensation. For the latter procedure, the project management will forward the documents necessary for processing the lump sum compensation to the management team.

## 5. Evaluation criteria

- **Impact:** Potential of the project to contribute to sustainable development (SD) or education for sustainable development (ESD) or to advance the HEIs' efforts toward sustainable development
- **Innovation:** Novelty and originality of the project (for the selected context). At least one component of the project should be novel

- **Networking at the location:** Contribution to strengthening links between Bern's HEIs, partners from other academic disciplines, and cooperation with external partners from civil society, the private or public sector
- **Efficiency:** Ratio between requested funds and expected results
- **Competencies:** Further development of technical and methodological competencies in the field of (B)NE as well as competencies in project management (e.g. team organization and reflection on the project process)

## 6. Co-applicant

The project submission requires confirmation by a co-applicant. Where possible, the co-applicant should belong to the institute/department of the project lead or a project collaborator and be employed at a HEI. The main task of the co-applicant is to confirm the project submission and the final report with their signature. If there is reason to believe that these framework conditions and/or the requirements specified in the written decision on the project application have been disregarded by project team, or if the project is terminated, the co-applicant shall immediately inform the responsible persons at *Students4Sustainability*.

The above-mentioned tasks of the co-applicant are minimum requirements. If the co-applicant wishes to participate more actively, for example by offering technical support for the student project, this is possible in principle after consultation with the person primarily responsible at *Students4Sustainability*.

## 7. Evaluation Committee

### 7.1 Tasks of the evaluation committee

The evaluation committee reviews and discusses the project submissions. It then makes the funding decisions. All members of the evaluation committee read the submissions carefully. The representatives of the four Bernese HEIs and the external experts also prepare an assessment for each submission based on a set of criteria. The submissions are distributed randomly and as evenly as possible among the representatives of the four Bernese HEIs and the external experts. The assessments are then presented to the entire evaluation committee and discussed. The evaluation committee makes its funding decisions based on the expert opinions. It should be noted that the evaluation committee may also award only a portion of the requested funding amount and/or attach conditions to the funding.

### 7.2 Composition of the committee

The evaluation committee consists of ten people and is composed as follows:

- Four subject experts from Bern's HEIs (University of Bern, BFH, PHBern, and PH-Institut NMS Bern). One person is appointed per HEI.
- Four students from Bern's HEIs. The University of Bern, BFH, PHBern, and PH-Institut NMS Bern each appoint one student representative.
- Two external experts with experience in student projects.

The current representatives of the evaluation committee can be found on the website: <https://www.students4sustainability.ch/forderung>.

### 7.3 Voting rights

- The members of the evaluation committee each have one vote in the decision-making process. The experts from the HEIs also have the right of veto.
- Members must recuse themselves when matters are discussed that affect their own interests or the interests of natural or legal persons close to them.
- In the event of a tie, the person primarily responsible for *Students4Sustainability* has the casting vote.

## 8. Further provisions

### 8.1 Intellectual property

The intellectual property rights to the results of each student project belong to the project team. If external persons or institutions are also involved in a project, the intellectual property rights must be regulated in a separate agreement between the parties, which must be enclosed with the project application.

### 8.2 Insurance

Project staff are responsible for clarifying their personal insurance coverage and ensuring that they have adequate insurance protection.

### 8.3 Communication and events

Funded projects undertake to participate in *Students4Sustainability* events at least twice a year and to actively participate in *Students4Sustainability*'s communication activities (social media, etc.). The *Students4Sustainability* corporate design manual must be adhered to in all communication/advertising by the projects (use of the *Students4Sustainability* logo, etc.). Funded projects will receive a microsite on the *Students4Sustainability* website. The projects are required to submit current content to *Students4Sustainability* at least at the beginning and end of the project so that it can be published on the microsite.

### 8.4 Participation in research projects

The grants program, as well as projects supported by a *Students4Sustainability* grant and their project leads and team members, may be the subject of scientific research activities by researchers from Bern's HEIs or affiliated institutions. The declaration of consent is part of the contract.

### 8.5 Consideration of legal requirements

Within the framework of project funding, and in the case of inter-HEI projects or cooperation with external persons or institutions, the internal legal requirements of the HEIs involved must always be observed.

### 8.6 Entry into force

These framework conditions will come into force on January 1, 2025, and will govern all projects submitted and funded under the *Students4Sustainability* funding program. They will remain in effect until December 31, 2027.

***This document is a translation that is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. The text of the original German version always prevails.***