

## Call Engaged UniBE: Transdisciplinary projects for sustainable development

The University of Bern promotes transdisciplinary approaches to contribute to researching and solving complex sustainability issues.

This call seeks projects that use transdisciplinary methods to promote sustainable projects. They should be guided by the currently emerging [Climate Roadmap 2030](#) and test and establish new formats and platforms together with social actors.

Projects in the canton of Bern are supported, such as

- Social innovations for sustainability transformations
- Research-based implementation projects for greenhouse gas reduction
- Climate impact projects, climate impact adaptation projects
- Living labs or real-world experiments
- Capacity development for early career researchers
- Development and implementation of transdisciplinary teaching formats
- Innovative formats for dialog with politics and civil society
- etc.

As part of the [Engaged UniBE](#) initiative, the University of Bern supports the development of transdisciplinary projects for sustainable development. Sustainability is understood in a broad context that encompasses ecological, economic and social dimensions. The Engaged UniBE initiative is part of the University of Bern's commitment to climate protection. Sustainable development and thus climate protection are central concerns of UniBE. As a university with proven expertise in sustainable development, it can provide important impetus for sustainability transformations in science, politics, business and society. In this regard, transdisciplinary research and teaching play an important role.

Transdisciplinary methods contribute to solving complex problems by taking a holistic approach. Cooperation with civil society, politics and business and the exchange of different perspectives lead to new ideas and innovative solutions. Transdisciplinary research aims to add non-academic knowledge from practice to interdisciplinary knowledge. This makes research results more relevant and applicable to society. Many global sustainability challenges, such as climate change and social injustice, require collaboration and shared understanding across disciplinary boundaries. Transdisciplinary approaches strengthen teamwork and communication skills, which are advantageous in many professional contexts. Both the academic community and society as a whole benefit from the use of transdisciplinary methods.

Workshops on transdisciplinary methods will be held during the application phase and project implementation. There will also be an opportunity to receive advice on transdisciplinary methods.

**Program period:** 2025-2027, 1 call per year

**Project duration:** minimum 1 year, maximum 3 years; project ideas/applications can be submitted for a maximum duration of three years. For multi-year projects (e.g. doctorate), the maximum amount per year applies.

**Funding amount per project:** up to CHF 100,000 per year, for a maximum of 3 years

**u<sup>b</sup> Groups eligible to apply:** The project must involve both a societal stakeholder and a university stakeholder (researchers, lecturers and/or students at the University of Bern). The submitted project must not be part of an existing project. For student projects, the criteria are weighted slightly differently.

### Application procedure

When	What
March 6, 2025, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Workshop on transdisciplinary methods <a href="#">Network for Transdisciplinary Research   td-net</a> If you are interested, please register by February 28 at <a href="mailto:claudia.saalfrank@unibe.ch">claudia.saalfrank@unibe.ch</a> .
April 30, 2025	Submission of the project idea (project application form)
May 01 to 15, 2025	Formal review and consideration of the project ideas by the evaluation committee and funding decision
May 20, 2025	Notification to the applicants regarding the selection of the projects as well as possible questions, additions, clarifications for the final project application (provisional approval subject to fulfillment of further requirements in the final project application).
June 15, 2025	Submission of final project application
June 15 to 30, 2025	Review of the final project applications
July 1, 2025	Project start Possibility of consultation and information on the selected transdisciplinary methods
Fall 2025	Workshop to foster exchange between projects
June 30, 2026	Reporting for 1-year projects Interim reporting for multi-year projects
June 30, 2027	Interim reporting for multi-year projects Final reporting for 2-year projects
June 30, 2028	Final reporting for 3-year projects

### Requirement for successful funding: (these activities must be planned with resources in the project)

- Participation in 1-2 workshops per year during the funding period with the aim of exchanging learning experiences from the transdisciplinary work
- Creation of materials (texts, PPP etc.) for the presentation of the project on UniBE's communication channels
- Providing information and materials to showcase the project results on the Engaged UniBE microsite
- Possible presentation of the project at Engaged UniBE events, the Sustainability Day of Bern's universities, the Bern Sustainability Days or similar events

## Criteria for the project idea or project application

**Formal criteria.** The following formal criteria must be met in order to participate in this call:

Formal criteria	Details
<b>Project framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding amount per project: up to CHF 100,000 per year, for a maximum of 3 years</li> <li>External partner + Member of UniBE (researchers, lecturers, students); definitive information in the project application, possible partners in the project outline</li> <li>The project submitted must not be part of an existing project.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable development and transdisciplinarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project description</li> <li>Explain the relationship to sustainable development and transdisciplinarity</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency and effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the planned output (how much money is planned for what)</li> <li>Competencies of the project managers/employees correspond to the intended project objectives</li> <li>Transferability / scalability of the results</li> </ul>
<b>Risk management/ Quality assurance/ Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of the three biggest risks for the project</li> <li>Identify mechanisms for iterative evaluation and adaptation of the project</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of the extent to which aspects of equal opportunities and diversity are taken into account in accordance with the University of Bern's <a href="#">Equal Opportunities Guidelines (2020)</a>.</li> </ul>

**Weighted criteria.** In addition to the formal criteria, the following weighted criteria must be met and are included in the evaluation. Each of these criteria has a specific weight that indicates its importance in the overall evaluation scheme:

Weighted criteria plus weighting	Details
<b>Climate protection impact and eco-effectiveness / contribution to UniBE's climate roadmap</b>  (weighting 40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a clear approach to how the planned outputs are to be achieved and a clear assessment of the longer-term impact</li> <li>Short, medium and longer-term contribution to climate protection (mitigation and adaptation) as a project result (both the impact during the project and the long-term reduction potential or positive effects in terms of climate protection are presented in a comprehensible manner and are clearly verifiable; the project result of the direct reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is quantifiable or comprehensibly presented or indirect effects in terms of climate protection are described in a verifiable manner)</li> </ul>
<b>Transdisciplinarity and participation</b> (see e.g. <a href="#">Belcher et al. 2016</a> , <a href="#">Parodi et al. 2023</a> )  (weighting 25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Societal stakeholders are involved from the outset of the process</li> <li>Clearly defined participation and co-production processes</li> <li>Strengthening an existing partnership or creating and consolidating a new one for the University of Bern</li> </ul>
<b>Research and/or teaching orientation</b>  (Weighting 20%; Weighting of student projects: 10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project process and results (research question, theory, hypotheses, methods) are scientifically planned, implemented and processed. (Goal: short publication on Engaged UniBE microsite, then database for projects)</li> <li>Empirical basis of the project</li> <li>Methods are in line with project objectives</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b> (weighting 10%; weighting student projects: 20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniqueness of the project in the Bern area, innovative combination of existing components</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion of competencies in education for sustainable development</b> (weighting 5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competencies in education for sustainable development, which are promoted and reflected upon in the course of everyday project activities</li> <li>Reflection on skills development over the course of the project</li> </ul>

In the case of ambiguities, please note that the German version of the “Call Engaged UniBE” prevails.