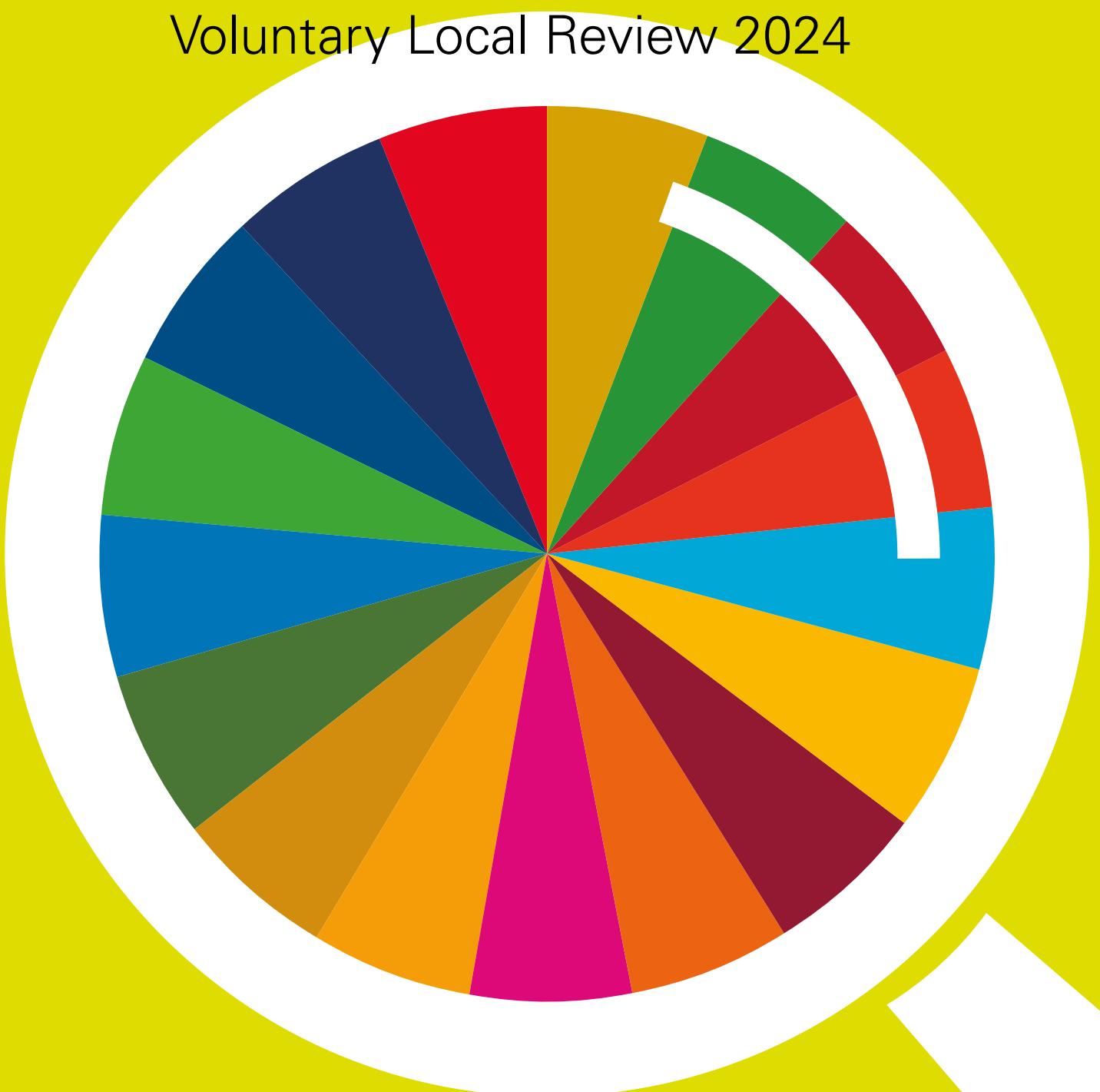


City of Bern Sustainable Development Framework Strategy 2021–2030

Bern's contribution to the SDGs
Voluntary Local Review 2024



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Bern, May 2025



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Foreword

Are you familiar with Bern? Bern is the capital of Switzerland. But the city on the banks of the river Aare is also a place with a high quality of life. Both locals and guests appreciate its recreation areas and transport links. The old town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983, teems with tourists all year round. As a capital city, Bern is the place of work for many civil servants and commuters. All this goes to show that Bern is diverse.

Bern is also a city of neighbourhoods. That means, for instance, that the people who live here can help to shape sustainable development in their city. Those who live in Bern should have a good life – and if you ask them, most Bernese will say that they do. Yet there are areas where the beautiful capital of a highly prosperous country still has much work to do. This Voluntary Local Review addresses this, and more besides.

The City of Bern regards sustainability as a process. It has been committed to it for a long time, and is facing up to the challenges. This report highlights the contribution that the City of Bern is making to attainment of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 50 Bern Sustainability Goals are based on the SDGs, broken down according to the local context and adapted to the City of Bern's scope for action.

The first Voluntary Local Review – based on the controlling report on the Sustainable Development Framework Strategy 2021–2030 (RAN2030) – shows how the city is using its scope for action in many areas and making welcome progress. All directorates are playing their part in the city's sustainable development through their day-to-day work and a host of specific projects. In addition, dedicated strategies and concepts set out measures that help to achieve the Bern Sustainability Goals. The report shows that there is a systematic approach to sustainable development in Bern. While the report is meant to stimulate critical debate, its main aim is to encourage people to emulate the measures that have proved effective.

So where does the City of Bern currently stand in terms of sustainability? What contribution is it making to achieving the global sustainability goals? In what areas is there a positive development? The City of Bern is already doing a huge amount on biodiversity, energy and climate issues to meet the enormous challenges. In terms of basic infrastructure such as schools, roads and bridges, it is investing large sums to overcome the backlog. In social affairs, education and health, the City of Bern is working hard to provide fair prospects for everyone, and promoting equality and participation for all residents. Regarding the sustainable economy, innovation and sustainable consumption, efforts are generally in their infancy, but are starting to have an effect. The interdependency of many issues means that the existing activities must be rigorously continued and the City of Bern's strengths in sustainable development must keep on being fostered.

This report also shows that sustainability means connectivity. Only collaboration between the directorates and beyond the City Administration – with civil society, business and science – will ensure the long-term success of sustainable development. Every effort will be made to further this connectivity while implementing the Sustainability Development Framework Strategy. The administration cannot achieve the sustainability goals by itself: it relies on the involvement of numerous stakeholders.

We are delighted with the work that has been done in the city, and hope you enjoy reading this report.

The City of Bern Executive Council



From left to right:

Matthias Aebischer, Director of Civil Engineering, Transport and Green Spaces (TVS)

Melanie Mettler, Director of Finances, Personnel and IT (FPI)

Ursina Anderegg, Director of Education, Social Welfare and Sport (BSS)

Marieke Kruit, Mayor, Mayor's Office (PRD)

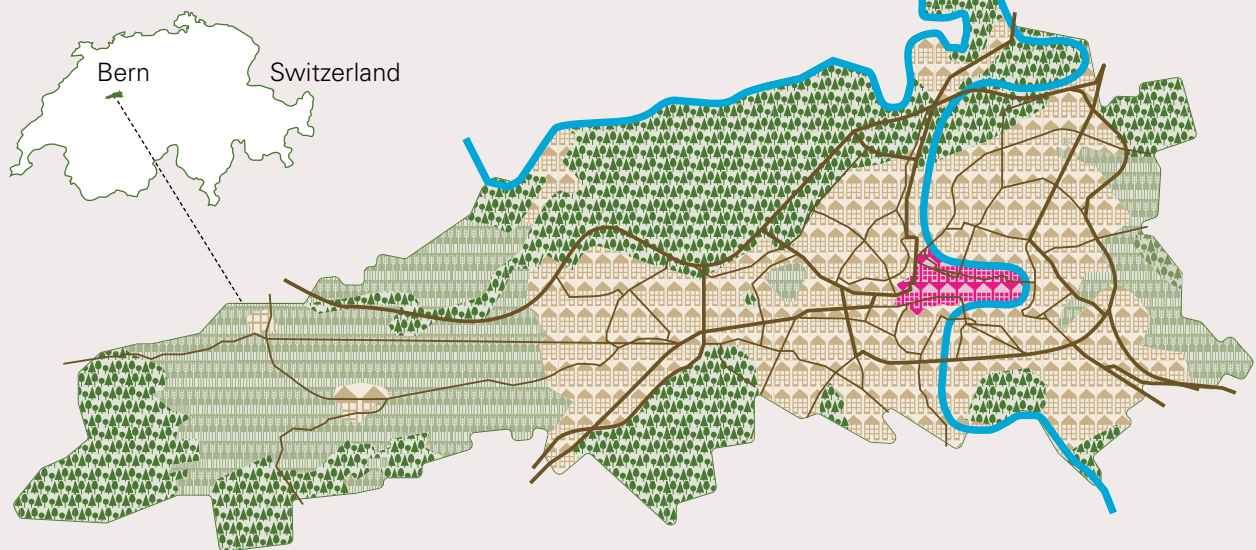
Alec von Graffenried, Deputy Mayor, Director of Security, the Environment and Energy (SUE)

Bern in figures

Geographical and political structure

51.6 km²
surface area

481–674 metres
above sea level



UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site



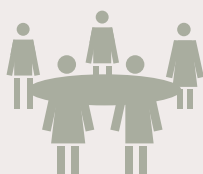
34%

buildings, gardens, parks



32%

forestry



Government ("Executive Council")

5 members,
including the Mayor



21%

farmland and meadows



Parliament ("City Council")

80 members
14 parties



11%

roads, railways



2%

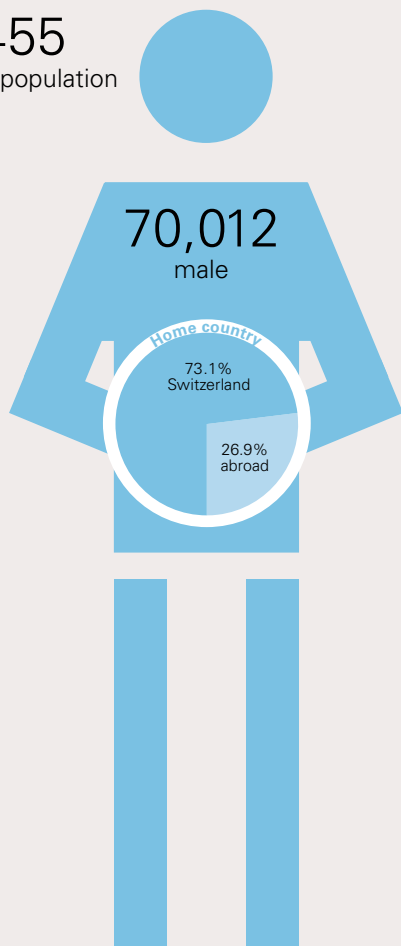
bodies of water

Sources: City of Bern Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook 2023; Bern City Council

Bern in figures

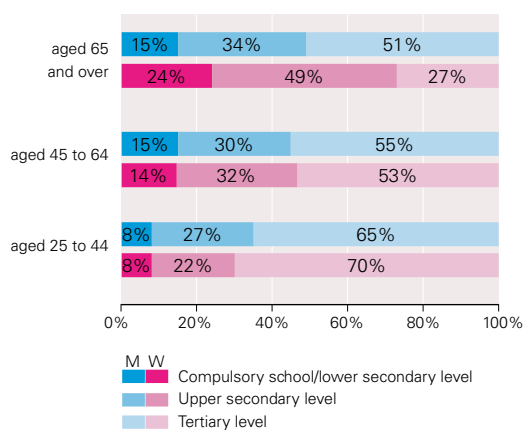
Population

146,455
residential population



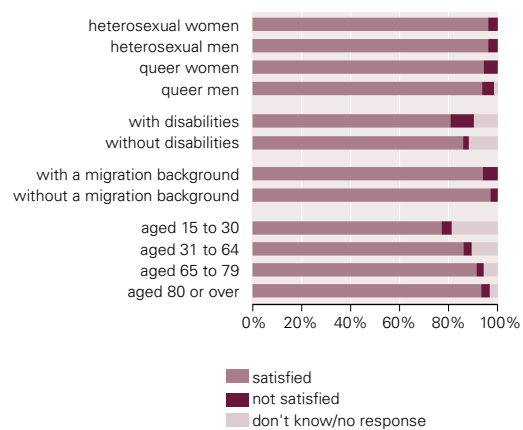
Education

by age group and gender



Quality of life

"How satisfied are you with your quality of life?"



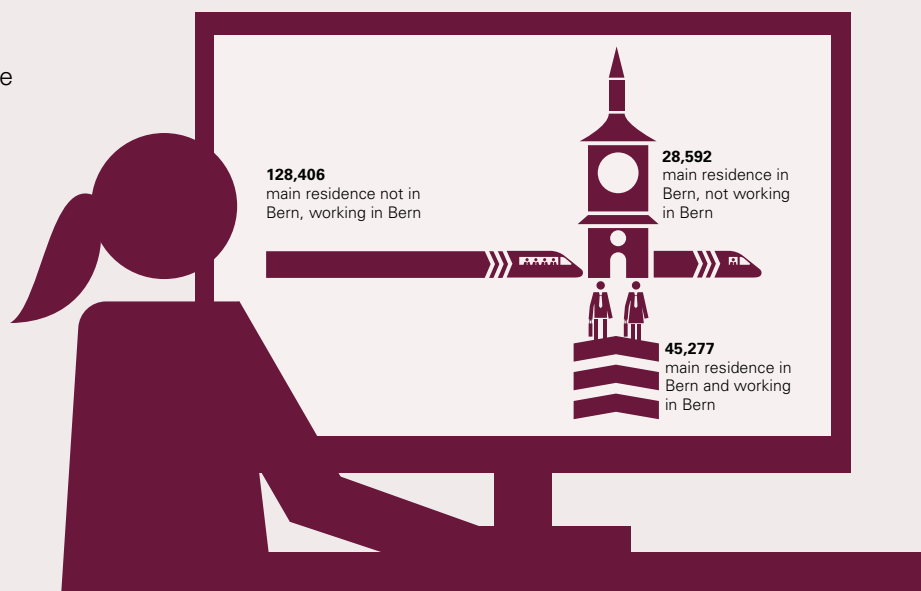
Sources: City of Bern Statistics Office, residential population 2024, population survey 2023

Bern in figures

Economy, mobility, emissions

173,684

Working people whose workplace is Bern

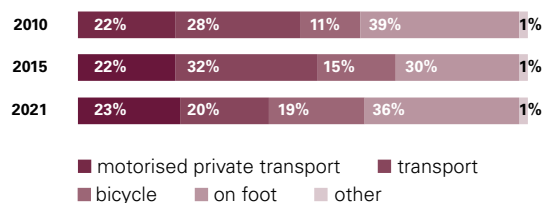


Employees by sector



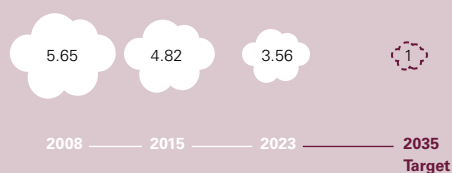
Mobility

Percentage of journeys taken by means of transport



Emissions

Emissions in the city area in tonnes of CO₂eq per resident



Sources: City of Bern Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook 2023; City Comparison on Mobility 2021; City of Bern Energy and Climate Strategy

City of Bern

Sustainable Development

Framework Strategy 2021–2030

The City of Bern Executive Council approved the City of Bern Sustainable Development Framework Strategy 2021–2030 (Rahmenstrategie Nachhaltige Entwicklung der Stadt Bern 2021–2030, RAN2030) in June 2021. This combines the UN's Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the goals of the City of Bern. RAN2030 is the basis for the alignment of the City Authority's activities to promote sustainable development. It brings the existing sustainability work of the individual administrative offices under one roof. At the same time, RAN2030 sets out the long-term pathway. Close collaboration with civil society, business and science is essential in order for the City of Bern to maximise its contribution to attainment of the SDGs.

Bern Sustainability Goals: the SDGs in the context of Bern

The 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030 are formulated to be as universally applicable as possible in a global context. Consequently, the City of Bern has formulated its own sustainability goals alongside the SDGs: the 50 Bern Sustainability Goals (BSGs). They take into account Switzerland's cultural context as well as the City of Bern's specific challenges and scope for action. In conjunction with the SDGs, the BSGs provide the structure of this Voluntary Local Review.

Priorities (Handlungsschwerpunkte HSP): Implement RAN2030 in Bern

To implement RAN2030, the offices of the City Administration devised the need for action in the defined action areas. Six priorities arose from this.

Priority 1 (HSP1): Social cohesion, equal opportunities

Priority 2 (HSP2): Public spaces and biodiversity

Priority 3 (HSP3): Climate action and adaptation to climate change

Priority 4 (HSP4): Environmental, social and innovative business location

Priority 5 (HSP5): Municipal finances

Priority 6 (HSP6): Participation and partnerships

Each priority makes contributions to attaining different SDGs. Priorities 1 to 4 have a thematic, interdisciplinary focus at the interface between the environment, society and business. Priorities 5 and 6 relate to all municipal activities.

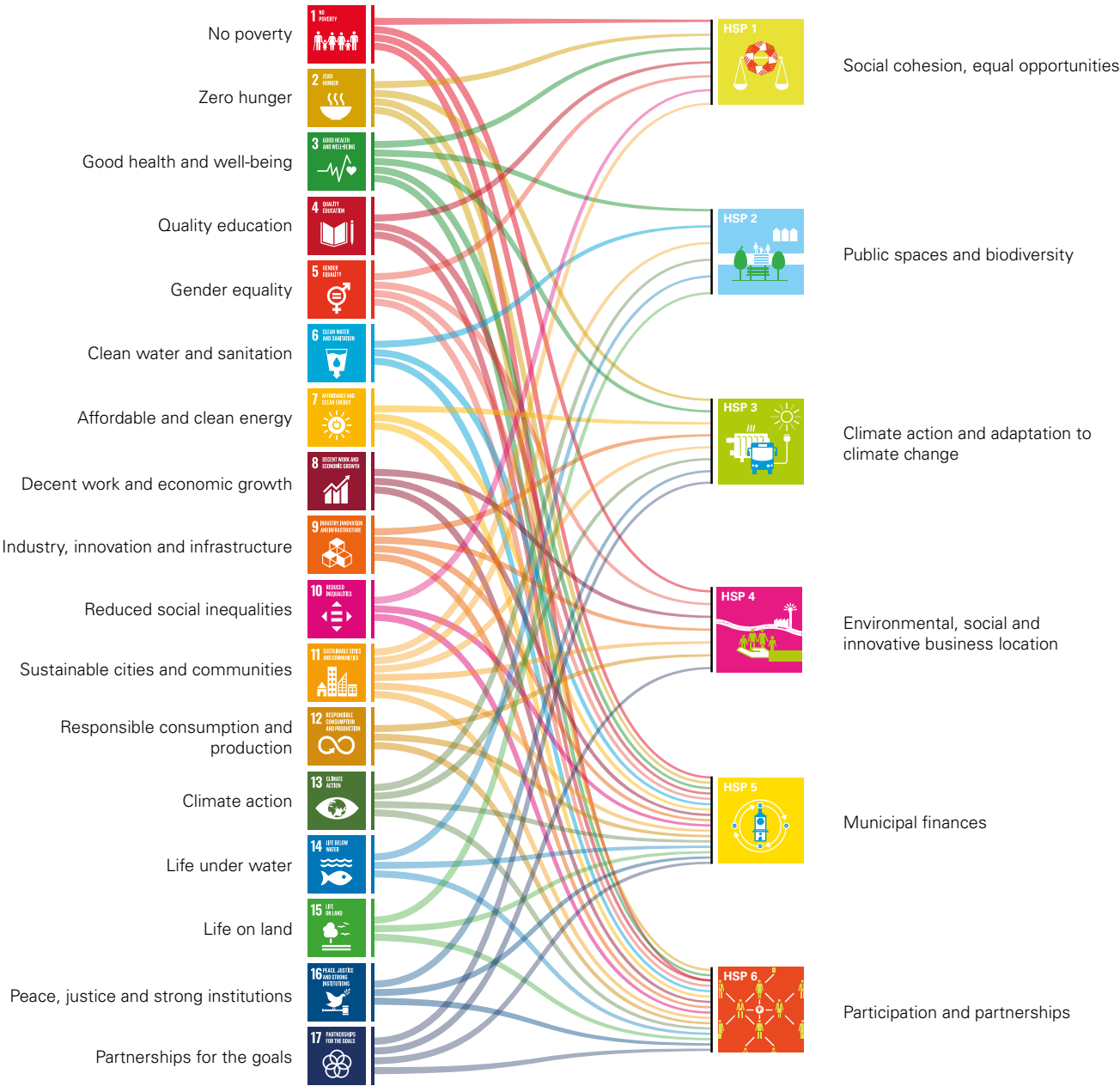
More information on RAN2030

You can find out more about the priorities and download the strategy paper at:
bern.ch/nachhaltig

Contribution of the priorities to attainment of the SDGs

UN Sustainable Development Goals SDGs

City of Bern priorities (HSP)



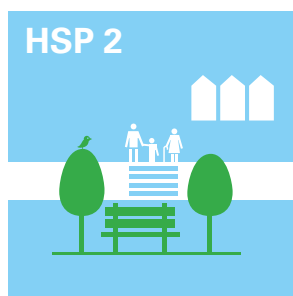
Six priorities of the City of Bern



Priority 1

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

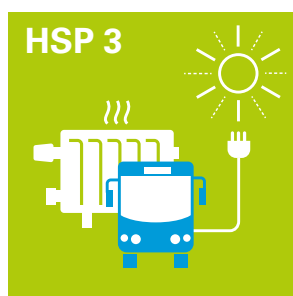
Solidarity, understanding between people and cultures, tolerance and mutual respect are key aspects of sustainable development. Social cohesion and economic, political, social and cultural participation of all social groups are fundamental conditions for a well-functioning society. Equal rights and equal opportunities are crucial here.



Priority 2

Public spaces and biodiversity

Creating and preserving safe public spaces with social and environmental qualities for all social groups goes hand in hand with the sustainable planning and management of open and green spaces in urban areas. To this end, social needs such as exercise, social interaction and experiencing nature in urban areas are taken into account, and biodiversity is supported and promoted.



Priority 3

Climate action and adaptation to climate change

The climate crisis threatens our life support system, and therefore affects us all. Switzerland ratified the Paris Agreement in 2017, and the City of Bern is expected to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. In its Climate Regulations, the City of Bern set out the reduction pathway for CO₂ emissions in the city area. However, climate action requires the whole of society to get involved: Heat supply and mobility must be decarbonised, and grey emissions must be reduced in a targeted manner. In cities like Bern, heat is ever more of a challenge. Therefore, measures to adapt to climate change are intended to minimise risks to humans and infrastructure.



Priority 4

Environmental, social and innovative business location

Strengthening a social business location and social innovation is essential to sustainable development, particularly in view of crisis situations. Resource-efficient and circular production and consumption patterns deliver environmental and economic benefits and act as innovation drivers. Digital solutions make the city more efficient and bolster the competitiveness and innovation capacity of Bern as a business location.



Priority 5

Municipal finances

Only long-term financial planning geared towards sustainability criteria and ongoing stabilisation of the financial situation can create scope for action for the City of Bern. They are crucial to implementing measures for sustainable development. Conversely, these measures can help to stabilise municipal finances.



Priority 6

Participation and partnerships

Connectivity, dialogue and collaboration are crucial to sustainable development. This is the only way in which genuinely sustainable solutions can be found. Beyond the scope for action within the administrative and city boundaries, the Sustainable Development Framework Strategy is intended as a basis for collaboration with the region, other communes, cantons and further stakeholders from civil society, business and science. The aim is to trigger a multiplier effect of the framework strategy beyond the system boundaries of the City of Bern.

Controlling of the Bern Sustainability Goals

In a controlling report issued every four years, the City of Bern examines its progress with attainment of the Bern Sustainability Goals, and consequently the SDGs. This Voluntary Local Review is based on the controlling report. All of this is intended to provide clarity as to the steps taken by the City of Bern towards sustainable development. The controlling report serves as a strategic guide for the City of Bern Executive Council, identifies potential changes to the need for action, and forms the basis for legislative planning. Every two years after the controlling report, a compact report sets out the status of implementation of the priorities.

Informative value of reporting

The controlling report provides a qualitative and semi-quantitative assessment of goal attainment, underpinned by quantitative indicators. Due to the range of aspects involved, indicators are not available on every BSG. Furthermore, many of the indicators only partially cover the BSG. Consequently, this controlling lacks clarity to some extent. However, it is meant to be transparent. With this in mind, the report shows where and how extensive this lack of clarity exists.

Reporting on the SDGs and BSGs

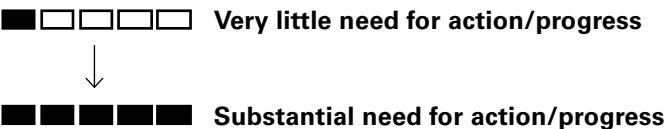
The Voluntary Local Review is broken down into chapters on the individual SDGs, in which information on attainment of the individual SDGs is provided. Along with a textual classification, there is a semi-quantitative classification for each SDG regarding the need for action and progress in the respective BSG. This classification is made by the project team in conjunction with the specialist offices and experts involved. The qualitative feedback and, where available, the indicators are taken into account here.

The following questions were asked when assessing the need for action:

- How extensive are the tasks and responsibilities of the City of Bern in this BSG?
- How much more does the City of Bern need to do in order to attain the BSG?

The following questions were asked when assessing the progress:

- How far has the City of Bern come in attaining this BSG?
- How effectively has the City of Bern used its scope for action?
This takes into account all factors such as financial and human resources, dependencies on other groups or political levels as well as responsibilities.



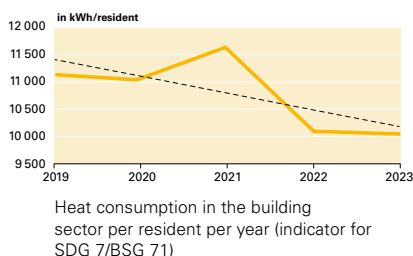
Indicators

For the quantitative assessment of attainment of the BSGs, indicators were devised and checked by internal and external experts. Wherever possible, reference was made to existing data here. The reference period is 2019 to 2023, although some indicators are not available for the entire period.

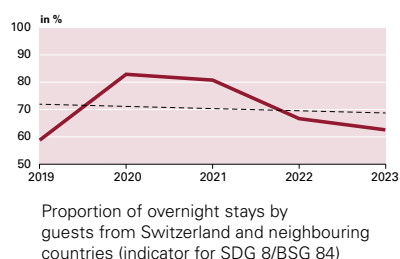
The indicators are set out with a trend line or, in individual cases, with reference values. For each indicator, the responsible specialist office assessed whether it is moving in the desired direction or not. This assessment is denoted by a symbol. The data sources for each individual indicator are listed below the chart.

In addition to the assessment, there is a written classification for each indicator. This explains how well it covers the relevant BSG, how much influence the City of Bern has on the indicator, and whether any other effects can explain the development of the indicator.

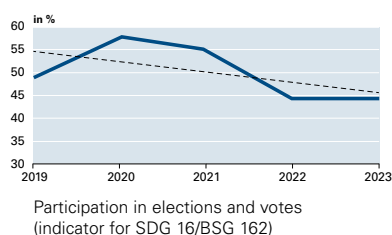
Examples of indicators with different assessments:



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

Selected projects

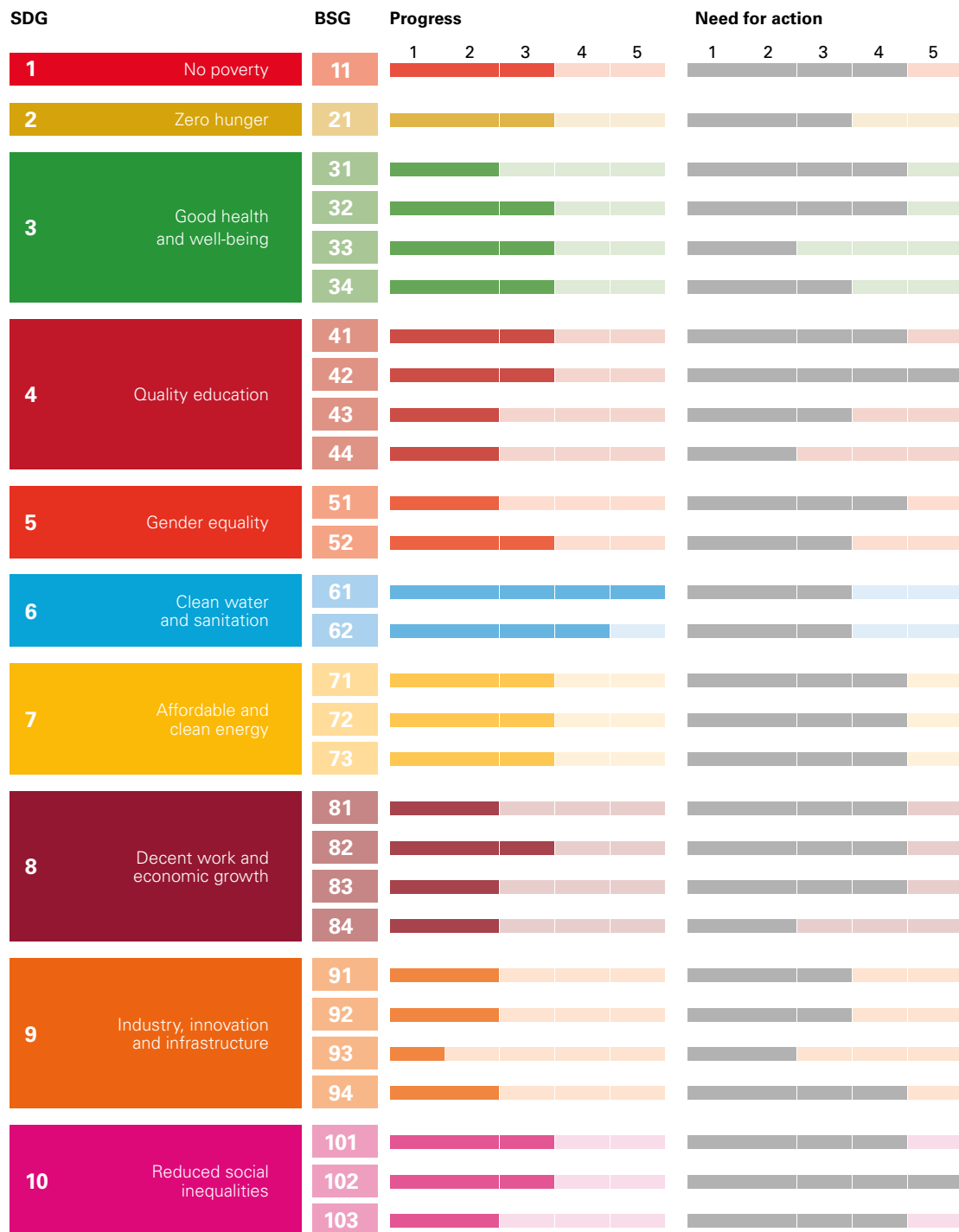
Each SDG is illustrated by one to three projects. This insight enhances the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the BSG and shows the City of Bern's wide-ranging local contribution to attainment of the global SDGs. The projects shown are examples. In addition to these, there are many other activities to support sustainable development in Bern.

Expert view

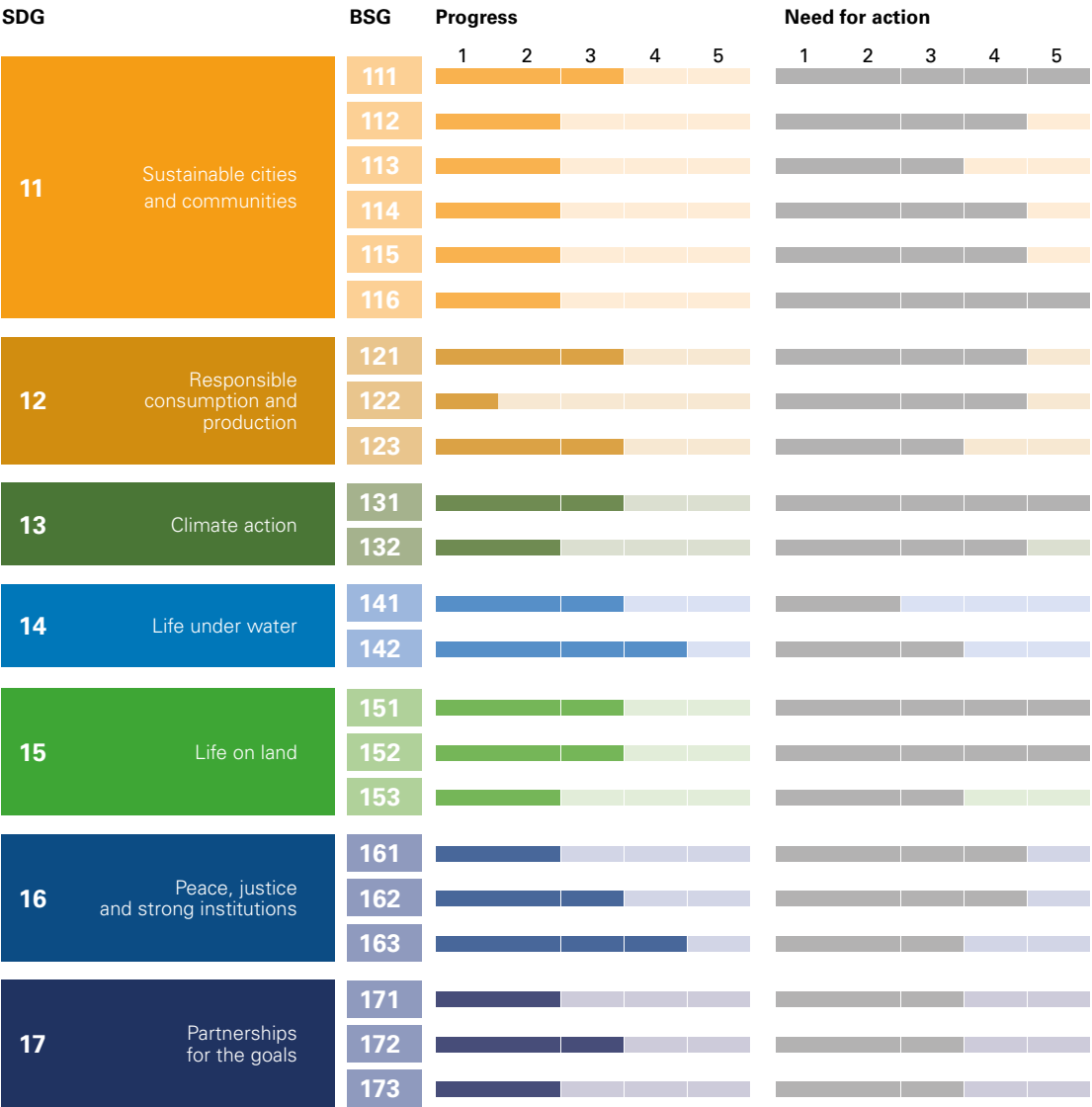
Internal and external experts give their own evaluation regarding the individual SDGs. This combines the findings from the controlling report on the respective SDG with an informed view. The experts classify the work by the City of Bern and highlight the challenges as well as the positive developments.

The experts were chosen on account of their specialist knowledge in a particular field and a certain proximity to the activities in Bern. As no external city-specific expertise was available in some fields, experts within or associated with the administration were used for the assessment.

Overview of attainment of the Bern Sustainability Goals



Overview of attainment of the Bern Sustainability Goals



No poverty

Millions of people around the world still suffer from extreme poverty. However, fighting poverty is a challenge even in a prosperous country like Switzerland, as relative poverty is based on national definitions. Poor people are particularly affected by political, environmental and economic crises as well as violence. This is why SDG 1 is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goal (BSG) for SDG 1:

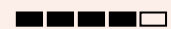


BSG 11

Prevent and fight poverty in all its forms

Preventing and fighting poverty is one of the City of Bern's defined social objectives. Accordingly, it pays social assistance, including to asylum seekers, and handles maintenance payments. In addition, it undertakes measures to promote workplace integration, fight homelessness and address addiction. It also develops its own initiatives to close gaps in support for those affected by poverty.

Need for action



Progress



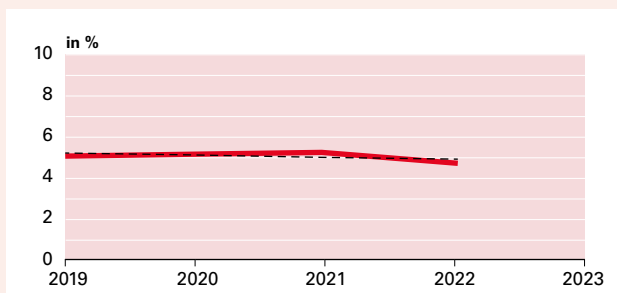
Indicators for attainment of BSG 11:

Proportion of people receiving social assistance

Subsidised support scheme

Indicators

BSG 11



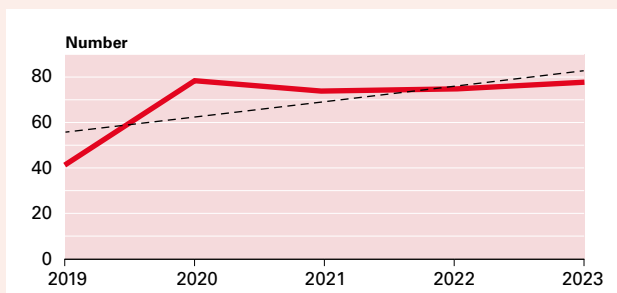
Source: City of Bern Social Services Office

Proportion of people receiving social assistance

The proportion of people receiving social assistance in Bern is currently at its lowest level since 2004. This development is pleasing, as fears of an increase after the coronavirus pandemic have not been realised.

The City of Bern has very little influence on the proportion of people receiving social assistance. Rather, it is macroeconomic factors that have an impact, in particular high labour supply. Even so, the City of Bern can apply workplace integration measures to keep employment levels high, thus keeping social assistance at a low level. It is also important to draw a distinction between the proportion of people receiving social assistance and the poverty rate. In Switzerland, the latter was almost three times as high as the proportion of people receiving social assistance in 2021. This is partly because people do not receive social assistance even though they are entitled to benefits. In addition, some people are only just getting by despite being employed, even though their income is above the social assistance threshold according to the guidelines of the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS).

BSG 11



Source: City of Bern Youth Welfare Office, City of Bern Elderly Affairs

Subsidised support scheme

Demand for the City of Bern's subsidised support scheme increased even while it was still in its pilot phase. This is a positive development.

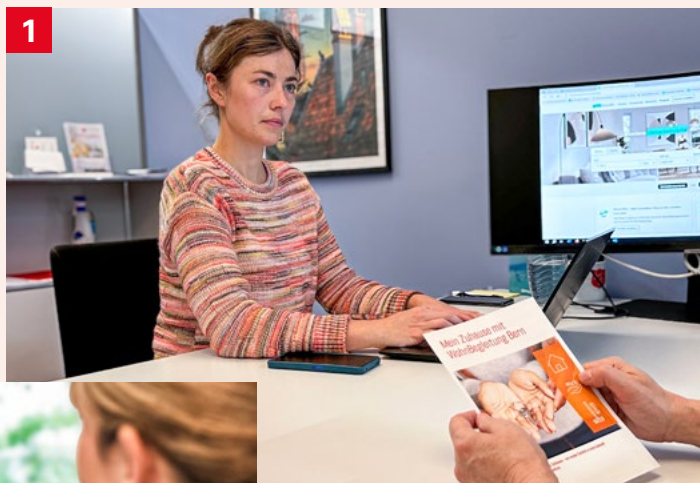
The subsidised support scheme provides an indication of the number of supported older people with limited financial means. However, it is not yet clear how much potential there is for the subsidised support scheme in Bern. Initial estimates put the figure at 400 people. The indicator only provides information on demand for the initiative rather than its quality or the extent of the services involved. Ultimately, an increase in demand may also be due to rising poverty among older people, which would be an unwelcome development.

The indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.

Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the Salvation Army (1), City of Bern (2)

1 Municipal housing advice agency

Finding and keeping a home is a challenge for some people. This is why, in 2024, the City of Bern set up an advisory and referral service designed for people in need of support. The aim is to help them find a home and avoid becoming homeless. The basic service involves straightforward advice on housing issues, assistance with finding a home and referral for access to housing for vulnerable and deprived target groups. This basic service can be extended by income, making it accessible to other groups of people. The housing advice agency is part of the City of Bern's housing strategy.

2 Subsidised support scheme

Many older people want to live in their own home for as long as possible. However, some do not have the money for services that allow them to live at home independently in old age. With this in mind, the City of Bern launched the subsidised support scheme, which provides financial assistance for senior citizens. Following a successful pilot phase, the subsidised support scheme was added to the City of Bern's range of services in 2023. Since 2024, over 120 people have used this scheme, which receives operational support from Pro Senectute Bern.

Expert view

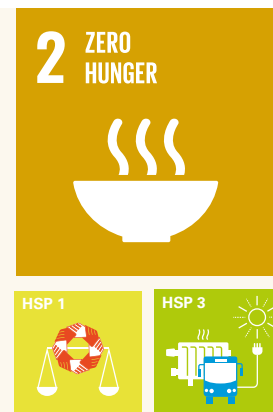
“Poverty does exist in Switzerland, albeit at a low but stable level. Social assistance is a proven tool for countering poverty. This is a task of the cantons, which delegate implementation to the communes and distribute the funds via cost compensation. The tool is community-supported; ultimately, communes have little direct influence on the people who live there. They are required to close the gaps in the social network so that all people who are entitled to social assistance actually receive it. In Bern, the proportion of people receiving social assistance is in line with the average, although it is believed to be higher due to a lack of take-up.

The City of Bern is keen to improve the situation of people in poverty. It is looking for ways to make support easily accessible. This means being constantly alert and exploring all available options. In large cities, many social developments can be observed at an earlier stage, and this often takes the fight against poverty in new directions. The City of Bern must ensure that it adopts solutions that command majority support while not stretching public finances. However, it must also bear in mind that the situation of people in poverty often has to be stabilised before it can improve.”



Patrik Probst
Deputy Head
City of Bern Social Services Office

Zero hunger



Sadly, many people still suffer from hunger and malnutrition in many parts of the world. Putting an end to this requires a sharp reduction in global inequalities in distribution and the huge levels of food waste. However, food production should not be detrimental to the environment. In view of this, SDG 2 aims to end hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The last two points are particularly relevant to a prosperous country like Switzerland.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goal (BSG) for SDG 2:

BSG 21

Promote sustainable food systems and healthy eating and make them easily accessible to everyone

The City of Bern promotes a diverse, community-supported and sustainable food culture. It supports projects in the civil society, education and business sectors. A prime example is the establishment of the food forum "Ernährungsforum Bern" in 2021. It also advises on and raises public awareness of food issues. One particular focal point is nutrition in children and young people, as many dietary habits are formed at this age. An even more structured approach to the BSG is planned with the new Sustainable Nutrition 2035 concept.

Need for action



Progress



No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 21.



Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1, 2, 3)

1 School snacks with parental involvement

At various schools in Bern, a group of parents regularly works with a class to prepare a snack for the whole school. The focus here is on a balanced diet. This project introduces pupils to healthy eating right from their first year, and also fosters a sense of community in the school.

2 Fourchette verte certification for daycare

The “Fourchette verte” label is awarded to community restaurants that focus on a balanced and resource-efficient diet. It is based on the dietary recommendations of the Swiss Food Authority and the Swiss Society for Nutrition. Other focal points are food origin, season and production methods, the prevalence of animal products and food waste. Daycare facilities for young children and school children of the City of Bern are certified with this label.

3 Pilot project to reduce food waste in municipal daycare facilities

Food waste is generated in many places – including the day schools of the City of Bern. In view of this, in 2023, the City of Bern teamed up with the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL), the municipal “Zieglerküche” kitchen and the consultancy firm ecos to run a pilot project in two locations. Measures were devised, then implemented, evaluated and optimised in a trial run. These measures included reducing production levels, regenerating meals in batches and improved communication of absences. In addition, the children were encouraged to try things out more before receiving entire set meals. The results from the trial week were used to optimise the measures for the second run.



Expert view

“Switzerland is in a comfortable position in the fight against hunger. Firstly, though, people here can also be affected by hunger if they fall into poverty. And secondly, food imports, which are at a high level in Switzerland, are indirectly linked with hunger in other parts of the world. This will only change if the food system in Switzerland becomes more regional and seasonal – and, in particular, reduces its reliance on production of foods of animal origin.

The City of Bern promotes sustainable food in municipal facilities and elsewhere. Even more could be achieved by improving knowledge of sustainable food production. Examples include school visits to farms that practise sustainable production, or promoting community-supported agriculture, where projects are already under way in the Bern region. Only those who know how healthy food is produced can also appreciate it as consumers. Lack of awareness of the problem, including among producers, remains an obstacle to greater food sustainability. If we understand food as a system, we can set about changing it.”



Thomas König

Board member of Ernährungsforum Bern
Owner of Königs Biohof

Good health and well-being

The aim of SDG 3 is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. This is centred on the knowledge that health problems are best approached holistically. Consequently, SDG 3 covers various factors from diet and prevention of diseases, addiction and accidents to access to healthcare facilities.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 3:

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



HSP 1



HSP 2



HSP 3



BSG 31

Promote physical and mental well-being

In recent years, the coronavirus pandemic in particular has had a negative impact on the population's physical and mental well-being. The City of Bern has responded to this, for instance by creating special consultations with the school doctor for young people showing signs of mental ill-health. Healthcare is a cantonal responsibility. The City of Bern focuses on prevention and health promotion as well as early detection and intervention.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 31:

Proportion of young people with high stress levels in year 8

BSG 32

Reduction in ill health caused by environmental and social factors

The City of Bern has adopted various measures to reduce ill health. These include urban planning approaches, awareness campaigns on coping with summer heat, and public services for schoolchildren, families, senior citizens and disabled people. In addition, environmental legislation is rigorously implemented and a safe, resource-efficient transport system is continuously enhanced.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 32:

Proportion of overweight young people in year 8

Particulate matter pollution PM 2.5

Road accidents per 1000 residents

Very little need for action/progress



Substantial need for action/progress



Good health and well-being

BSG 33

Prevention and mitigation in the case of infectious and non-infectious diseases

With its full-time school doctors, the City of Bern has a proven system for closing vaccine gaps and curbing the spread of infectious diseases. It also has various services in place to help ensure that children, young people, their families and disabled people are supported in developing health-enhancing practices.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 33:

Measles vaccination rate in year 8

BSG 34

Access to healthcare facilities and services for all

Healthcare is a cantonal task. The City of Bern assumes that there are gaps in the healthcare of certain groups of the population, and is determined to close them. No specific measures were taken in the reporting period. However, the school medical service and school social work in Bern help to ease the burden on the healthcare system and detect ill health at an early stage.

Need for action



Progress

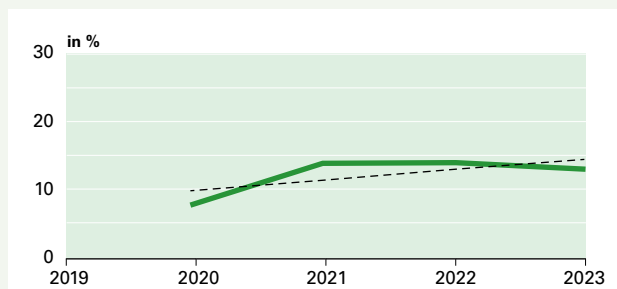


No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 34.



Indicators

BSG 31



Source: City of Bern Department of Public Health

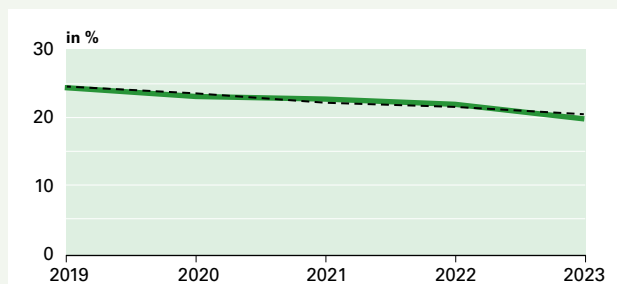


Proportion of young people with high stress levels in year 8

After the coronavirus pandemic, stress and mental ill-health of young reached record levels, with only a slight decrease since then. The trend is not clearly heading in the right direction.

Stress is a definite restriction of mental well-being. The indicator covers schoolchildren who were surveyed during a mandatory school medical examination. Mental ill-health in young people depends on various factors. The City of Bern cannot influence all of these. However, it helps to boost mental resilience in young people with various services and structures.

BSG 32



Source: City of Bern Department of Public Health



Proportion of overweight young people in year 8

The proportion of overweight pupils has been declining since 2019, and is therefore heading in the right direction. However, the link between BSG 32 and the indicator is only an indirect one, and so the indicator is of limited relevance.

The City of Bern influences the development of this indicator via prevention and health promotion programmes. However, external factors such as socioeconomic status, the development of the food market and the societal shift towards spending more time in front of screens also have an influence.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

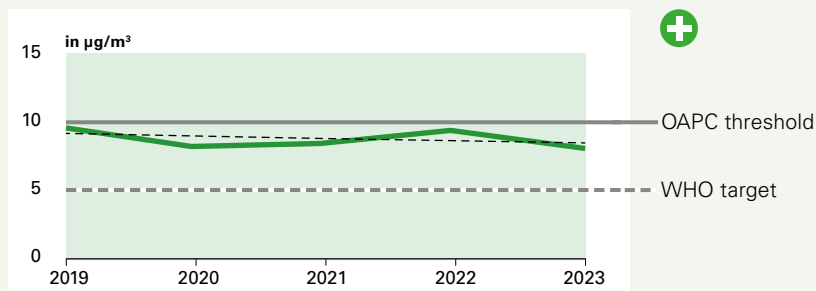
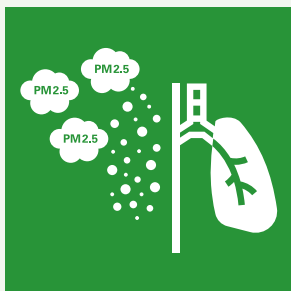


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 32



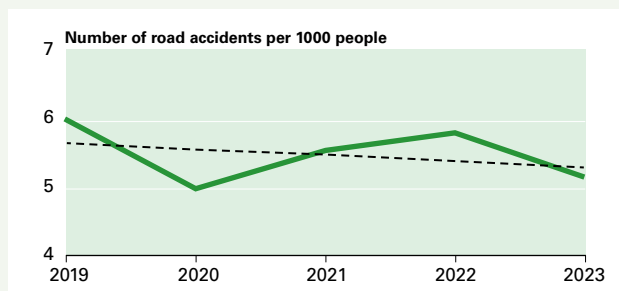
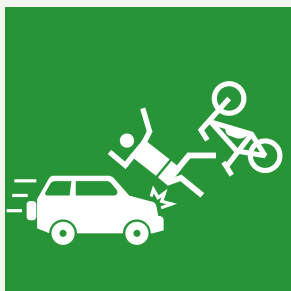
Source: Environmental Protection Office, City Laboratory

Particulate matter pollution PM 2.5

The concentration of air pollutants such as particulate matter is decreasing in Bern, and is therefore heading in the desired direction. For several years, it has been below the limit in the Ordinance on Air Pollution Control of 10 micrograms per cubic metre, but above the WHO target of 5 micrograms per cubic metre. Recently, the increase in small wood-fired heating systems has curbed the decline.

The City of Bern influences particulate matter pollution by reducing its own emissions and checking and enforcing compliance with the Ordinance on Air Pollution Control. In addition, it advises residents, industry, commerce and municipal services so that they can prevent environmental contamination.

BSG 32



Source: Bern Cantonal Police, accident assessment/statistics, FDFA, Ordipiro

Road accidents per 1000 residents

There has been a long-term fall in the number of road accidents, which is a move in the desired direction. However, when assessing this indicator, it must be borne in mind that the population was less mobile in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The City of Bern influences road safety by providing a safe transport infrastructure and promoting means of transport that are less harmful in the event of accidents, such as public transport, walking and cycling.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

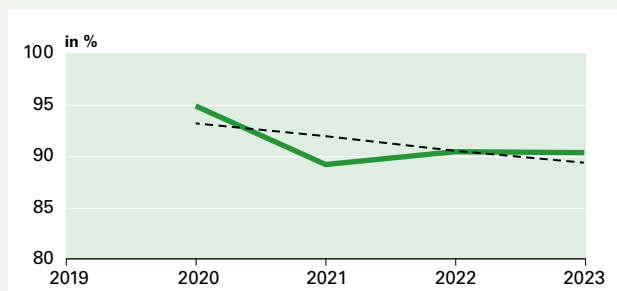


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 33



Source: City of Bern Department of Public Health



Measles vaccination rate in year 8

The measles vaccination rate has been relatively constant over the years. The immunisation coverage of just over 90 percent is too low to prevent a measles outbreak. Herd immunity is only possible at 95 percent or above.

The City of Bern has a system with full-time school doctors. Other communes with a part-time system have lower vaccination rates. However, like other Swiss communes, the City of Bern has to contend with a shortage of paediatricians who are crucial to attaining a higher vaccination rate.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



2

BERNcouragiert
hinschauen & handeln

Photos: Shutterstock (1),
courtesy of the City of Bern (2)

1 **Special consultation with the school doctor for young people showing signs of mental ill-health**

The coronavirus pandemic caused an increase in mental ill-health in young people. In response, the City of Bern developed a service for young people with signs of mental ill-health that provides them with an in-depth assessment as well as early intervention until work or further education options arise. This means that the City of Bern directly promotes mental well-being.

2 **Courageous Bern**

With the "Bern couragiert – hinschauen & handeln" initiative (Courageous Bern – Look & Act), the City of Bern is pursuing three key approaches for the well-being of children and young people in Bern. All children should be entitled to dignity, protected against sexual assault and able to grow up without taking drugs. In this way, the City of Bern is helping to boost mental and physical well-being.



Expert view

“Even in Bern, a city with a high quality of life, good health and well-being cannot be taken for granted. Ensuring that everyone in the city enjoys both good health and well-being requires continuous and extensive structural, health-promoting and preventive measures. According to a survey of the city’s population, personal quality of life has deteriorated slightly and stress has increased significantly since 2015. Around 15 percent of people with a critical assessment of their own health need the problems to be identified as quickly as possible and require targeted intervention.

There is a greater need for measures relating to mental health, overweight, eating and exercise habits, integration and social participation as well as the climate and environment. This is why vulnerable groups of people should receive special protection. Another focal point should be the use of digital media, which seems to exacerbate mental problems and adverse behaviour. Healthcare is critical in the case of mental illness.”



Dr Christa Leutert and Richard Jakob

Joint Heads of the City of Bern Department of Public Health

Quality education

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



HSP 1



Education is key to the development of every single human being and the community. With this in mind, SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This expressly involves focusing on the most disadvantaged in society and promoting their access to basic and vocational education. Although Switzerland has an open and effective education system as well as a dual vocational education and training system, quality education also requires constant commitment here.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 4:

BSG 41

Ensure high-quality pre-school and school education

As the education authority of the primary school, the City of Bern is responsible for quality pre-school and school education. Along with a modern curriculum, it provides a sound school infrastructure, which it is constantly updating. In addition, it provides family-external support for families as well as help with school life, such as learning support and daycare. As a result, it reduces the pressure on low-income families, also benefiting the pre-school and school education system.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 41:



Ratio of the number of childcare vouchers to the number of pre-school children



Proportion of school leavers with no work or further education options

Very little need for action/progress

Substantial need for action/progress



Quality education

BSG 42

Promote equal access to education

The City of Bern applies the “early intervention” model, which particularly aims to reach vulnerable families of children of pre-school age. One focal point is language acquisition of children and parents alike. For instance, on enrolment, it aims to give children equal opportunities for their school career so that gaps in the first few years of their life do not adversely affect them later on. The early support provided by the City of Bern is easily accessible and jointly organised by the administration and district organisations.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 42:



Proportion of children with no language support and inadequate German skills 1.5 years before starting kindergarten

BSG 43

Promote education for sustainable development

The City of Bern aims to enable children and young people to think and act with the future in mind. It provides schools with lots of options relating to education for sustainable development (ESD), a component of Curriculum 21, which the schools are responsible for delivering. The ESD options offered by the City of Bern include lessons on issues concerning resources and energy as well as racism and mutual respect. The City of Bern also supports projects financially, for instance energy and climate lessons.

Need for action



Progress



No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 44.

BSG 44

Promote lifelong learning

The City of Bern itself does not provide any lifelong learning options. However, to help achieve this goal, it has a service agreement with the adult education centre Volkshochschule Bern. In addition, the City of Bern works to improve the language skills of vulnerable adults. For instance, it helps this group to take up lifelong learning options.

Need for action



Progress

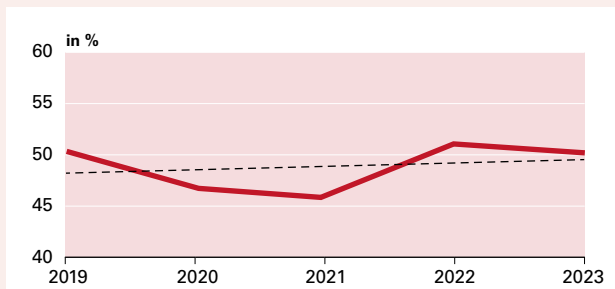


No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 44.



Indicators

BSG 41



Source: City of Bern Youth Welfare Office, statistical reports on childcare

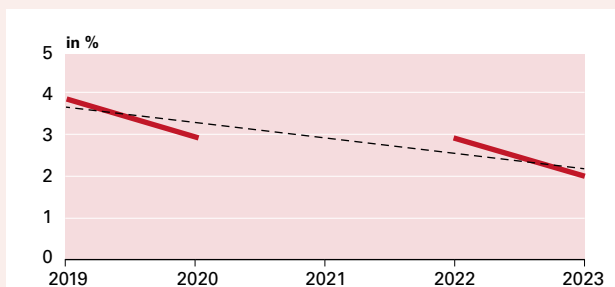


Ratio of the number of childcare vouchers to the number of pre-school children

Apart from a pandemic-related decline, the number of children in Bern who are supported by childcare vouchers remains stable.

The City of Bern influences the take-up of childcare vouchers by providing accessible information and advice as well as making financial contributions to the cantonal childcare vouchers. However, external factors also have an influence, such as increased part-time working and the associated decrease in childcare hours, which reduces take-up, and rising daycare fees, which increases it. In general, the indicator does not enable conclusions on education quality, but only on whether support is being used.

BSG 41



Source: Careers information centres (BIZ) of the Canton of Bern



Proportion of school leavers with no work or further education options

No data on this indicator is available for the pandemic year 2021. However, a growing number of pupils in Bern leave school with work or further education options, so the indicator is heading in the right direction.

The City of Bern can have a positive influence on the development of the indicator with good conditions for schools, particularly at level 3 (secondary stage I) before the end of compulsory education. However, the work of the cantonal careers information centre (BIZ) and the situation on the apprenticeship market also play a role. As the indicator does not cover pupils who had work or further education options before leaving compulsory education, it can be assumed that the situation in Bern is even better than the indicator suggests. This result is positive for equal opportunities, even though the quality of data is not ideal due to differences in school response rates. Furthermore, the indicator sheds no light on the type of work or further education options, which also include temporary transitional solutions.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

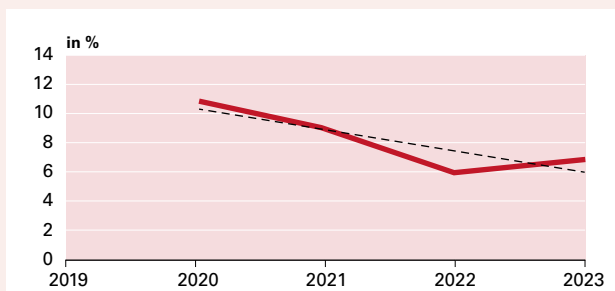
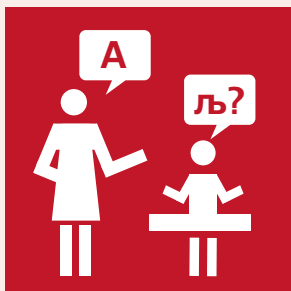


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 42



Source: City of Bern Department of Public Health



Proportion of children with no language support and inadequate German skills 1.5 years before starting kindergarten

Despite a slight rise in the last reporting year, the indicator is on a downward trend. This is a welcome development.

The City of Bern can influence the development of the indicator through communications work or by financing the support options. Although the indicator only covers children of pre-school age, it provides important information on equal opportunities. German skills are key to involvement in education.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of Primano_Department of Public Health (1),
Stephanie Schär (2), Pusch (3)

1 Primano early support

Primano is an initiative by the City of Bern for supporting children of pre-school age. The programme includes home visits, German lessons at pre-school age, discounted playgroup visits, advanced training for playgroup leaders and early support platforms in the districts. Primano was launched as a pilot project in 2007 and made permanent in the pilot districts in 2013. It has been in place throughout Bern since 2017.

2 Education landscapes

In 2015, the City of Bern created the education landscape “futura” in the districts of Untermatt, Stöckacker and Schwabgut in tandem with the Bern Community Work Association (VBG). The project is a collaboration between families, the school and various organisations. Its aim is to enable children aged four and over to access educational services in the district and encourage trust in the school. futura was rolled out across Bern in 2019. A second education landscape focused on post-compulsory education was created in the Wankdorf district.

3 Energy and climate lessons

Climate change is one of the most pressing problems of our age, and is closely linked with energy production and consumption. Both issues are complex, which is why they are often taught in a separate module. To this end, schools in Bern can use the energy and climate lessons of the non-profit Swiss Foundation for Practical Environmental Protection (PUSCH). These lessons are available at the appropriate level for all stages from year three upwards, and are financed by the City of Bern for municipal schools in Bern.



Expert view

“Creating suitable conditions for quality education remains an important goal. The City of Bern pursues this goal across all age groups, applying a very broad definition of education. All relevant aspects of SDG 4 are covered by the stated Bern Sustainability Goals. The City of Bern’s projects in this field are appropriate and pool specialist knowledge on a cross-departmental basis. They are to be continued. Strengthening of pre-school education and the transition to school as well as development of the first language remain particularly important as keys to participation.

Daycare must continue to be regarded as a core part of schooling. There are formal and informal learning possibilities and the opportunity for language development here. The connection between school and district, as established in the education landscape in Bern, is promising. In general, efforts to attain quality education must not be confined to school. Supporting children and young people with very different requirements and the ongoing skills shortage are challenges.”



Luzia Annen and Daniel Hofmann

Joint Heads of the City of Bern Education Authority

Gender equality

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



HSP 1



HSP 4



Although considerable progress has been made on gender equality in many parts of the world, inequality between the genders remains a major barrier to sustainable development, economic growth and the reduction of poverty. Consequently, SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. In addition to protection against violence, participation in political structures is important. For the City of Bern, gender equality expressly includes LGBTIQ people too.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 5:

BSG 51

Ensure equal treatment of all people regardless of their gender and gender identity

Equality of genders is part of the City of Bern's political mandate. Since 2018, this has also included LGTBIQ people as well as women and men. Along with equality projects, the reporting obligation and monitoring of wage equality in public procurement and service agreements, the equal opportunities action plan particularly ensures equal treatment of all people in Bern.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 51:

Proportion of women in managerial positions

BSG 52

Ensure involvement of all people, regardless of gender and gender identity

The City of Bern works towards involvement of all people wherever it can. They should be appropriately represented on the committees of the Executive Council. In addition, the City of Bern constantly gathers information on representation and participation of the genders in civil society. Successes are particularly apparent in political representation. However, ensuring this participation at all levels remains a challenge.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 52:

Proportion of women/non-binary people on the Executive Council, City Council, committees of the Executive Council and district organisations

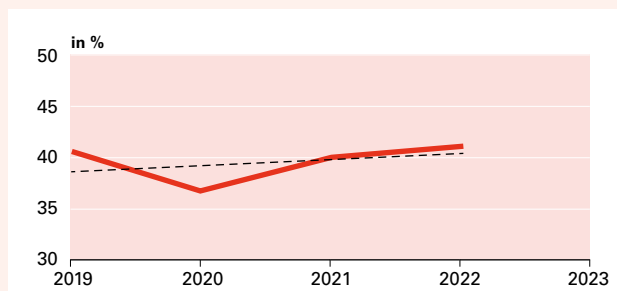
Very little need for action/progress

Substantial need for action/progress



Indicators

BSG 51



Source: FSO, structural survey (Swiss workforce survey)

Proportion of women in managerial positions

The indicator relates to the women working in the City of Bern (aged 15–64). The trend of the indicator has been positive again since 2020. This means that the proportion of women is moving in the desired direction.

Although the desired gender parity has not yet been attained in management positions, the trend remains positive. The City of Bern's performance is somewhat better than the Swiss average, on account of the good conditions and the progressive attitudes of companies in urban areas. The City of Bern can influence the indicator via awareness measures, advice and, in particular, provision of affordable support options as well as in its capacity as an employer: In the City Administration, the proportion of women in management positions was 38.6 percent in 2023. The indicator is also influenced by overriding factors such as gender perceptions and the willingness of companies to promote women. It is also important that the indicator remains just one aspect of equality in working life and does not take a holistic view.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

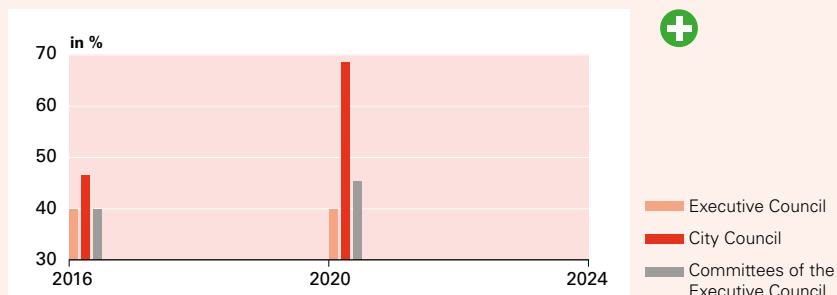
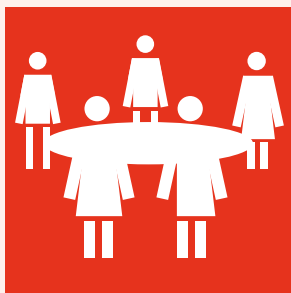


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 52



Source: City Chancellery, External Relations and Statistics department

Proportion of women/non-binary people on the Executive Council, City Council, committees of the Executive Council and district organisations

On the Executive Council of the City of Bern, the proportion of women or non-binary people is stable. On the City Council, it was at a pleasingly high level in 2020, but decreased again as the legislative term progressed. On the committees of the Executive Council, the proportion rose between 2016 and 2020, and it is currently slightly higher than in 2020 (47.5%). 11 of the 29 committees of the Executive Council meet the set target of 40 percent women/non-binary people. Data relating to the district organisations is only available for 2024. Women only made up 35 percent of their Management Boards in 2024.

The City of Bern can only influence the gender balance on the committees of the Executive Council, where there is also a requirement for appropriate gender representation (40% women). In terms of political posts, voting behaviour and candidate selection by the parties play a role. Although the indicator only covers a small part of society, representation of all gender identities in politics is key to their representation and acceptance.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



1 Equal opportunities action plan

The City of Bern has a systematic approach to equal opportunities. Since 2009, it has been working with action plans for equal opportunities that set binding targets and measures for four years at a time. The current 2023–2026 action plan for equal treatment of women, men and LGBTIQ people contains 32 measures focused on the work/life balance, protection against gender-specific violence and discrimination, gender-appropriate access to resources and services, and the City of Bern as an equal-opportunities employer. Implementation of the measures is examined on a regular basis.

2 Bern is paying attention

Bern does not tolerate sexist or queer-hostile behaviour. With this in mind, the City of Bern launched the “Bern is paying attention” campaign in 2023. Along with courses, advice services, nightlife-related initiatives and an information campaign on civil courage, an online reporting tool is another part of this campaign. Anyone who experiences or sees sexist, queer-hostile or sexual harassment in Bern can report it anonymously via the tool. “Bern is paying attention” is built on a broad alliance of civil society organisations that are committed to the shared vision of the campaign.

3 Werkplatz Égalité

Gender equality needs people to advance it. To this end, the City of Bern Office for Equality in Gender Issues and the Canton of Bern Office for Equality of Women and Men launched the “Werkplatz Égalité” (Workplace Equality) initiative. This initiative aims to foster links between companies in the Canton of Bern, highlight good equality practice, achieve jointly devised practical solutions and generate new impetus in workshops. The companies in the network firmly believe that equality and diversity are success factors for companies, particularly in order to retain dedicated employees and make companies fit for the future.



Expert view

“Switzerland still faces major challenges in achieving genuine gender equality. These include the unequal distribution of assets and income, a lack of regard for unpaid work and the ongoing prevalence of sexual violence. There are cultural, structural and political reasons for these challenges. Social trends away from a binary to a pluralistic understanding of gender are triggering important debate, but are also a source of tension.

The City of Bern is doing a great deal for gender equality. One particular example is the action plan for equal treatment of women, men and LGBTIQ people, which is having an impact thanks to a framework of cross-departmental measures. For instance, the City of Bern actively stipulates wage equality in procurement and service agreements, and takes a clear stand on equality for LGBTIQ people as a member of the Rainbow Cities Network. However, there is room for improvement, for instance in the financing of child-care facilities, which are still very expensive for parents in places including Bern.”



Regula Bühlmann

Head of the City of Bern Office for Equality
in Gender Issues

Clean water and sanitation

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Drinking water is an essential requirement for human life. Consequently, access to drinking water is a human right. SDG 6 requires the provision and maintenance of an infrastructure for water protection. After all, along with access to drinking water, well-functioning sanitation facilities are an important factor in social, economic and environmental development. For Switzerland, this means the reduction and prevention of water pollution caused by hazardous chemicals, and the coordinated provision of water resources.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 6:

BSG 61

Maintain good drinking water quality, in particular prevent pesticide residues in drinking water

The City of Bern regards ensuring drinking water quality as a continuous task. A strategically sound decision on the location of water sources was taken on the basis of risk assessments. The fully functioning distribution system for Bern's drinking water is regularly inspected. In addition, the City of Bern checks the quality of its drinking water several times a week. Furthermore, all known hazardous substances – above and beyond pesticides – are examined periodically. This means that the City of Bern will remain able to respond to new findings on hazards and impurities to which drinking water is exposed in modern society.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 61:

Days with a usage warning

Very little need for action/progress



Substantial need for action/progress



Clean water and sanitation

BSG 62

Provide and maintain the infrastructure for water protection

With its own wastewater systems and an effective sewer network, the City of Bern ensures compliance with federal water protection legislation. To this end, the City of Bern provides a public wastewater system covering around 300 km with fixed assets of around CHF 1 billion, and operates it in line with the provisions of the municipal general drainage plan (GEP). As part of its supervisory duties, it checks, approves and oversees proper and legally compliant operation of private wastewater plants. It develops and uses modern digital tools to do this.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 62:

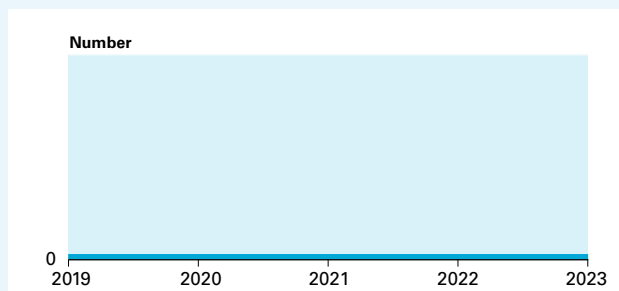


Fully renovated private wastewater plants per year



Indicators

BSG 61



Source: Energie Wasser Bern

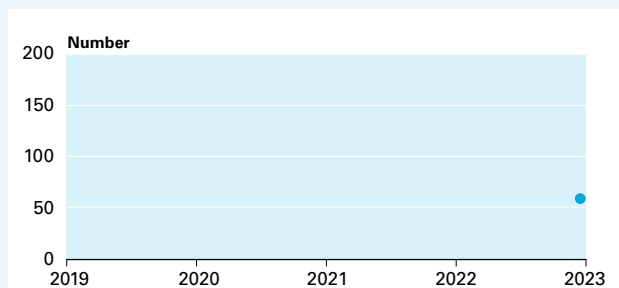
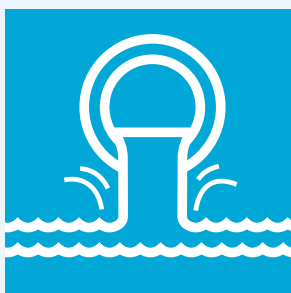


Days with a usage warning

In the reporting period, no usage warnings were issued in Bern. This means that the indicator is at its best possible level.

The City of Bern can examine drinking water quality, on which the indicator provides extensive information, through continuous and rigorous checks. Ensuring that the drinking water is of perfect quality requires forward planning. After all, in industrial societies, including Switzerland, there are many external influences and pollutants that can affect drinking water.

BSG 62



Source: City of Bern Civil Engineering Office, Urban Drainage/Water

Fully renovated private wastewater plants per year

This indicator has only been in place in the City of Bern since 1 February 2023. Consequently, it is not possible to provide any details of its development.

In principle, the City of Bern has a significant influence on the indicator. It checks and approves private wastewater plants in the context of planning applications, taking into account the sponge city principles and climate-resilient urban development. Future objectives are to actively determine the need for renovation of private wastewater plants and to monitor prompt implementation of the renovation work. Please note that the indicator only provides information on private wastewater plants rather than public ones. The public sewer system is renovated or replaced to a very high level at significant expense in line with the general drainage plan of the City of Bern (GEP).



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



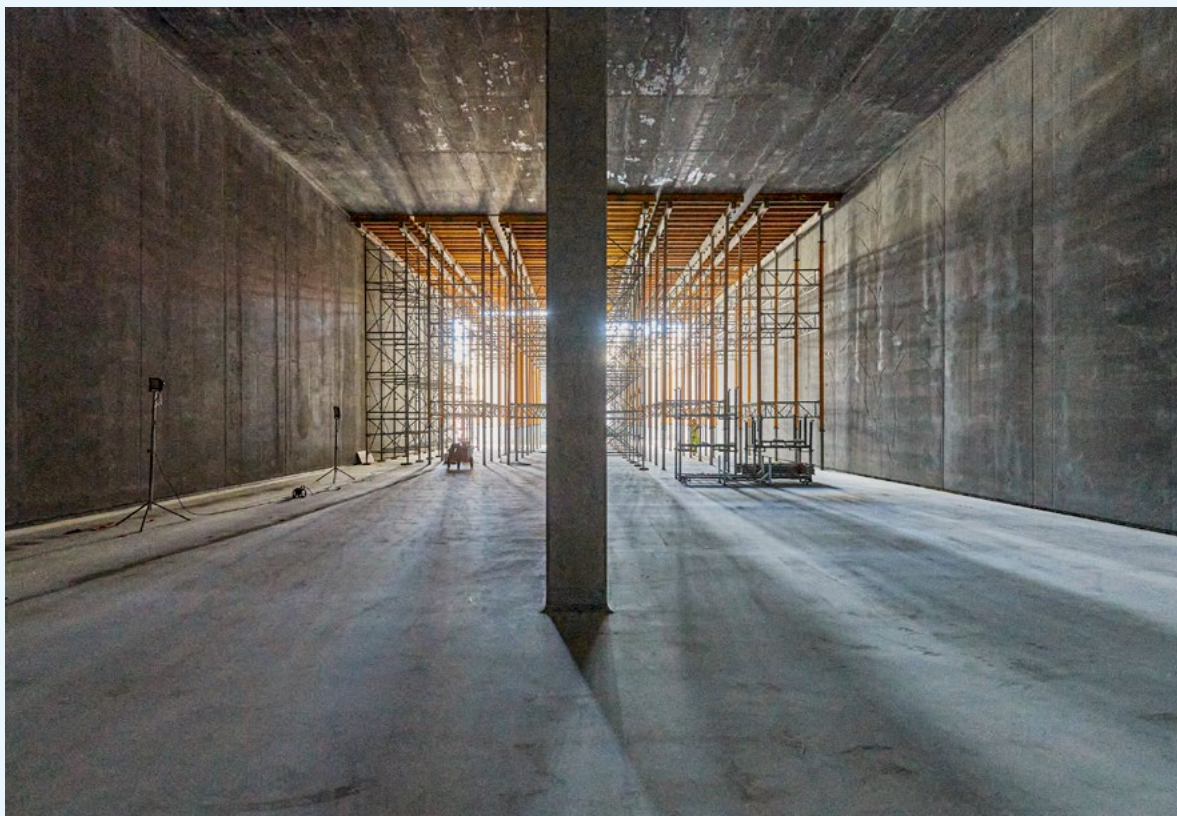
The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected project



Photos: Courtesy of StöhGrünig

Construction of Mannenberg reservoir

Supplying drinking water is a long-term task. This is apparent from how old the infrastructure can get. Yet after more than 100 years, it is now also time to renovate the Mannenberg drinking water reservoir in Ittigen near Bern. This is the largest reservoir of Wasserverbund Region Bern AG, which supplies Bern and other places with drinking water. As well as being structurally outdated, it had also become too small. The new reservoir holds 30,000 cubic metres of drinking water, and is set for completion in 2025.



Expert view

“The people of Bern enjoy drinking water of the highest quality, which is ensured by strict monitoring and regular inspections. Energie Wasser Bern (ewb) supplies all households and businesses with clean, healthy drinking water that is safe for daily use. A modern, well equipped supply network ensures that our drinking water is available around the clock.

To ensure future supply security, ewb continuously performs network renovations. In this way, we ensure the longevity and efficiency of the network while minimising the risk of supply interruptions. We play a key role in our region's welfare by guaranteeing access to high-quality, reliably available drinking water and ensuring a secure future through forward planning. However, there are also challenges to overcome. These include the growing population in our supply area, as well as climate change with erratic rainfall and drought.”



Philip Waldmann

Senior water supply specialist at
Energie Wasser Bern

Affordable and clean energy

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Energy is essential to our daily lives and sustainable economic development. That is why SDG 7 calls for general access to affordable, reliable and modern energy. This includes promoting energy efficiency as well as investment in the energy infrastructure and clean energy technologies. Access to affordable and clean energy also influences other SDGs.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 7:

BSG 71

Reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency

The City of Bern demands stricter energy regulations for new buildings in planning processes for new sites. In its own construction projects, it aims to use energy as efficiently as possible. To increase the rate of energy-efficient renovation in Bern, the City of Bern holds information events in the districts in conjunction with the municipal energy advice service and EnergieWasser Bern (ewb). Municipal funding programmes of the Eco-fund for Renewable Energies supplement the cantonal options and assist property owners in the planning of renovation measures and the replacement of heating systems. The City of Bern coordinates its energy policy measures in its own Energy and Climate Strategy.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 71:

Heat consumption in the building sector per resident per year

Electricity consumption per resident per year

Very little need for action/progress

Substantial need for action/progress

Affordable and clean energy

BSG 72

Promote local production of renewable energy (electricity, heating, cooling)

BSG 73

Provide renewable energy (electricity, heating, cooling)

The City of Bern uses the roofs of its own properties to produce energy. With the solar implementation concept, it sets out how installations on municipal roofs can be advanced. The eco-fund for renewable energies supports the installation of solar energy systems and the creation of self-consumption communities. In addition, the City of Bern informs the various stakeholders in the property sector of opportunities to use renewable energies. In conjunction with EnergieWasser Bern (ewb), it furthers the expansion of thermal networks with renewable energy sources by expanding the existing district heating network and commissioning feasibility studies for new networks. The City of Bern also coordinates the energy policy measures relating to this BSG in its own Energy and Climate Strategy.

Need for action



Progress



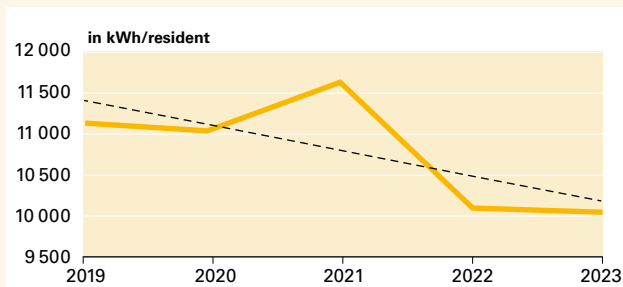
Indicator for attainment of BSG 72 and 73:

Installed photovoltaic capacity in the ewb network



Indicators

BSG 71



Source: City of Bern Environmental Protection Office, ECS Controlling

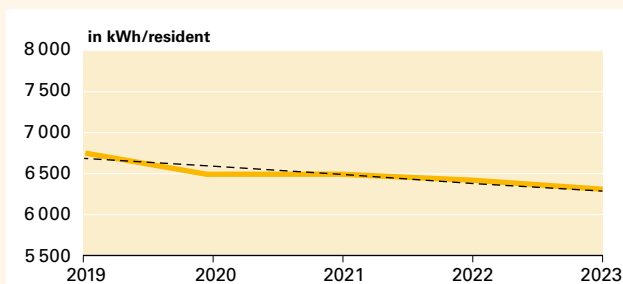
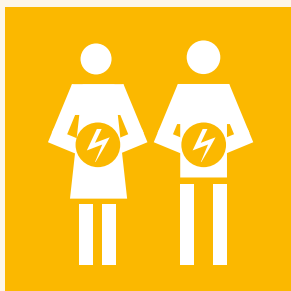


Heat consumption in the building sector per resident per year

Having risen briefly in 2020 and 2021, when the coronavirus pandemic held sway, heat consumption has since resumed the negative trend of previous years and is clearly heading in the desired direction.

Heat consumption in buildings depends on both the energy efficiency and the use of the building. Although the City of Bern has an influence on both these aspects, there are also external effects. The energy efficiency of buildings is improved by renovations performed by property owners for various reasons. One of these is the revised Energy Act of the Canton of Bern, which came into force in 2023.

BSG 71



Source: City of Bern Environmental Protection Office, ECS Controlling



Electricity consumption per resident per year

Having been relatively stable in 2020 and 2021, electricity consumption per resident fell in 2022 and 2023, as in the years prior to 2020. This is a particularly positive development, as the decrease in fossil fuels for heating and mobility means a shift towards electricity as an energy source.

The City of Bern can influence electricity consumption by taking a pioneering role with its own buildings or increasing its own consumption of solar power through accelerated expansion of photovoltaic systems. However, other stakeholders such as the federal government also influence the reduction of electricity consumption with energy-saving campaigns.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



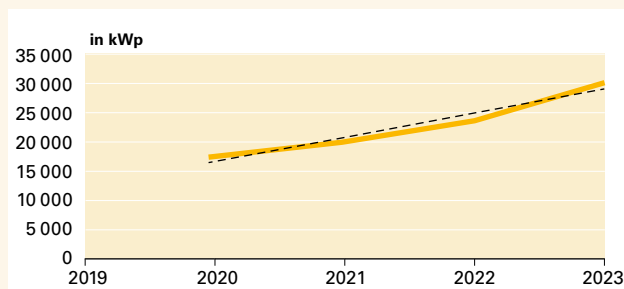
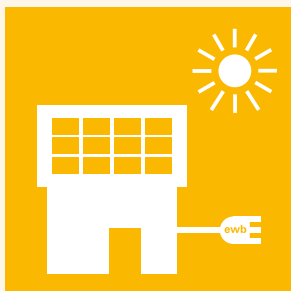
The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 72

BSG 73



Source: City of Bern Environmental Protection Office, ECS Controlling



Installed photovoltaic capacity in the ewb network

Installed photovoltaic capacity is clearly heading in the desired direction. However, there is still much potential for further photovoltaic systems in Bern.

The City of Bern can advance the expansion of photovoltaic energy by installing systems on its own buildings, thus acting as a role model. Photovoltaic energy is just one of several renewable sources that can also be used directly to generate electricity only, rather than heat. However, installing photovoltaic systems does have a positive effect indirectly, as some of the electricity needed to power heat pumps in place of gas- or oil-fired heaters can be generated cheaply on-site.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

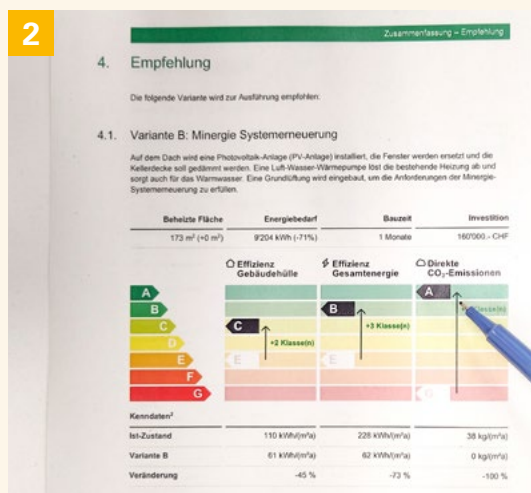


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects

2



1



3



1

Information events on the replacement of heating systems

In terms of heating, there is still considerable potential to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources. At the same time, many building owners need to be informed about the replacement of heating systems. With this in mind, the City of Bern has been holding information events on the replacement of heating systems and energy-efficient renovation in several districts since 2022. At various events, the support options available for installing solar energy systems have also been highlighted, and experts have provided information.

2

“City of Bern GEAK Plus” support programme

GEAK Plus is a tool established throughout Switzerland for informing building owners of their building’s energy efficiency status along with suitable renovation options. In addition, “City of Bern GEAK Plus” is aligned with the City of Bern’s energy policy goals. It comprises the individual building analysis by independent experts, an economic efficiency analysis and an overview of all available funding. In 2022 and 2023, over 120 GEAK Plus certificates were issued via the support programme.

3

Positive-energy buildings at Reichenbachstrasse 118

Energy-saving and affordable living – it can be done. The urban settlement at Reichenbachstrasse 118 is a low-car-use zone and has been awarded the “2000-Watt Area” label. Two of the four buildings are energy-plus buildings, meaning that they produce more energy than they need. Photovoltaic systems are mounted on all roofs, and the requisite heating is generated via geothermal probes. In addition to their exemplary energy efficiency, the homes are also leased by the City of Bern at affordable rents.



Expert view

“Moving towards a sustainable, future-oriented energy supply is a very ambitious goal. In order for us to achieve it, everyone needs to play their part – businesses, politicians, society and each member of the public. A targeted combination of innovative technological approaches, increased use of renewable energies such as hydroelectric and photovoltaic power as well as attractive support options will give the energy transition further impetus.

To us, a major lever of the energy transition is the heating transformation, i.e. the switch from oil- and gas-powered heating systems to sustainable solutions. We are expanding district heating by investing heavily in sustainable energy production and a modern network. In addition, we are committed to setting up further local heating networks. Ultimately, changes in behaviour are also an important starting point for effective climate protection. If we only adapt our routines a little, we can make a big difference – with no discernible compromises on comfort. With the various measures, we are making a key contribution to attaining the climate targets and reducing CO₂ emissions in Bern.”



Cornelia Mellenberger
CEO Energie Wasser Bern

Decent work and economic growth

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



HSP 4



Access to work is key to economic growth. In an economy geared towards sustainability, it is essential that economic progress is not achieved at the cost of the environment or through human exploitation. Rather, consumption and production must be structured in a resource-efficient way. Therefore, SDG 8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth that also ensures full and productive employment and decent work for all. Respecting human rights and complying with ecological limits are also crucial aspects of this for industrialised countries such as Switzerland.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 8:

BSG 81

Access to decent work for all

Creating access to the labour market is one of the City of Bern's primary tasks. It meets this task through accessible job opportunities and collaboration with local employers. In addition, it regularly performs checks relating to the shadow economy and labour exploitation. As a result, it regularly uncovers violations, which shows that the checks are necessary, but also that decent work is not yet guaranteed everywhere.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 81.

Need for action



Progress





Decent work and economic growth

BSG 82

Promote reconciliation of work and family life

The City of Bern enables all families to use external childcare so that parents or guardians can work. In all its school districts, it runs municipal daycares that supplement the private daycares. Furthermore, the City of Bern's day schools are open to all children at primary school, and also offer support during the school holidays. In addition, the City of Bern issues childcare vouchers to reduce the cost of care at daycares and home-based provision. The City of Bern promotes reconciliation of work and family life in the context of promotion of equality and as an employer itself.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 82:

Available daycare places for small children

Employment rate of women and men

Work-time percentage of women and men

BSG 83

Create the conditions for an environmentally friendly and socially responsible economy

The City of Bern creates the conditions for an environmentally friendly and socially responsible economy at various levels. Examples include a set of guidelines for public procurement and the Climate Platform for Business (KdW). The City of Bern is increasingly applying principles of the circular economy to projects. However, implementation is still in the early stages.

Need for action



Progress



No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 83.

BSG 84

Promote sustainable tourism

The City of Bern is also a tourist destination. Although it has little direct influence on the approach to tourism in the destination, which comprises a larger region, it is particularly keen to attract visitors from the domestic market and nearby markets. After all, short journeys make a major contribution to sustainable tourism. In addition, the Bern Welcome destination is actively committed to sustainability.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 84:

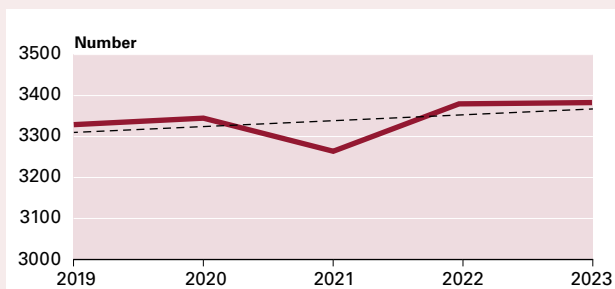


Proportion of overnight stays by guests from Switzerland and neighbouring countries



Indicators

BSG 82



Source: City of Bern Youth Welfare Office

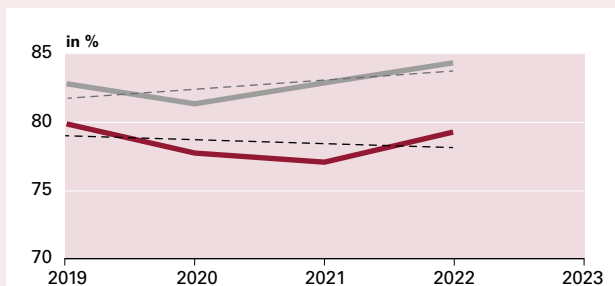


Available daycare places for small children

The number of available spaces at daycares for small children in Bern rose constantly until 2019. It fell when the coronavirus pandemic broke out in 2020, and has fallen slightly again since 2021. Availability is now slightly higher than before the pandemic. Consequently, the indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The City of Bern runs around an eighth of the daycares for small children in Bern. Therefore, it has a direct influence on available spaces. However, the indicator does not provide any information on demand from parents and therefore on whether supply meets demand. At present, there are enough available daycare places. The care behaviour of families is changing towards fewer childcare hours.

BSG 82



Source: Federal Statistical Office, structural survey



Employment rate of women and men of working age

The indicator shows what proportion of working-age women and men living in Bern are in work (full-time or part-time). The employment rate of women fell slightly in the reporting period, particularly during the pandemic. The employment rate of men increased in the same period. This divergence is worrying, as it poses a risk to the economic independence of women.

The City of Bern can influence the indicator as an employer and by putting in place the conditions that enable people to reconcile paid and unpaid work – for instance by providing childcare facilities. In conjunction with the work-time percentage (the following indicator), the indicator covers a significant part of this BSG.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

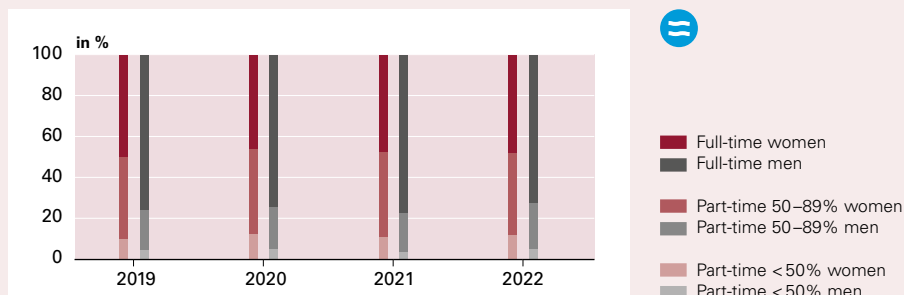


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 82



Source: Federal Statistical Office, structural survey

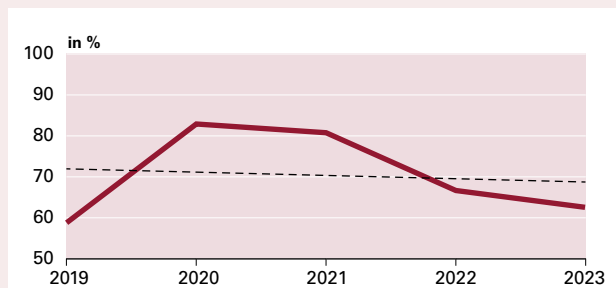


Work-time percentage of women and men

The indicator shows the distribution of the work-time percentage of working women and men. The preferred development would be an alignment of both distributions so that unpaid work can also be evenly distributed between the genders.

A general assessment of the indicator can be found above. In conjunction with the employment rate (the previous indicator), the indicator covers a significant part of this BSG.

BSG 84



Source: City of Bern Statistics Office (T10.02.510)



Proportion of overnight stays by guests from Switzerland and neighbouring countries

Having risen sharply in 2020, the year in which the coronavirus pandemic started, the proportion of guests from Switzerland and neighbouring countries has been falling ever since. However, it is still above the level of 2019. Overall, the direction of the indicator is unclear.

The City of Bern has little influence on the indicator, as the tourism organisation Bern Welcome is responsible for the tourism strategy. The indicator does not provide any information on day-tripping either. Although it does not cover all aspects of sustainable tourism, it does provide some information on environmental sustainability. Bern Welcome can prevent emissions from long-haul flights by focusing on domestic and nearby markets.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



1 Strategy for the Promotion of Professional and Social Integration in the City of Bern 2022–2025

Integration needs a helping hand. That is why the City of Bern has been promoting professional and social integration of people receiving social assistance with its own programmes since 2014. The City of Bern has set out its own strategy and committed funding of around CHF 4 million for the period from 2022 to 2025. Accessible measures are at the forefront. They are geared towards job seekers, young people, single parents and people with gaps in learning.

2 Family-friendly working conditions at the City of Bern

Working for the City of Bern should be possible for people in many situations. The City of Bern wants all employees to be able to reconcile their job with care responsibilities and other non work-related commitments and activities. Wherever possible, it offers part-time working, flexible working hours and working from home. It also recognises models such as extended paternity leave, parental leave, short-term leave in emergency situations and reduced hours when new care responsibilities arise.



Expert view

“The City of Bern is actively committed to helping businesses in its economic area and attracting new ones. The “Charta for Workplace Integration”, launched in 2024, promotes collaboration between business and providers of integration measures for people with restricted access to the labour market. However, political influence on companies’ commitment to the inclusion of migrants or the long-term unemployed is limited.

Boosting of the local economy through suitable conditions is a source of potential. Cantonal and municipal integration programmes should be combined in a targeted way in order to create social and economic benefits for the whole city. In addition, sustainable development requires targeted investment in qualifications, retraining and flexible working models, particularly with a view to digitalisation and automation.”



Erich Zbinden

Head of the City of Bern Competence Centre for Work

Industry, innovation and infrastructure

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



HSP 3



HSP 4



A sustainable infrastructure requires prosperity and secures jobs, in developing and newly industrialised countries as well as in Switzerland. With this in mind, SDG 9 aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation. To this end, resources should be employed more efficiently, and environmentally friendly technologies and industrial processes promoted.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 9:

BSG 91

Increase resource efficiency

The use of resources depends on many external factors such as the production of consumer goods and the global raw materials cycle. Consequently, the direct influence of the City of Bern is limited. The City of Bern promotes resource efficiency by creating further opportunities for the collection of separated waste. In this way, materials are recycled and fewer new resources are consumed for new products. Furthermore, the City of Bern practises circular and sustainable procurement whenever possible (see also SDG 12). With the newly devised Energy and Climate Strategy 2035, the City of Bern has taken measures to prevent grey emissions: Resource efficiency in the construction industry is to be increased through greater redevelopment, and recycling-friendly business operations are to be promoted. There is much work to be done here.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 91:



**Household waste (no market) in kg per resident per year
(also in BSG 123)**



Green waste in kg per resident per year

■■■■ Very little need for action/progress

→ ■■■■ Substantial need for action/progress

Industry, innovation and infrastructure

BSG 92

Promote sustainable innovations in technology and infrastructure

The City of Bern did not take any specific measures to promote innovations in technology and infrastructure in the reporting period. However, it does take approaches and technologies of the circular economy into account in individual infrastructure projects of its own. In principle, the City of Bern has limited influence on innovations in technology and infrastructure. It finds out about new products and technologies. Wherever it can, it promotes integration, and is committed to sustainable economic growth and an attractive business location.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 92:

Business start-ups in innovative sectors

BSG 93

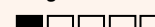
Strengthen collaboration with education and science to promote innovation

Bern is home to several educational and research institutes, although they are run by the Canton of Bern or the private sector. The City of Bern is committed to "City of Science" status, with a view to integrating and strengthening the city's education landscape. The Allianz Kreislaufwirtschaft (Circular Economy Alliance) connects business and science to promote innovation and sustainability in the circular economy. This regularly results in collaboration between research and the City of Bern, for instance regarding adaptation to climate change.

Need for action



Progress



No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 93.

BSG 94

Enhance and optimise infrastructure through sustainable use of resources

The City of Bern is constantly exploring how it can utilise new materials and use resources sustainably in its own projects. In addition, it generates momentum for the circular economy. It is devising its own circular economy master plan, and has launched several pilot projects in this field. Many initiatives in this field are still in their infancy.

Need for action



Progress

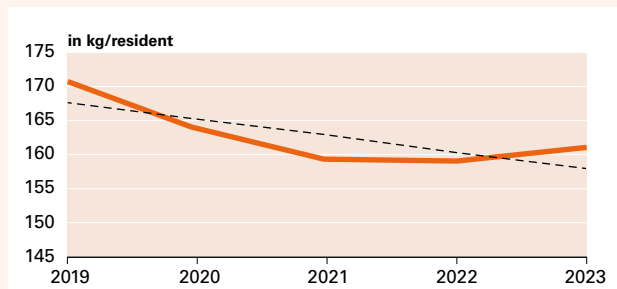


No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 94.



Indicators

BSG 91



Source: Waste Disposal and Recycling Bern

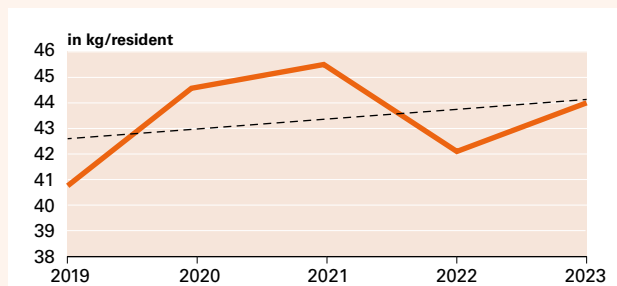


Household waste (no market) in kg per resident per year

Although the volume of household waste rose slightly in 2023, there is a clear downward trend in Bern. The indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The annual trend in Bern is similar to that of the rest of Switzerland. Packaging and consumer habits are changing, while waste separation is constantly improving. Overall, the City of Bern has only a limited influence on this indicator, although it can positively encourage waste separation with campaigns. In addition, municipal waste only accounts for a small portion of the volume of waste in Bern. Construction waste, which accounts for a much higher proportion, is not recorded.

BSG 91



Source: Waste Disposal and Recycling Bern



Green waste in kg per resident per year

Apart from a brief decline in 2022, the volume of green waste collected in Bern is on a clear upward trend. This is a positive development, as separately collected green waste can be used as compost or, in some cases, as raw material for biogas production.

The City of Bern has only a limited influence on the volume of green waste collected. It provides a good service and can run awareness-raising campaigns. However, separate collection is voluntary and depends on whether bins for green waste are available to tenants, for instance. In addition, the weather has a significant influence on the volume of green waste generated. For instance, the lower volumes in 2022 and 2023 were also attributable to drought and an associated decrease in vegetation growth.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



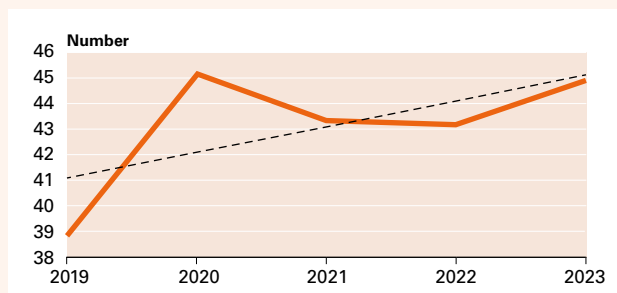
The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.

Indicators

BSG 92



Source: City of Bern Business Office



Business start-ups in innovative sectors

In the reporting years, new businesses were established in Bern in sectors classed as innovative according to the definition in the Cercle Indicateurs sustainable development indicators. This is a welcome development and clearly in the desired direction.

However, the City of Bern has no direct influence on the development of the indicator. Promotion of start-ups is a responsibility of the Canton of Bern. In addition, the pace of start-ups is heavily dependent on macroeconomic factors and general sociopolitical sentiment. Furthermore, the indicator does not provide any information on innovation processes at existing businesses.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



1 Support for the “Reuse & Repair” project of the Pretty Good association

Some things that get thrown away can still be used. That is why the Pretty Good association rescues usable items from being thrown away, then repairs and sells them. In its “Reuse & Repair” project, the association collects such items from the City of Bern’s waste depots, which accept them after separation. The City of Bern provided organisational support for the pilot project. As it proved so successful, it became part of the regular waste services.

2 Steel girder reuse pilot project

Around two thirds of waste in Switzerland is generated in the construction sector. Consequently, there is substantial potential for reuse here. With this in mind, the Swiss Business Council for Sustainable Development (öbu) aims to reuse steel girders with an alliance from the industry. The City of Bern supports this initiative and, in pilot project, has reused steel girders from the old Festhalle Bern in water pipeline projects. This has saved around 22 tonnes of CO₂ that would otherwise have been emitted during smelting and recasting of the steel girders.

3 Expansion of Schlossmatt kindergarten

The City of Bern faces a challenge in terms of school space. It needs to meet growing space and renovation requirements in the next few years, while taking recycling into account during construction. Therefore, in the project competition for the expansion of the Schlossmatt kindergarten, it requested an overall sustainability concept for the first time. The selected project reuses as many components as possible, and its innovative energy concept removes the need for complex technical installations.

Expert view

“Sustainability has long been present in the infrastructure sector; and relevant stakeholders are aware of its importance. The public sector can have an influence through the procurement process in particular, but sometimes meets obstacles. All players need to make the transition from a throwaway society to a circular society together. This is especially true if both efficiency and sufficiency are to be promoted in the infrastructure sector in future and the related question of how much infrastructure we need is to be answered.

The City of Bern is making good progress, but can make people more aware of the strategies and measures it is pursuing. Again, by far the biggest source of potential in Bern is the construction industry, with its vast use of resources and carbon footprint. Reusability and short transportation routes should be taken into account as early as the planning stage. Of course, the obligation also applies to private building contractors as well as the public sector. Making them accountable is a challenge. The City of Bern can pass on the results of its own experience and specifically shedding light on the use of resources in the construction industry.”



Patric Schädli

City of Bern Civil Engineering Office,
Head of Operations & Maintenance/Deputy City Engineer

Reduced social inequalities

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



HSP 1



Inequality is one of the biggest barriers to sustainable development. It restricts opportunities to participate in social, cultural, political and economic life. SDG 10 aims to reduce social inequality within and among countries. All people should be empowered to exercise self-determination. Equal opportunity should be granted and income growth of the poorest section of the population should be increased so that nobody, least of all vulnerable groups, is left behind on the path to sustainable development.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 10:

BSG 101

Promote social and professional integration and social participation of all people

Support for professional integration and promotion of social integration are two of the City of Bern's core sociopolitical tasks. One key tool is the Strategy for the Promotion of Professional and Social Integration in the City of Bern 2022–2025. This includes services that support various groups who need help: young adults with multiple problems, unemployed people receiving social assistance and clients of the asylum social service. In addition, the City of Bern has a wide range of measures that allow disabled people to participate in life with as few restrictions as possible.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 101:



Young people aged 16 to 25 with no vocational training in the Competence Centre for Work

Very little need for action/progress

Substantial need for action/progress



Reduced social inequalities

BSG 102

Fight discrimination and exclusion of specific social groups

The City of Bern is committed to fighting racism and racial discrimination, and is constantly stepping up its work in this field. The principles and goals are rooted in the Priority Plan on Migration and Racism 2022–2025, which is the City of Bern's fourth priority plan on these issues. However, the City of Bern acknowledges that there is still room for improvement regarding racism and racial discrimination. That is why it also carries out awareness-raising work within the administration.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 102



**Training within the administration
on transcultural openness and racism**

BSG 103

Create accessible public spaces appropriate for diversity and all generations

The City of Bern enables its residents to use public spaces actively and put their own ideas forward. This also includes accessible participation and consideration of various target groups. Via targeted and temporary measures by the City of Bern Competence Centre for Public Spaces (KORA), it is possible to gain findings that are incorporated in the long-term planning of public spaces. Furthermore, public spaces in Bern are designed accessibly wherever possible. This enables older people and people with disability to participate in social life on an equal footing.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 103:

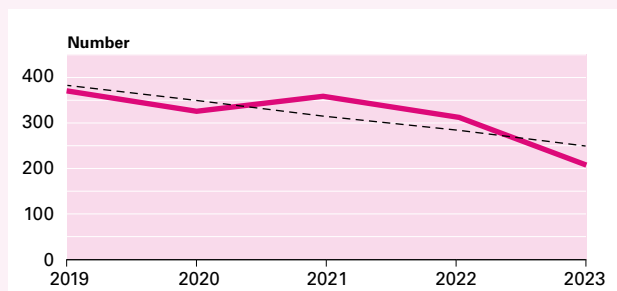


KORA measures undertaken



Indicators

BSG 101



Source: City of Bern Social Services Office, Competence Centre for Work

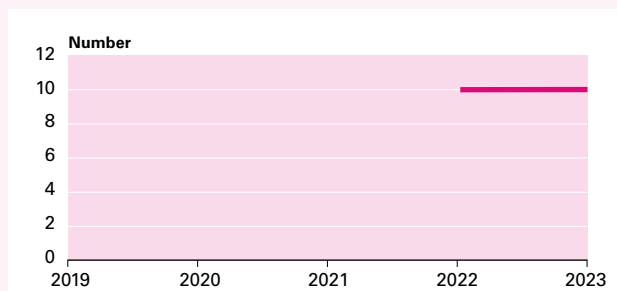


Young people aged 16 to 25 with no vocational training in the Competence Centre for Work

Apart from an increase in 2021, during the pandemic, the number of young people with no vocational training in the Competence Centre for Work is on a downward trend. Consequently, the indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The indicator is in line with the general positive developments on the apprenticeship market. The City of Bern can influence it by providing apprenticeships itself and helping young people to look for jobs. However, it is important to note that professional integration, such as starting an apprenticeship, does not automatically mean social integration. Even so, this indicator is meaningful, as it relates to the key age group of young people aged 16 to 25. Failed or delayed integration of this group increases the potential consequential costs to society and reduces the chances of social participation of the people concerned.

BSG 102



Source: City of Bern Office for Migration and Racism

Training within the administration on transcultural openness and racism

Based on the available data, it is too early to say how the indicator is progressing.

Only the City of Bern has any influence on the indicator. The more internal training courses it conducts, the more positively the indicator progresses. The data only covers the training events of the Office for Migration and Racism, and only applies to some of the courses in this field.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

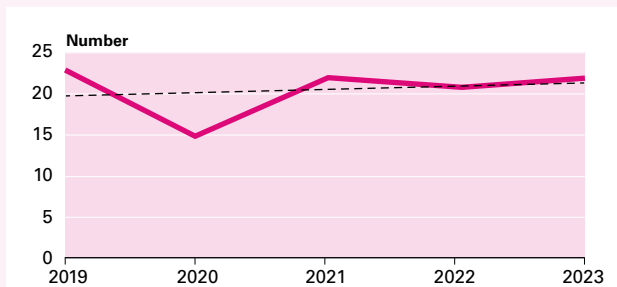


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 103



Source: City of Bern Civil Engineering Office, Competence Centre for Public Spaces



KORA measures undertaken

The Competence Centre for Public Spaces (KORA) is a platform for dialogue between users of public spaces and experts at the administration. It enables the population to submit projects. Apart from 2021, during the pandemic, when planned KORA measures were not undertaken, the indicator is stagnant.

The current funds are insufficient to increase the number of KORA measures. Although the City of Bern can keep the number of measures stable, it has no influence on the quantity and quality of incoming requests. It is also unable to control whether or not its services reach disadvantaged groups, as the measures are launched by the population.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



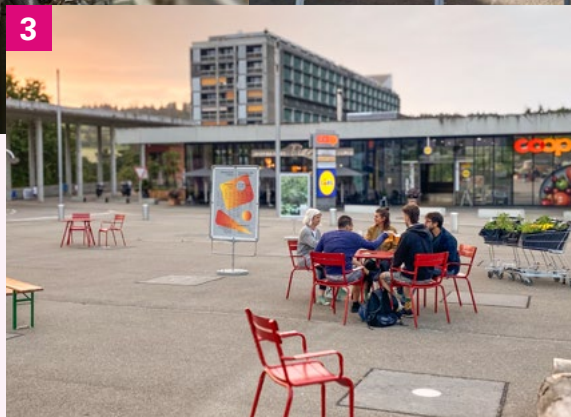
The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1, 2, 3)

1 Workplace integration master plan

Work is an important way of integrating people living in poverty. In the City of Bern, various stakeholders help with workplace integration. With the workplace integration master plan, the City of Bern has further improved and coordinated integration. In particular, collaboration with local businesses has been intensified in order to ensure their help with workplace integration. To this end, the City of Bern launched the Charta for Workplace Integration in the context of its workplace integration master plan.

2 Action Week Against Racism

Racism concerns everyone to some extent. With this in mind, the City of Bern takes a clear stand against racial discrimination every year with the Action Week Against Racism. This action week addresses a wide audience with a varied programme of events and an accompanying communication campaign. It includes civil society organisations in its efforts. They take part in the action week with their own ideas and projects, with support from the City of Bern, and receive a platform for their own work.

3 KORA Ansermetplatz project

For many years, Ansermetplatz in the district of Gäbelbach was not one of Bern's most inviting locations. In summer 2024, the City of Bern Competence Centre for Public Spaces (KORA) spruced up the empty and disused square with plants, seating and games. These elements have an influence on the use of the square as well as the city's climate. They lower the temperature, thus ensuring a more pleasant stay.

Expert view

“The City of Bern is doing a lot to attain its own sustainability goals in SDG 10. Along with the “workplace integration master plan” project, it is committed to the workplace integration of young job seekers in the context of a cantonal mandate. These young people are benefiting from the current labour market situation, as the number of participants in the motivational semesters (SEMO) fell again in 2024. The City of Bern can do even more here by filling its own apprenticeship places in a targeted way. It can do this by selecting future apprentices on the basis of criteria that also give disadvantaged groups an opportunity, and by giving them extra support on top of the generous options already available.

Through projects such as the Action Week Against Racism and the KORA project, the City of Bern has taken a stand, and is committed to fighting racial and gender-specific discrimination. It does this through training and education on key issues such as racism, and through direct involvement of the city’s population in shaping the zones of social interaction. The City of Bern can confidently point to its commitment to the sustainability goals in SDG 10.”



Susanne Seiler
Head of Young Adults
City of Bern Competence Centre

Sustainable cities and communes

In many respects, cities are the engines of today's world. They are where half the world's population live, four fifths of global economic output is generated and three quarters of all emissions stem from. Sustainable development in cities is just as significant. SDG 11 aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Environmental pollution in cities should be reduced, and residential development and public spaces should not exclude anyone. In addition, access to affordable housing and transport systems should be ensured. SDG 11 is of equal importance to the City of Bern.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 11:



BSG 111

Develop safe, climate-friendly, city appropriate mobility

Mobility is changing in Bern, and is influenced by external and city-specific factors. Cycling is becoming increasingly popular, and is now an accepted part of the mobility mix, accounting for around 20 percent of the modal split. The City of Bern funds some charging infrastructure projects, and benefits from the general increase in electric mobility. It therefore takes its role as an infrastructure operator seriously, and is gradually revamping the streets in line with sustainability criteria. As a key element of a thriving, prosperous city, commercial traffic should also become more sustainable and climate-friendly. To this end, the City of Bern is working with interest groups in the logistics sector and industry to devise principles, and is also putting in place favourable conditions and supporting pilot projects.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 111:

Volume of cycling traffic (indicator to be measured from 2026)

Proportion of cars with an electric motor (including hybrid)

Volume of motorised private transport (indicator to be measured from 2026)

Sustainable cities and communities

BSG 112 Ensure adequate and affordable housing in all districts

Housing prices are rising in Bern, as in the whole of Switzerland – a challenge to people on low incomes in particular. Although it only owns a small proportion of homes, the City of Bern exerts its influence wherever it can. It does this by increasing its housing stock through construction and purchase of housing, and by leasing, mainly at cost rent or as subsidised, affordable housing with leasing criteria (GüWR). In addition, it hands over leasehold land to non-profit property development groups. The City of Bern also has influence on the planning of sites, where it legally stipulates quotas for affordable housing at cost rent. Furthermore, it makes owners aware of the need for affordable housing. The City of Bern sets out its housing policy vision, guidelines, targets and measures in the “Diverse Residential City” strategy.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 112:

Leases for affordable housing (GüWR)

BSG 113 Ensure a near-natural living environment in all districts

The City of Bern has identified various opportunities to ensure a near-natural living environment in the districts. It can plan the outdoor spaces of its own properties and public spaces in a near-natural manner and refer to this in the approval process in external planning applications. In addition, it informs, advises and assists the population in designing their own gardens and outdoor spaces in a near-natural manner.

Need for action



Progress



No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 113.

BSG 114 Strengthen social cohesion through community-building district and neighbourhood work

District and neighbourhood work takes various forms in Bern. The City of Bern commissions the Bern Community Work Association (VBG) to run district centres and the Neighbourhood Bern platform. It also provides financial support for community projects, such as Neighbours’ Day and sociocultural initiatives in the districts.

Need for action



Progress



No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 114.

Sustainable cities and communities

BSG 115

Ensure adequate service, industrial and commercial premises

In particular, the City of Bern ensures adequate premises in its role as a landowner, issuer of leaseholds and lessor. In key cantonal development areas such as Ausserholligen in the west of the city and Wankdorfcity 3 in the north, it has stipulated the principles for sustainable and adequate service, industrial and commercial premises.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 115.

Need for action



Progress



BSG 116

Ensure sustainable municipal finances

Since 2023, municipal financial planning has been based on the targets of the sustainable development framework strategy RAN2030: If new funds are allocated in task scheduling and financial planning, it must be stated whether there is a link with RAN2030 and, if so, the priority to which this relates. In addition, whenever new tasks arise or services are expanded, the link to the Bern Sustainability Goals is assessed. As a result, municipal finances aligned with sustainability criteria are systemically ensured.

Indicators for attainment of BSG 116:



Proportion of tasks and service expansions closely linked to an RAN target



Proportion of newly notified investments (basis: total amount) as per the notification of requirements closely linked to an RAN target (indicator to be measured from 2024)

Need for action



Progress





Indicators

BSG 111



There is no data on this indicator at present.

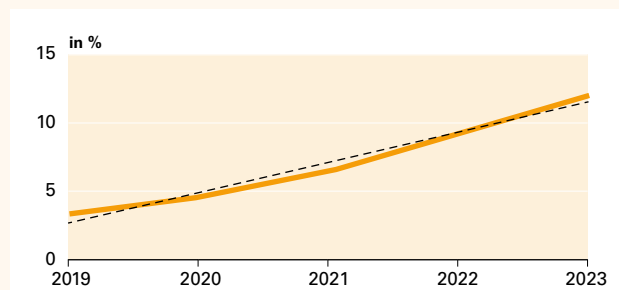
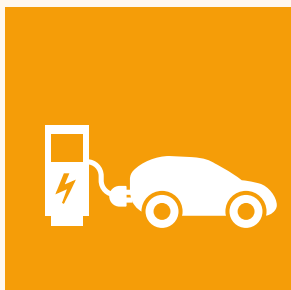
Source: Environmental Protection Office, ECS Controlling

Volume of cycling traffic

The indicator will be measured for the first time in 2026 in the context of controlling relating to the Energy and Climate Strategy 2035. The average daily traffic (ADT) at selected measuring points is measured here.

In principle, the City of Bern has a substantial influence on the indicator, for instance by expanding the cycling infrastructure or through awareness-raising and communication. The indicator covers a significant part of climate-friendly, city-appropriate mobility.

BSG 111



Source: City of Bern Statistics Office (T11.06.040)



Proportion of cars with an electric motor (including hybrid)

The proportion of electrically powered cars in Bern is constantly increasing. This trend is clearly in the desired direction, as an increase in the proportion of electric or hybrid cars in Bern means a proportionate decrease in cars powered by fossil fuel.

The proportion of electric cars in Bern is slightly ahead of the trend in Switzerland. A more extensive charging infrastructure is one of the factors that would boost development here. Provision of the charging infrastructure is mainly a private-sector responsibility. Via its eco-fund, the City of Bern finances private and publicly accessible charging stations on private property. It provides charging points in some public spaces. This indicator does not cover delivery traffic, which should also be electrified for climate-friendly, city-appropriate mobility. Two large parcel delivery firms have already electrified their entire fleet for Bern.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

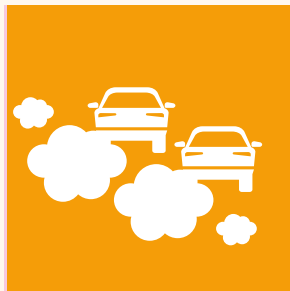


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 111



There is no data on this indicator at present.

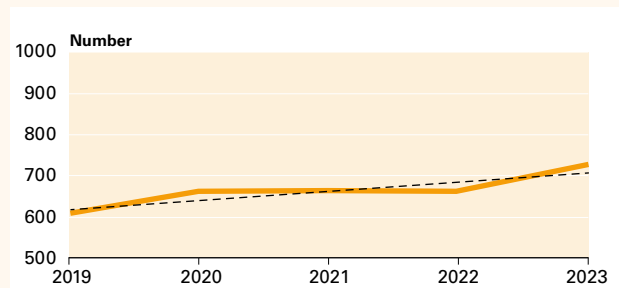
Source: Environmental Protection Office, ECS Controlling

Volume of motorised private transport

The indicator will be measured for the first time in 2026 in the context of controlling relating to the Energy and Climate Strategy 2035. The average daily traffic (ADT) at selected measuring points is measured here.

In principle, the City of Bern has a significant influence on the indicator, for instance by re-designating traffic zones, reducing car parking and making it more expensive, creating pedestrian priority zones or “superblocks” and through awareness-raising and communication.

BSG 112



Source: City of Bern Property Management, Fund Property Management



Leases for affordable housing (GüWR)

Leases for affordable housing increased in the reporting period. A target of 1000 leases is set for the segment of affordable housing with leasing criteria in the City of Bern's housing strategy. The indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The increase of 190 leases for affordable homes in the last five years is positive. However, the trend has fluctuated. The City of Bern must perform an annual check as to whether tenants of affordable housing still meet the criteria. In the event of terminations in the affordable housing segment, it must also lease homes eligible as affordable housing that are not leased in this segment.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

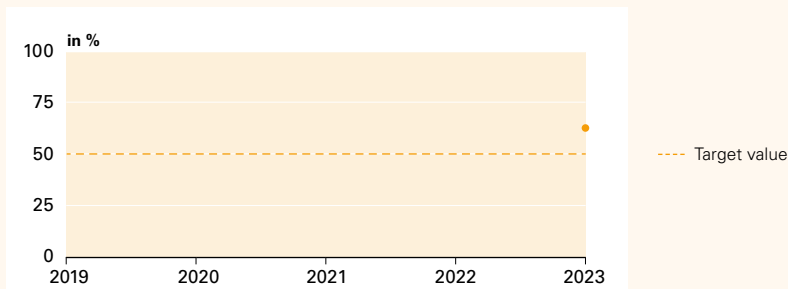


The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Indicators

BSG 116



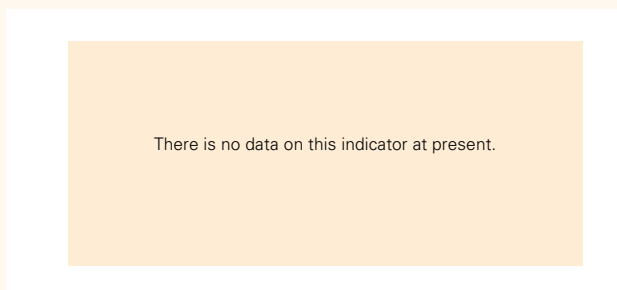
Source: City of Bern task scheduling and financial planning

Proportion of tasks and service expansions closely linked to an RAN target

The indicator was measured for the first time in 2023, as this was when the link to the RAN2030 targets first had to be stated in task scheduling and financial planning. It is too early to provide any information on its development. However, when the indicator was first measured, it was above the set target of 50 percent.

Nevertheless, the City of Bern has considerable influence on the further development of the indicator, which also covers the BSG effectively.

BSG 116



Source: City of Bern task scheduling and financial planning

Proportion of newly notified investments (basis: total amount) as per the notification of requirements closely linked to an RAN target

The indicator was measured for the first time in autumn 2024 while ascertaining the investment requirements. It was therefore not available in the reporting period.

The City of Bern has a significant influence on the development of the indicator. This indicator covers the BSG effectively.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the TCS Mobility Academy TCS (1), City of Bern (2), Marco Zanoni (3)

1 Support for carvelo and SMARGO

Freight transport in cities is rising noticeably, primarily as a result of online retail. In view of this, cities like Bern are looking for alternatives for sustainable urban freight transport. The sharing services “carvelo” for cargo bikes and “SMARGO” for electric small utility vehicles provide two approaches. Both services were created by the TCS Mobility Academy and supported by the City of Bern.

2 Themed year “Nature Needs the City”

If we are serious about maintaining biodiversity, everyone must play their part. Guided by this principle, the City of Bern organised the themed year “Nature Needs the City” in 2021 in tandem with the Botanical Garden of the University of Bern and other partners. Awareness-raising, information and appreciation were used to encourage the population to create new biodiversity zones. At the same time, the City of Bern upgraded areas itself. It received the 2022 Binding Prize for Biodiversity for the themed year “Nature Needs the City”.

3 Neighbours’ Day

A good neighbourhood lifts the spirits. With this in mind, many cities throughout the world celebrate Neighbours’ Day on the last Friday in May. The City of Bern joins in and supplies party kits, games instructions, tips and prize draws for residents. It also issues free permits for parties on public premises on Neighbours’ Day.

Expert view

“As indices and surveys always show, the quality of life in Bern is high. However, the City of Bern does not simply benefit from being in a country with an extremely high standard of living. It does a great deal to enable its residents to live well. Lessons from the past have played a part here. One clear example of this is the improvements in flood protection along the river Aare following instances of flooding.

Extreme events such as these are also reminders that quality of life cannot be taken for granted. In future, ensuring a tolerable urban climate will be a particular challenge. Here, Bern, like other cities, faces the challenge of planning for future problems today. Shaping urban traffic by shifting the modal split towards more walking and cycling also remains a major challenge in terms of maintaining the currently high quality of life. The City of Bern must strive to do everything it can here.”



Marius Christen
SusCon

Sustainable consumption and production

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



HSP 4



Overall, people are currently consuming more resources than our planet's ecosystems can provide in the long term. SDG 12 therefore aims to ensure sustainable patterns of consumption and production so that the ecosystems can improve social and economic development. This also includes environmentally friendly handling of waste, reduction of waste and encouragement of more sustainable business management.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 12:

BSG 121

Promote sustainable consumption and step up sustainable public procurement

Public procurement is clearly regulated by law. The City of Bern acts as a role model in sustainable procurement. Its "Guidelines on Sustainable Procurement in the City Authority" set out principles, and the "ChoufFair" (buy fair) platform promotes exchange of knowledge between the specialist departments in the administration. The City of Bern buys products and services that are not only cost-effective, but also resource-efficient and environmentally friendly as well as being made responsibly.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 121.

Need for action



Progress



Sustainable consumption and production

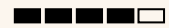
BSG 122

Promote a socially responsible and resource-efficient economy

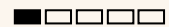
The City of Bern promotes a socially responsible and resource-efficient economy. It constantly adapts performance agreements in contracts with companies and criteria in public tenders. In addition, businesses in Bern exercise their social responsibility by taking part in projects such as Jobtimal and Job Caddie. Via the Climate Platform for Business, the City of Bern organises events that provide a platform for sustainable businesses and promote networking. The Allianz Kreislaufwirtschaft (Circular Economy Alliance) is committed to a more circular economy. Overall, though, the socially responsible and resource-efficient economy is not yet as widespread as it could be in Bern, as in other places.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 122.

Need for action



Progress



BSG 123

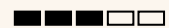
Prevent waste, promote reuse

The City of Bern has an extensive network of collecting points as well as waste depots that receive a large selection of separated waste, thus helping to ensure a high recycling rate. With communication measures and pilot projects, it also encourages the population to avoid waste and reuse old items. Aspects relating to the circular economy are increasingly integrated in municipal construction projects, (see also BSG 91). Handling of construction waste is much less advanced.

Need for action



Progress



Indicators for attainment of BSG 123:

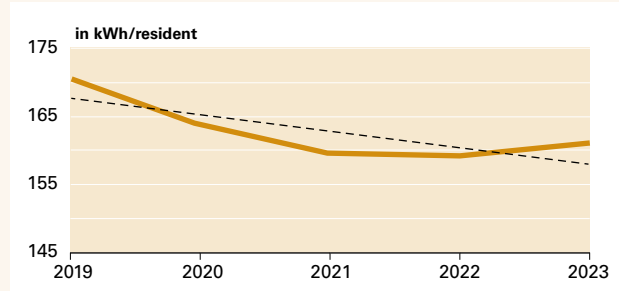
**Household waste (no market) in kg per resident per year
(Also in BSG 91)**



Recycling rate

Indicators

BSG 123



Source: Waste Disposal and Recycling Bern

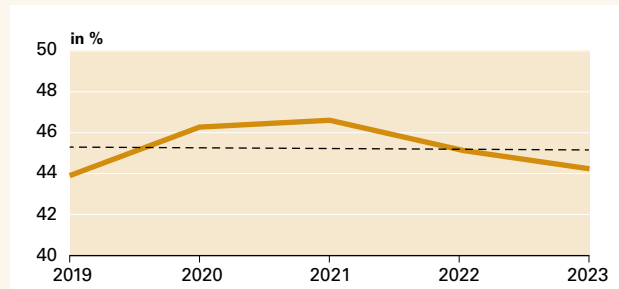


Household waste (no market) in kg per resident per year

Although the volume of household waste rose slightly in 2023, there is a clear downward trend in Bern. The indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The annual trend in the City of Bern is similar to that of the rest of Switzerland. Packaging and consumer habits are changing, while waste separation is constantly improving. Overall, the City of Bern has only a limited influence on this indicator, although it can positively encourage waste separation with campaigns and more collecting points. In addition, municipal waste only accounts for a small portion of the volume of waste in Bern. Construction waste, which accounts for a much higher proportion, is not recorded.

BSG 123



Source: Waste Disposal and Recycling Bern



Recycling rate

After a temporary rise, the recycling rate in Bern has fallen in recent years. The indicator is therefore not heading in the desired direction. This is because of the decrease in the volume of paper collected due to digitalisation, and the rise in flammable bulky refuse.

The City of Bern has only a limited influence on the recycling rate. Although it can raise awareness of correct waste separation through campaigns, it has no direct influence on residents' consumption patterns. In addition, a high recycling rate is not synonymous with intensive reuse. It merely shows the percentage of waste collected in Bern that goes on to be recycled. If the overall waste volume falls, the recycling rate can fall too. To gain a more accurate picture of reuse in Bern, the recycling rate would have to be expressed as a ratio of the separate collection rates of PET, glass, metal and plastic for Switzerland as a whole.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.

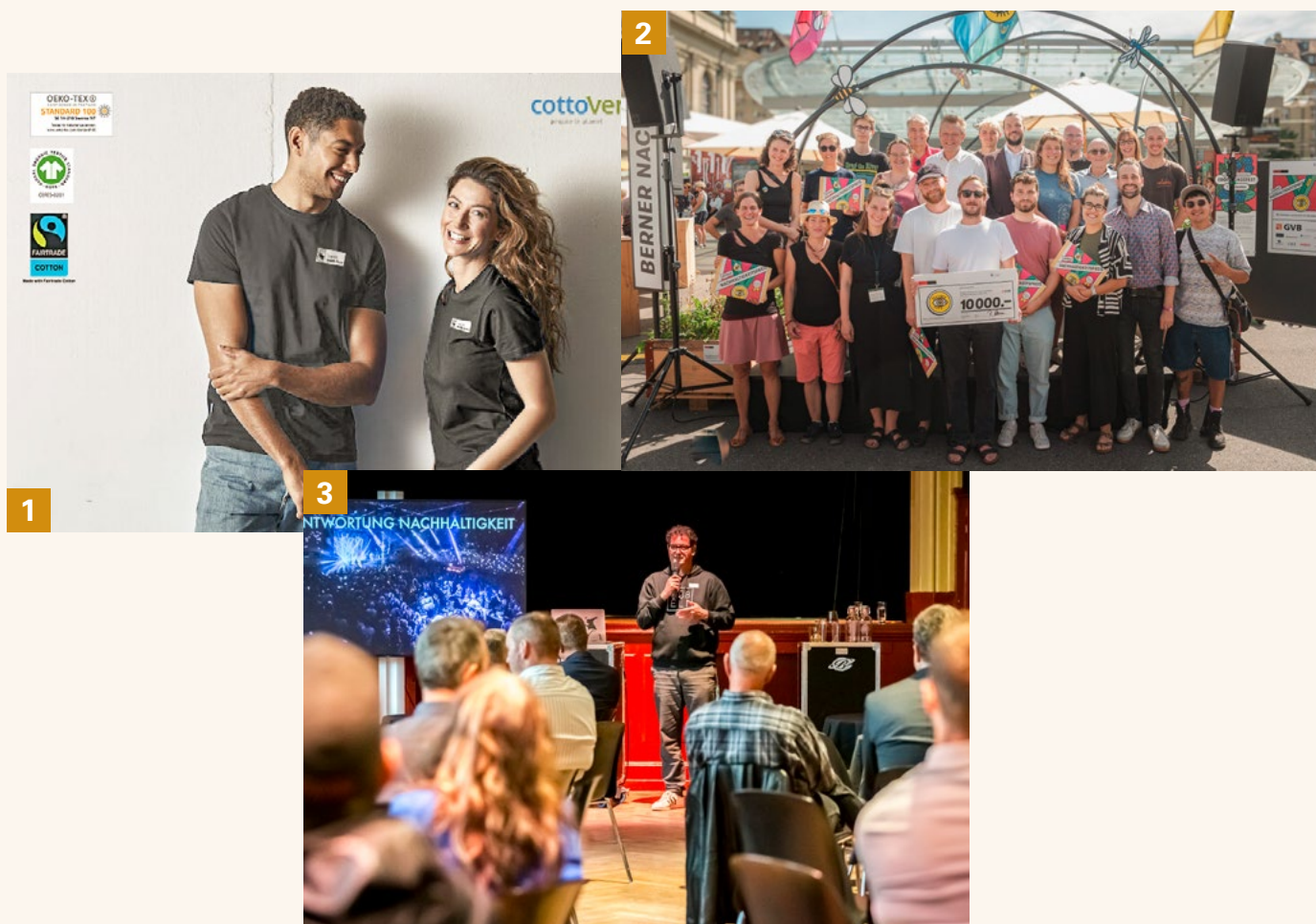


The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.

Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of New Wave Groupe SA (1), City of Bern (2, 3)

1 Work clothing of the municipal departments

These days, textiles often have a large environmental footprint. There is a commensurately high level of leverage in the procurement of work clothing with correspondingly large quantities. The City of Bern procures work clothing for its departments (Sports and Leisure department, Bern Animal Park, City of Bern Property Management, and Bern Logistics) centrally and in line with strict sustainability criteria.

2 Bern Sustainability Award

In 2022 and 2024, the City of Bern recognised exemplary projects committed to an environment worth living in, social justice and a responsible economy. Around 30 projects were submitted each time. In 2022, the award went to TEIL, an innovative clothing company that lends clothes rather than selling them. The winner in 2024 was the Pretty Good association, a repair service that works with waste depots and rejuvenates discarded items.

3 Climate Platform for Business (Klimaplatzform der Wirtschaft)

The vision of a sustainable economy can only be realised by working together. To this end, the City of Bern set up the Climate Platform for Business, which now counts 70 companies from the Bern region as members. They are committed to reducing CO₂-emissions, promoting the circular economy and advancing sustainable development. To date, the members have completed 832 projects, saving more than 141,000 tonnes of CO₂.

Expert view

“We appreciate the City of Bern’s efforts in respect of SDG 12. However, we feel it is important that the Bern Sustainability Goals are geared towards the planetary boundaries, including a roadmap and financing models, in order to enable attainment for the next few decades. To make the economy more sustainable, we must take a close look at our current consumption and production patterns. Although the circular economy is an important lever for a more resource-efficient economy (consistency), we also need to consume less and differently (sufficiency).

This can be, for example, a predominantly plant-based and wholesome diet comprising regionally and sustainably produced food, and socially just and inclusive access to it. Furthermore, with regard to food, Bern can target the prevention of food waste, for instance through the serving of smaller portions at Bern’s restaurants with the option of replenishment. To ensure that the general public also takes sustainable solutions into account, greater inclusion of Bern’s citizens in devising the targets for attainment of SDG 12 is essential.”



Evelyn Markoni, Matthias Meier

Lecturers at Bern University of Applied Sciences/School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL)

Climate action



Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our age, and is also a threat to sustainable development. The changed rainfall and temperature cycles are also a risk to Switzerland's infrastructure, its industrial sectors and the health of many people. With this in mind, SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This includes the fast and effective reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as well as more effective prevention of climate-related natural disasters.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 13:

BSG 131

Reduce CO₂ emissions and comply with the agreement from the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris

The measures and tools of the City of Bern for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are proving effective overall. Greenhouse gas emissions in Bern have been reduced by a third since 2008. The current Energy and Climate Strategy 2025 contains 52 measures to reduce CO₂. Furthermore, the Climate Regulations, which stipulate binding reduction pathways, came into force in Bern in 2022. The new Energy and Climate Strategy 2035 was approved in 2024, and will come into force in early 2025.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 131:



Greenhouse gas emissions per resident per year



Climate action

BSG 132

Promote measures for a climate-resilient city

Heatwaves, drought and heavy rain are increasingly common and shaping our reality. In densely built-up urban areas, thermal stress is particularly high. The City of Bern has developed tools for adapting to climate change. These include the Urban Climate Plan, which defines measures in public and private spaces, the Climate Change Adaptation Regulations and the urban climate principles in the working tool for public spaces, “Bern baut” (Bern is Building)’. In metropolitan construction projects, climate change adaptation measures are taken into account and trialled in sponge city elements. Partnership-based collaboration with business and science has become established here.

Need for action



Progress



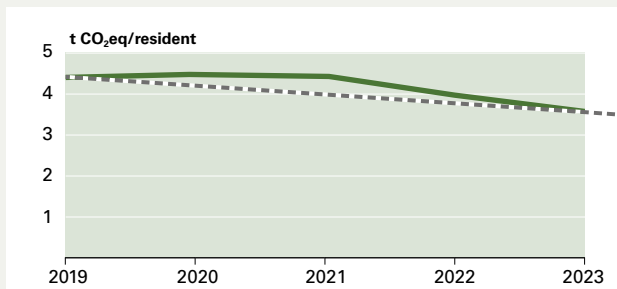
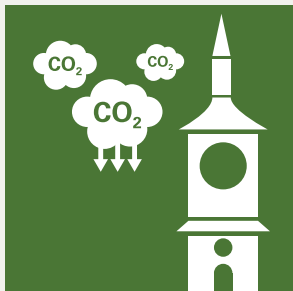
Indicator for attainment of BSG 132:

Tree crown surface (indicator to be reported from 2026)



Indicators

BSG 131



Source: City of Bern Environmental Protection Office, ECS Controlling



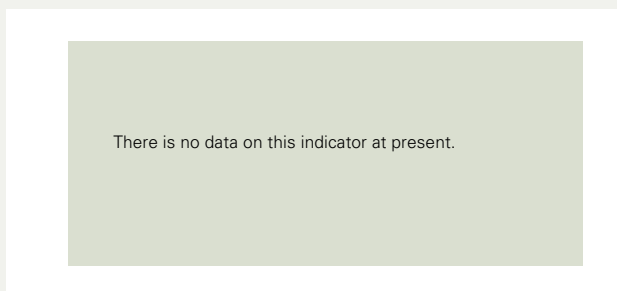
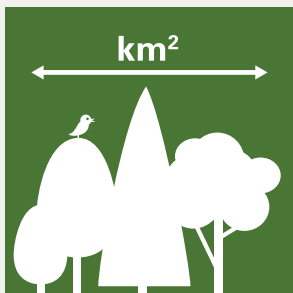
Reduction pathway as per the City of Bern's Climate Regulations

Greenhouse gas emissions per resident per year

Greenhouse gas emissions generated in Bern have been decreasing since 2008. This is a positive trend; but it must continue in order to adhere to the reduction pathways set out in the City of Bern's Climate Regulations.

The City of Bern can directly influence the emissions generated within the administration by making municipal buildings more energy-efficient and equipping its vehicle fleet with low-emission propulsion systems. Its influence on emissions in the city itself is less direct, and the City of Bern has limited room for manoeuvre in terms of legislation. With large-scale projects such as the current expansion of district heating, the City of Bern and ewb are helping to increase the supply of renewable heating. The indicator only covers territorial greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions outside Bern and grey emissions are not included.

BSG 132



Source: Transport and Green Spaces Bern

Tree crown surface

The indicator gives a comprehensive overview of green space in the city. A large amount of green space is essential to the city's temperature balance and is therefore highly important to the assessment of climate change adaptation measures. Green space is also directly perceptible to the population, for instance as shade in exercise areas and as a distinct enhancement of the surroundings in parks in the summer.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1, 2), ewb (3)

1 Energy and Climate Strategy 2035

To ensure a clear and lasting decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, the City of Bern has been pursuing an Energy and Climate Strategy (ECS) since 2015. The ECS contains targets and measures for the City Administration and the city area, and the City of Bern regularly examines their attainment. The City of Bern has approved the ECS 2035 for the period until 2035. Measures relating to energy supply and buildings as well as mobility help to reduce emissions in the city area. Grey emissions, adaptation to climate change and the creation of good framework conditions are also part of the ECS.

2 Sponge city pilot project at Schosshalden cemetery

Conflicts of use on the roads, heat stress and drought impair the vitality of trees in cities. With this in mind, the City of Bern is trialling a sponge city substrate that can be built on. This ensures that the trees have more root space below the car park and the road. In addition, rainwater can seep in and supply the trees with water. This improves the conditions for the trees' growth. Through the pilot project, the City of Bern is gaining findings for forward-looking, more climate-resilient urban development.

3 Expansion of the district heating network

Expansion of the district heating network and the associated replacement of many fossil fuel-powered heating systems is a highly effective measure for reducing CO₂ emissions in Bern. Construction of the infrastructure for the use of district heating has been in progress in the west of Bern, in Länggasse and the Viererfeld-Tiefenau district, since 2020. The work will be completed by around 2035. Along with expansion of the district heating pipelines, the district heat extraction system at the Forsthaus power station is being expanded, and there are plans for a wood-fired power plant to enable provision of additional heating.



Expert view

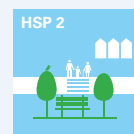
“The City of Bern is in a good starting position for its climate protection measures. It has been setting itself clear targets for its approach to emission reduction for 15 years now. The target of one tonne of CO₂ per capita by 2035 and climate neutrality by 2045 has been defined for some time, and the measures to achieve it are clear. The rules have been tightened once again with the Climate Regulations. The monitoring undertaken by the City of Bern every two years shows that these efforts are having an effect. For instance, it achieved the emissions targets for 2025 back in 2023. This is cause for optimism for the future.

Even so, the City of Bern still has much work to do if it wants to achieve its emissions targets. The reduction pathways are steep, with the easily achieved measures already completed. This is where the major challenge lies: a constant, long-term commitment by the whole of society is required. The City of Bern still faces many tasks in terms of adaptation to climate change. These must be planned alongside climate change adaptation measures rather than replacing them. In SDG 13, all stakeholders take joint responsibility. The administration cannot achieve the targets by itself.”



Adrian Stiefel

Head of the City of Bern Environmental Protection Office



Life under water

All over the world, pollution and overuse of water are causing major problems. Decreasing biodiversity, contamination with plastic waste and acidification of oceans in particular are putting water resources at risk. People need clean water and intact water ecosystems, which is why SDG 14 demands conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. As a landlocked country, Switzerland is keen to make an indirect contribution by keeping pollution of its water as low as possible.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 14:

BSG 141

Preserve and promote aquatic biodiversity

Water protection is one of the City of Bern's core tasks. It fulfils this at regulatory level by implementing hydraulic engineering legislation and actively undertaking water protection. In addition, the City of Bern is constantly uncovering new sections of watercourses and restoring them to their original state. With the Watercourses Development Concept, there are constant efforts to upgrade existing stream beds.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 141:

**Uncovered and/or restored stretches of water
(indicator measured for the first time in 2025)**

BSG 142

Promote water protection

The City of Bern enforces water protection regulations via wastewater checks on industrial and commercial premises. As the majority shareholder of ara region bern ag (arabern), it also has a key responsibility for ensuring that Bern's wastewater treatment plant is expanded and enhanced. As a result, urban wastewater in Bern is purified via efficient processes and returned to the river Aare in a clean condition.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 142:

Reduction capacity at the outlet of arabern: COD reduction

Very little need for action/progress



Substantial need for action/progress

Indicators

BSG 141



There is no data on this indicator at present.

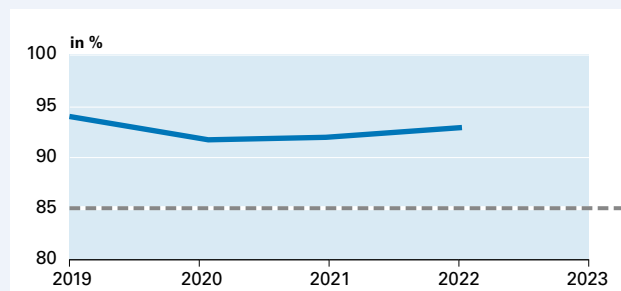
Source: City of Bern Civil Engineering Office, Urban Drainage/Water

Uncovered and/or restored stretches of water

Data relating to this indicator will be available from 2025. In 2023, the City of Bern restored around 270 metres in various sections of the city's stream; further uncovering and restoration is planned.

The indicator sheds light on the improvement of aquatic ecology as well as the aquatic and terrestrial connectivity with the watercourses in Bern. It also provides a great deal of information relating to the defined BSG, as an uncovered and restored watercourse preserves and forms the basis for optimum aquatic biodiversity. Watercourse development is a key responsibility of the City of Bern. Along with the financial and staff resources, the number of restorations carried out depends on involvement in large-scale projects, not all of which are with the remit of the City of Bern. A variety of interests in the place where restoration is required also has a limiting effect.

BSG 142



Source: arabern AG



Statutory limit

Reduction capacity at the outlet of arabern: COD reduction

In the reporting period, COD reduction was constantly above the statutory limit, which is a welcome development.

Chemical oxygen demand (COD) is one of many parameters that have to be adhered to during wastewater treatment. In addition to the technical capacity of the wastewater treatment plant, it depends on the quantity and composition of the wastewater. A rapid improvement in the COD is only possible if the plant is expanded or new purification stages are applied.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.

Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1), Ara Bern (2)

1 Restoration of the Buchdruckerweg stream

The stream "Stadtbach" extends from the west through Bern before flowing into the river Aare. Large sections were built over or channelised in the past. In winter 2022/23, the City of Bern upgraded a further section of the Stadtbach in the centre of Bümpliz. This involved creating stream embankments, stone blocks and near-natural planting. Further sections of the city's stream will be uncovered and upgraded in the next few years.

2 Fourth purification stage at ara region bern ag (arabern)

The river Aare is an important natural and recreational area in Bern and the surrounding region. arabern ensures that the water in the Aare underneath Bern is clear and clean. To this end, it purifies the wastewater of twelve communes. Micropollutants such as pesticides, hormones and medication residue did not used to be removed, which is why arabern is incorporating a fourth purification stage. The project was started in 2024, and is scheduled for completion by 2026.

Expert view

“Switzerland generally has advanced wastewater and sewage treatment plants that can purify the wastewater in their respective catchment areas thoroughly. This also applies to Bern. Expansion of the fourth purification stage at arabern is in progress. This new stage of the purification process is an important step in order to protect the Aare against undesirable substances and thus attain a long-term improvement for aquatic life.

The technology for water pollution control is highly advanced. The more developed a purification system, the more complex it is to enhance. Work on the final details is not always feasible. Ultimately, it is up to policymakers to set the course and decide the endpoint for expansion. They decide how many resources are to be made available for what environmental benefit.”



Adrian Schuler

Managing Director of ara region bern ag

Life on land



Biodiversity is important to social and economic development, and ultimately to human survival. After all, it enables health and food security, absorb CO₂ emissions, and provide clean air and water. SDG 15 calls for ecosystems to be preserved, restored and used sustainably. Deforestation and desertification are the biggest challenges at global level. In Switzerland, soil sealing, a lack of ecological connectivity, nitrogen input and pesticide use are the main reasons for the decline in biodiversity.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 15:

BSG 151 Preserve and promote biodiversity

BSG 152 Ensure connected open spaces for biodiversity, relaxation and the urban climate, safeguard the ecological infrastructure

The City of Bern aims to take biodiversity into account and promote it in all its planning and measures. To do this systematically and coherently, the City of Bern devised a biodiversity concept in 2012 and has been implementing it ever since. New developments and findings have been incorporated in the revised concept, which comes into force in 2025. The City of Bern's measures relating to biodiversity include the design of public spaces, the specific support of species and habitats, and public awareness campaigns. In recent years, the City of Bern has created large near-natural spaces, improved connectivity of spaces and supported species. A systematic survey of biodiversity was conducted as part of the reporting on the biodiversity concept, and is also planned in the new biodiversity concept 2025–2035.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 151 and BSG 152:

Awarding of Biodiversity Garden and Neighbourhood status

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Very little need for action/progress

→ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Substantial need for action/progress

Life on land

BSG 153

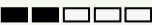
Promote agriculture and forestry that are sustainable and conducive to biodiversity

The City of Bern promotes sustainable food, and this also includes land management conducive to biodiversity. This is set out in the biodiversity concept and the sustainable food concept. In addition, the City of Bern promotes and supports animal-friendly, environmentally sound and ecological farming on its own land and on that of third parties. Forests also play a major role in preserving biodiversity. They also have to fulfil other functions, such as relaxation and wood utilisation.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 153:

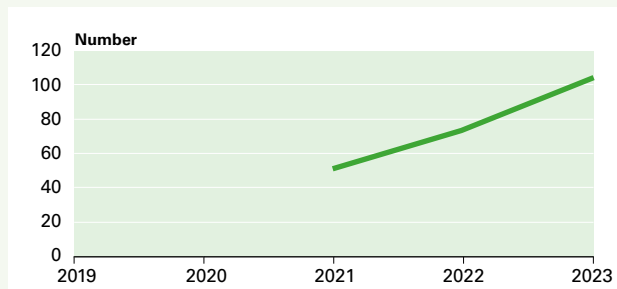
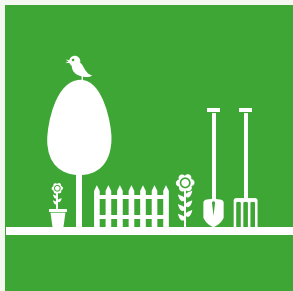
Proportion of farms with an organic label in the city area



Indicators

BSG 151

BSG 152



Source: Transport and Green Spaces Bern

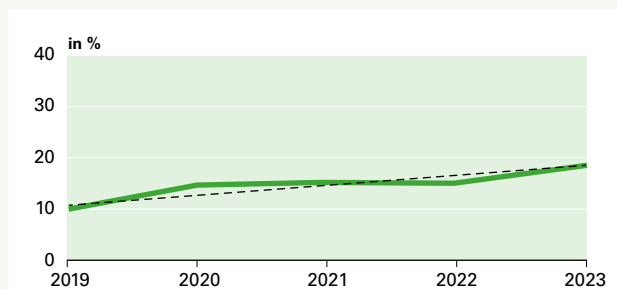


Awarding of Biodiversity Garden and Neighbourhood status

Biodiversity Garden status was introduced in 2021. It has been awarded increasingly frequently since then, which is a welcome development of the indicator.

The indicator covers a small part of the BSG. By awarding Biodiversity Garden and Neighbourhood status, the City of Bern has a significant influence on the indicator. Interest among the population in designing their gardens in a near-natural way is a major factor. In turn, this interest is linked with an appreciation of nature and an enthusiasm for gardening.

BSG 153



Source: GELAN, Canton of Bern Agriculture and Nature Office



Proportion of farms with an organic label in the city area

The proportion of farms run according to organic criteria in Bern is rising constantly. Consequently, the indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The City of Bern only has a direct influence on farms owned by the Municipal Fund for Land and Housing Policy. Here, the City of Bern can stipulate production in line with organic standards when a tenancy changes hands or help existing tenants to convert. However, the general trend towards more organic production may also have an influence on the indicator. The indicator only provides information on the proportion of organically managed farms, and not on the surface area cultivated.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.



Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1, 3),
Christian Flück (2)

1 Biodiversity Gardens and Neighbourhoods

Since 2021, the City of Bern has awarded special status to gardens, terraces, residential environments and family allotments where biodiversity is preserved and fostered. In doing so, it is keen to highlight the commitment of people in Bern to a near-natural living environment in the districts and encourage others to follow their lead. At the end of 2023, a total of 104 gardens had been awarded the Biodiversity Garden label. In addition, the City of Bern established the Biodiversity Neighbourhood label in 2024. This is intended to improve the integration of individual biodiversity sites.

2 New lease at Elfenau

Elfenau is one of five farms owned by the City of Bern. A change of tenancy is scheduled for 2025. The City of Bern set strict sustainability criteria for the lease allocation, including increased biodiversity. The lease has been allocated to a five-person limited liability company. It intends to carry out arable farming with niche crops as well as seasonal vegetable cultivation for self-harvest. The production guidelines should be at least at "Bio-Knospe" level (organic farming).

3 Biodiversity concept 2025–2035

Preserving natural biodiversity requires many more near-natural areas. The City of Bern devised its biodiversity concept 2025–2035 with this in mind. This concept forms the basis for the City of Bern's promotion of biodiversity for the next ten years. There are six action areas in total: ecological infrastructure, biodiversity-enhancing residential areas, forestry and agriculture, near-natural habitats in residential areas, species, genetic diversity, and cooperation and coordination.



Expert view

“As in every other city, extensively used areas in Bern are changing as residential development encroaches. Near-natural habitats for plants and animals are disappearing, becoming smaller and more isolated. To counter this, the City of Bern has ecologically upgraded and connected many areas in public spaces and parks in recent years. Many valuable structures have also been built in outdoor spaces of residential areas and in household gardens. It has been demonstrated that all new habitats are quickly populated.

The species are still present. Their populations just need to be increased so that they can survive. This requires more spaces with near-natural habitats, of better quality and with ecological connectivity. And along with residential areas, the agriculture and forestry sectors must also get involved in promoting biodiversity.

In order to preserve biodiversity, it is important that it is treated as a high priority in planning and design. And it requires the involvement of everyone who owns, manages, cultivates or looks after a plot of land.”



Sabine Tschäppeler

Head of the Bern Office for Nature and Ecology in the
Bern Department of Parks and Greenspace Service

Peace, justice and strong institutions



Sustainable development is not possible without well-governed, peaceful societies. Therefore, SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. In this context, armed conflicts and the absence of rule-of-law institutions are major challenges worldwide. In Switzerland, there is a focus on combating crime and violence, strengthening participatory political discourse and ensuring inclusive institutions.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 16:

BSG 161

Promote a diverse, fair and inclusive society with no violence or discrimination

In Bern, the cantonal police are responsible for combating violent crime. The City of Bern assists by providing initiatives to prevent violence and advise victims of violence and stalking. With projects such as "Door to door – we are paying attention" and "Bern is paying attention", issues such as domestic violence and disturbances are addressed and sustainable socio-spatial support structures are put in place for victims. The City of Bern carries out publicity work and raises awareness on inclusion and diversity.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 161:



Reports by cantonal police to the Domestic Violence Assistance Service following police intervention due to domestic violence.

Peace, justice and strong institutions

BSG 162

Promote participation in civil society

The City of Bern provides opportunities to take part in political life that extend beyond participation in municipal elections and votes. They include the Children's Parliament and the Youth Parliament, Parents' Councils in all municipal schools, the Senior Citizens' Council and the participation motion for foreign nationals. In addition, it enables people in the city to help shape life in the districts and in the public sphere. Many of these opportunities are taken and used by the city's population.

Need for action



Progress



Indicator for attainment of BSG 162:

Participation in elections and votes

BSG 163

Ensure the rule of law and the functioning of the political system

In Bern, the ombudsman service helps to ensure the rule of law and the functioning of the political system. It provides the opportunity to complain about actions of the City Administration and the right to inspect documents and receive information in relation to the City Administration. The ombudsman service is free and accessible, and also enables those affected to address other grievances with no fear of detriment to their career. Bodies such as the Executive Council and the City Council work transparently. The functional capability of the political system is demonstrated by the fact that the population exercises its political rights, for instance through referenda and initiatives.

Need for action



Progress

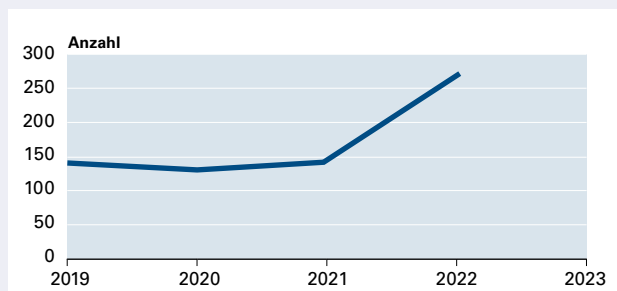


Indicator for attainment of BSG 163:

Requests and complaints received by the ombudsman service of the City of Bern

Indicators

BSG 161



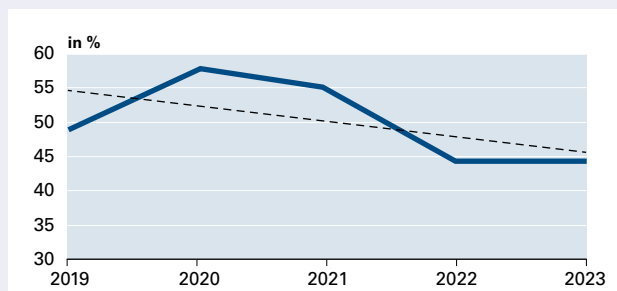
Source: City of Bern Office for the Protection of Children and Young People

Reports by cantonal police to the Domestic Violence Assistance Service following police intervention due to domestic violence

The increase in the indicator is not in line with the desired development. However, the number of reports rose in 2022 due to a new agreement with the Bern cantonal police. Previously, the indicator had been constant for several years.

Since 2022, the cantonal police have been reporting cases of disputes between couples to the City of Bern Domestic Violence Assistance Service in addition to cases of domestic violence. At most, the indicator is influenced through successful raising of awareness by experts and those close to victims, and through the increase or decrease in domestic violence in general. This makes any assessment of the increase and decrease of the indicator ambivalent. In addition, the indicator only covers reports by the cantonal police to the Domestic Violence Assistance Service. Direct reports to the Domestic Violence Assistance Service by experts and self-reports by victims are not included in this indicator. The indicator does not measure unrecorded instances of domestic violence either.

BSG 162



Source: City of Bern Statistics Office

Participation in elections and votes

Despite a temporary increase – including in the municipal election year 2020 – participation in elections and votes is on a downward trend in Bern. This is not in line with the desired development of the indicator.

The City of Bern cannot directly influence participation in elections and votes. In the case of votes, the content of the proposals as well as cantonal or federal votes being held at the same time have an influence. The City of Bern has an indirect influence on the indicator via its political education and the creation of further participation opportunities that can boost motivation to vote. Furthermore, these participation opportunities are a key aspect of political participation that is not covered in the indicator.

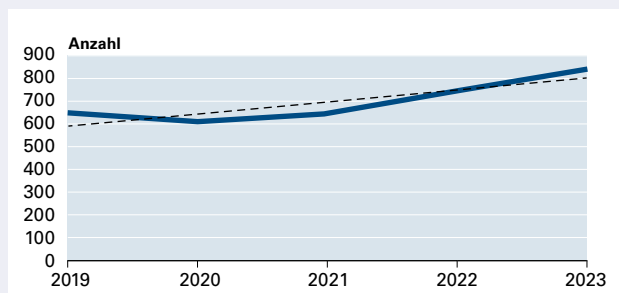
The indicator is heading in the desired direction.

The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.

The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.

Indicators

BSG 163



Source: City of Bern Ombudsman Service

Requests and complaints received by the ombudsman service of the City of Bern

An increase in requests and complaints received by the ombudsman service means that it is known about and used. However, the indicator provides no information on the impact of the service, which is why there is no classification.

The City of Bern ombudsman service was set up in 1996, and has become an established component of good governance and compliance. In recent years, there has been a constant rise in the number of cases handled, which is partly attributable to digitalisation of the administrative processes. Consequently, some of these processes are less visible and traceable, which can result in a commensurate rise in the number of complaints and enquiries. The ombudsman service only covers one aspect of this BSG.



The indicator is heading in the desired direction.



The indicator is not heading in the desired direction.



The development of the indicator is stagnating or unclear.

Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1, 2, 3)

1 Children's Parliament and Youth Parliament

Residents of Bern do not have to wait until they come of age to get involved and make a difference. The Children's Parliament and the Youth Parliament give children and young people the opportunity to raise their own ideas and concerns and take part in the discussion and decision-making processes. The Youth Parliament was established in 2015, and the Children's Parliament in 2003. Each parliament has a dedicated budget of CHF 30,000 per year. Participation is free and open to all children and young people who live in Bern.

2 District organisation reform project

Since the 1980s, five district organisations in Bern have been representing the local people's interests to the administration and standing up for diverse districts. They are recognised and financially supported by the City of Bern. As their work has become more demanding in recent years, they are in need of reform. Launched in 2024, the reform project aims to boost participation at district level and make it more inclusive, thus opening access to further groups.

3 Separation of the ombudsperson and the data protection officer

Until 2022, the City of Bern combined the ombudsman service and data protection supervision into a single office overseen by the ombudsperson. The two roles were separated with the revision of the Ombudsman Regulations and the creation of municipal Data Protection Regulations. As a result, the City of Bern has given more weight to these two constitutionally vital roles while also eliminating future uncertainty as to the role in which the ombudsperson and data protection officer are acting.

Expert view

“SDG 16 is a key target for sustainable development. It applies to political participation, as well as how and whether sustainable development is discussed. With its established culture of political debate, Switzerland is well-placed here. In other areas of this SDG, there is much to do at national level, particularly regarding negative “spill-over effects” from Switzerland. Examples include fiscal dumping and arms exports.

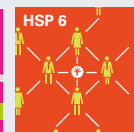
The City of Bern has many tools for political participation. One apparent blind spot is inclusion of disabled people, a group that is often forgotten when it comes to participation. Like society, opportunities for participation must be constantly adapted, and trends must be countered. In addition, people should join forces to advance sustainable development. The Bern Sustainability Days are a good example: The public sector can open doors. As a civil society, we share responsibility.”



Eva Schmassmann
Head of the Platform Agenda
2030 coordination office

Partnerships for the goals

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Sustainable development worldwide requires intensive collaboration at all levels. What applies in the global context is also relevant to the context of Switzerland. SDG 17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. The local and regional resources for sustainable development must be strengthened. To this end, collaboration on science, technology and innovation as well as policy coherence must be strengthened in order to further sustainable development.

The City of Bern has defined the following Bern Sustainability Goals (BSG) for SDG 17:

BSG 171

Promote and strengthen coherence and collaboration with other communes in the region

The City of Bern is a member of inter-commune organisations such as the Bern-Mittelland Regional Conference and the Verein Hauptstadtregion Bern (Capital Region Bern Association). It is represented by staff there and is active in projects as well as with its own initiatives. The City of Bern is committed to the commune merger project "Cooperation Ostermundigen – Bern", although the electorate of Ostermundigen rejected this project in 2023.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 171.

Need for action



Progress



BSG 172

Promote national and international links with other cities and give greater priority to municipal matters

The City of Bern is a member of the Swiss Union of Cities and its Major Urban Cities Interest Group committee. Here, it maintains dialogue with other cities and works to address their concerns. With statements on political affairs at cantonal and national level, it works to give greater priority to municipal matters.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 172.

Need for action



Progress



■■■■ Very little need for action/progress

—> ■■■■ Substantial need for action/progress



Partnerships for the goals

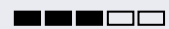
BSG 173

Multiplication of the sustainability strategy beyond the administration through collaboration with the region, other cities and communes as well as with politicians, civil society, business and science

The City of Bern aims to publicise its commitment to sustainable development beyond the administration. This includes RAN 2030 as strategic implementation of the SDG at commune level, which the City of Bern presents at various events in the political, business and public administration fields. Bern is one of ten Swiss cities that are involved in a national exhibition. NEXPO is to be decentralised, participatory, evolutionary and sustainable, and will be held in 2032.

No indicator is available for quantitative assessment of BSG 173.

Need for action



Progress





Selected projects



Photos: Courtesy of the City of Bern (1, 2), Peter Brand (3)

1 Bern Sustainability Days

Since 2022, part of the late summer has been devoted to sustainability in Bern. The Bern Sustainability Days are held for two weeks. As part of this, a host of Bern-based businesses and organisations invite people to workshops, guided tours and exhibitions, and provide a range of events for the general public. The Bern Sustainability Days put various aspects of sustainability relating to the environment, business and social affairs in the spotlight.

2 KlimaBalkon

The impacts of climate change are becoming ever more apparent, especially in cities. With this in mind, in the summer of 2021, the City of Bern launched its KlimaBalkon (Climate Balcony) campaign as part of the Sustainable Development Promotion Programme of the Federal Office for Spatial Development. In this way, the City of Bern aims to counter hot summers while promoting biodiversity. The campaign is intended to inspire people in the city to grow native plants on their balconies. The cooling effect of the plants ensures a better microclimate, and insects find food and shelter. Scientists were involved in this campaign, which was designed in such a way that it can also be run in other cities and communes. The campaign was presented at various conferences, and the documentation prepared was passed on to interested parties.

3 Blue Community

Access to drinking water is a human right. This is why the City of Bern is committed to public-sector control of the water supply. In 2013, it was a co-initiator of Blue Community, which works to ensure sustainable and fair access to water. Blue Community is now a global network of communes, universities, NGOs, schools, parish assemblies, unions and other bodies that is committed to shared principles.



Expert view

“The Union of Cities represents the interests of urban areas at political level. Representation of interests is all the more important because urban politicians are currently under-represented in the national parliament. The City of Bern is active on many committees – sections, commissions and working groups – of the Union of Cities.

In particular, the City of Bern has a permanent seat on the Management Board. Through the involvement of representatives on the various specialist and policy committees, the City of Bern makes a valuable contribution to representing the cities’ interests. This voluntary commitment of the City of Bern benefits many other cities. After all, thanks in part to the work, experience and specialist knowledge of the experts from the administration of the City of Bern, the Union of Cities can stand up firmly for the sustainable development of urban Switzerland in consultation procedures. The Union of Cities would like to take this opportunity to thank the City of Bern for its valuable work!”



Martin Flügel

Director of the Swiss Union of Cities

Steering Group of the Sustainable Development Framework Strategy, c/o Directorate
for Security, Environment and Energy, Environmental Protection Office

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