BOKU UNIVERSITY

Sustainability Report [2024]

Preface by the Rector

GRI 2-22

In 2024, the impacts of climate change became increasingly tangible in Austria, with record temperatures, prolonged heat and drought, and a major flood event. As a leading university for life sciences and sustainability, BOKU University is uniquely positioned to contribute to possible solutions and actively seeks to do so.

We provide top-level scientific expertise on sustainability-related topics in teaching and research, actively communicate our work to the public, and engage with numerous external stakeholders. Since 2019, the annual GRI-certified Sustainability Report has served as a key tool for communicating BOKU's achievements and efforts as a sustainability university, both internally and externally.

In response to a changing environment, the current report introduces several changes: it is now published in English to better address our international colleagues and stakeholders, and focuses more concisely on the most relevant aspects. It is also certified by a new auditor.

The report covers, on the one side, organizational ESG goals (environment, social, governance), and on the other side university-specific goals (curriculum and learning, research, societal impact) – reflecting BOKU's whole-institution approach towards sustainability. The data collection process, as a central part of our reporting, allows us to monitor changes in key areas and respond promptly if developments do not align with our goals. Midway through our emissions reduction path, we are proud to have already achieved a significant share of our commitments. However, the last miles often demand the greatest effort.

A path toward sustainability is never straightforward. Despite our achievements, we see the necessity to reflect and re-evaluate our targets as well as the strategies and measures to remain effective and focused on our goals in a constantly evolving context. For the upcoming years, we are strengthening our efforts to further develop BOKU's Sustainability Strategy – turning learnings gained so far into action for the journey ahead.

It is a privilege to work every day with nearly 3,000 BOKU staff members and over 10,000 students toward a sustainable future. I sincerely thank you all for your dedication and efforts.

Sincerely,
Eva Schulev-Steindl
Rector

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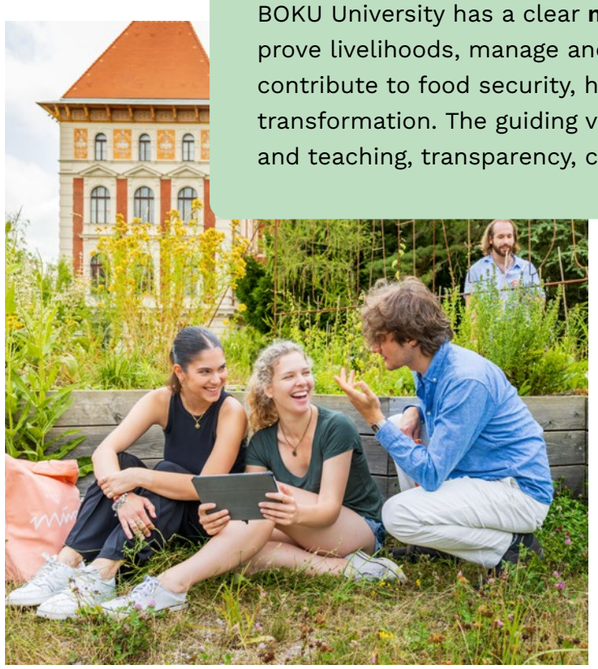
Sustainability at [BOKU] University

BOKU University at a Glance

GRI 2-1, GRI 2-6

Established in 1872 and located in Vienna, Austria, BOKU University has evolved from its beginnings as the Imperial-Royal Institution of Higher Agricultural Education to one of Europe's leading life science universities with a strong focus on sustainability and inter- and transdisciplinary research. BOKU University has consistently advanced its goal of addressing global challenges through research, education, and a strong commitment to societal responsibility, aiming to bring together scientific, technical, and socio-economic topics.

BOKU University has a clear **mission**: to safeguard and improve livelihoods, manage and protect natural resources, and contribute to food security, health, and sustainable societal transformation. The guiding values are excellence in research and teaching, transparency, cooperation, and responsibility.



As a key player in Austria's education and research sector, BOKU primarily focuses its research and teaching activities within Austria while maintaining a strong international presence. It serves as a hub for exchange among science, students, society, the economy, and politics, actively promoting the integration of sustainability into all societal processes.

Responsibilities of BOKU University

BOKU is a legal entity under public law pursuant to the Austrian Universities Act of 2002 ("Universitätsgesetz" UG, 2002). BOKU's responsibilities are defined by law and include research, education, as well as supporting national and international scientific cooperation. A full list can be found in § 3 UG, 2002.
Every three years, Performance Agreements are negotiated with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research (BMBWF)[1], defining basic funding and tasks tailored to the university's profile and societal relevance. Additional funding comes from organizations like FWF, FFG, and strategic partnerships with entities such as Bio Austria, WWF, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Competence Areas of BOKU University

Scientific work at BOKU is structured around six interdisciplinary fields:

- **Ecosystem Management and Biodiversity**
- **Agricultural Production and Food**
- **Sustainable Materials and Technologies**
- **Biotechnology**
- **Landscapes, Water, and Infrastructure**
- **Resources and Social Dynamics**

1 In 2025, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research became the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research. In this report, we use the name which was valid in the reporting year 2024.

BOKU covers the entire spectrum of life sciences and focuses on future topics such as climate protection, biodiversity, bioeconomy, nutrition and health, biopharmaceuticals and bio-based materials, as well as habitats and infrastructures. These fields form the foundation of both its teaching and research activities.

The primary beneficiaries of the university's activities are students, who receive a comprehensive education and research opportunities. The degree programs provided by the university equip students not only with general and specific knowledge in their respective fields of study, but also with soft skills like teamwork and project management, ensuring that students are well-prepared for their future professional and social lives. The knowledge and skills acquired by the students are valuable to potential employers such as companies, NGOs, and government institutions.

As part of its internationalization strategy, BOKU actively promotes the exchange and mobility of its staff and students, fostering cultural diversity within the university. The university conducts global research collaborations and offers international Master's programs with countries such as Sweden, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, France, and others. Additionally, BOKU is active in numerous international scientific networks[2].

BOKU University 2024 in Numbers

- 51 degree programs, including 7 Bachelor's, 31 Master's (13 international), and 13 doctoral programs were offered at BOKU.
- 10,386 students (70 % Austrian, 22 % EU, 8 % non-EU) were enrolled (effective date: January 3, 2025).
- 3,078 people were employed at BOKU, including 2,254 scientific staff (73 % of total employees).
- 2,073 scientific publications were published, 1,785 lectures (90 % science to science, 10 % science to public) were held, and 17 patent applications were filed by BOKU scientists.
- EUR 72.8 million in revenues were obtained from R&D projects.

2 See chapter "Cooperation, Networks, and Partnerships", p. 139

Campus Locations[3] of BOKU University

GRI 2-2

BOKU operates across multiple campus locations, as well as external research sites. At all campus locations, research as well as teaching activities are carried out.

Türkenschanze

The historical Türkenschanze campus, located in the 18th and 19th districts of Vienna, houses the university administration, central organizational units, the ÖH BOKU student union, and departments that primarily focus on topics such as land use, agricultural and forestry sciences, and global change.

Muthgasse

Located in the 19th district of Vienna, the Muthgasse campus focuses on biotechnology, food technology, and water/waste management.

Tulln

Here, the focus lies on plants, renewable raw materials, wood research, and resource-oriented technologies.

External sites

include the research farm areas in Groß-Enzersdorf and forest sites in Vienna and Burgenland.

3 https://boku.ac.at/en/fm/themen/orientierung-und-lageplaene

Sustainability Implementation at BOKU University

Sustainability at BOKU is implemented at different levels, e. g. through embedding sustainability in its strategy, alignment with the global SDGs, and the development of practical management and monitoring systems. Below, we will focus on the understanding of sustainability at BOKU, management approaches, and BOKU's relation to the SDGs.

BOKU's Understanding of Sustainability

BOKU's understanding of a sustainable university[4] follows the Whole Institution Approach (WIA), which integrates sustainability across all aspects of university life. This approach encompasses the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) topics commonly used in business Sustainability Reporting plus university-specific topics. In contrast to former Sustainability Reports, governance is now depicted as a separate topic in order to reflect the ESG triade. Accordingly, BOKU's sustainability efforts are structured into **six interconnected topics**: curriculum & learning, research, societal engagement, environment, social, and governance (Fig. 1).

BOKU is committed to the general principles of sustainability[5] in its strategic decisions and across all areas of its activities. These principles, such as resource conservation, justice, resilience, and the long-term maintenance of economic viability, are consistent with core values of the WIA that BOKU's understanding of sustainability is based on, including participation, responsibility, continuous learning, and long-term commitment.

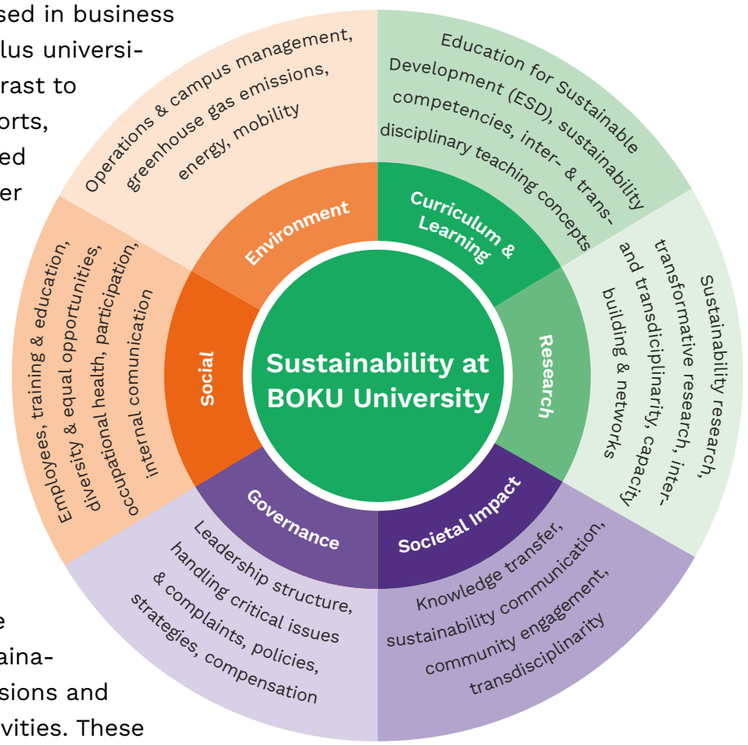


Figure 1: Overview of the six areas of BOKU Sustainability.

4 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit
5 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-understanding-of-sustainability

Sustainability in BOKU's Strategic Development

GRI 2-12, GRI 2-13, GRI 2-14, GRI 2-18

BOKU's sustainability efforts are reflected in its **Development Plan**[6], a central planning tool with a six-year horizon that defines strategic goals and directions. It is developed collaboratively by the university's governing bodies[7] and approved by the University Council.

The Development Plan serves as the foundation for **Performance Agreements** between BOKU and the BMBWF. These agreements translate goals into objectives and measures. The Performance Agreements are also subject to approval by the University Council. The BMBWF reviews the progress and achievements of the goals outlined in the Performance Agreement on an annual basis. To ensure continuous alignment and accountability, follow-up meetings are conducted twice a year. Progress is tracked using a set of defined indicators, which are reported in BOKU's annually published Intellectual Capital Report ("Wissensbilanz").

Internal goal agreements between the University Council and the Rectorate, as well as between the Rectorate and the university's organizational units, reflect and support the overarching goals of the Performance Agreement, ensuring institutional coherence. The Rectorate reports on the progress four times a year to the University Council, and undergoes an annual performance review based on agreements with the University Council. The University Council and the Senate need to approve the continuation of the Rectorate. An evaluation of the University Council is not explicitly defined.

6 Development Plan 2030: https://short.boku.ac.at/entwicklungsplan.html
7 See chapter "Governance", p. 125

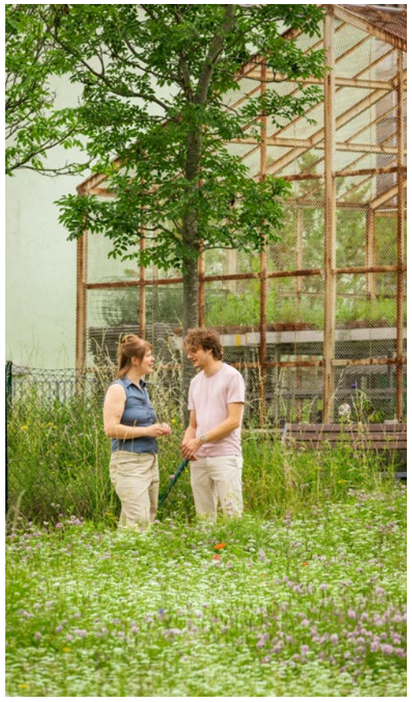
Materiality Assessment

GRI 3-1, GRI 2-29

In 2024[8], a **Materiality Assessment** was carried out in alignment with GRI 2021, focusing on the inside-out perspective. The assessment aimed to identify BOKU's key ecological, societal, and economic impacts, guided by the Whole Institution Approach[9] for sustainable universities and ESG principles. These topics should be prioritized within sustainability management and covered in the Sustainability Reporting.

BOKU differentiates between material topics and report topics. Both are identified through an impact assessment as areas where BOKU's activities significantly impact people and the environment. Nevertheless, **material topics** are ranked higher than report topics and call for a management approach that defines targets and measures accordingly. **Report topics** are included in the report in less detail and do not have a dedicated management approach.

Sustainability context of BOKU: As an Austrian public university, BOKU is called upon to contribute to solving human problems and to the prosperous development of society and our environment (§ 1 UG, 2002). With its extensive activities in the field of sustainability, BOKU University is pursuing its vision of being one of Europe's leading sustainability universities. BOKU has a lot of groundwork to build on when it comes to sustainability considerations, like the Sustainability Strategy and the binding goals in the Performance Agreements.



In order to identify stakeholders that may be affected by BOKU's activities, potential target groups for the Sustainability Report were identified initially through brainstorming sessions by the Sustainability Core Group in 2020. These groups included high school graduates, students, prospective employers of alumni, research partners, media representatives, and subcontractors such as cafeteria services and cleaning contractors. By identifying those who directly interact with BOKU and those affected by its activities, the Sustainability Core Group systematically selected the relevant stakeholders. Based on this list, the list of stakeholders for the Materiality Assessment 2024 was evaluated and updated (Tab. 1).

Table 1: Selected stakeholder groups of BOKU University in the context of Sustainability Reporting.

	Selected Stakeholder Groups	Specification	Involvement (General)
Internal	BOKU employees (MA)	General and academic staff	Employee survey (every 3–4 years)
	BOKU students	-	Student survey (approx. every 3 years)
External	Politics	BMBWF, BMK	Performance agreements (every 3–4 years)
	BOKU University Council	-	University Council meeting (5–6 times per year)
	BOKU alumni	-	Graduate survey (annually)
	Business partners	e.g., BOKU Stakeholder Board, research collaborations	Regular meetings of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities
	NGOs	Global 2000	Regular exchange
	Funding institutions	FFG, FWF, WWTF, CDG, ÖNB Jubiläumsfonds, ecoplus, ADA, Hochschuljubiläumsfonds der Stadt Wien, Klima- und Energiefonds, ÖAW	-

Identifying topics and impacts: In preparation for the impact assessment, the list of possible material topics including associated impacts from the previous Materiality Assessment 2019 was reviewed. Where necessary, topics were redefined and updated to better reflect the evolving context of BOKU University since 2019. Also, new topics were added. Positive as well as negative impacts were included. During this part of the process, feedback on the list and descriptions of topics and impacts was gathered from internal experts of thematically relevant working groups within BOKU. These included experts from the working groups on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Sustainable Research, and the Network on Environmental Management (NUM).

The topics were structured around five[10] out of BOKU's six interconnected sustainability areas: curriculum and learning, research, societal engagement, environment, and social topics. The goal was to have at least one material topic and one report topic from each area to ensure that BOKU's wide range of activities, from teaching methods and research collaborations to campus operations and organizational structures, were analyzed.

8 https://boku.ac.at/nachhaltigkeit/boku-nachhaltigkeitsbericht/wesentlichkeitsanalyse-2024
9 Holst (2022): https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-022-01226-8

10 Governance is covered mostly by GRI 2.

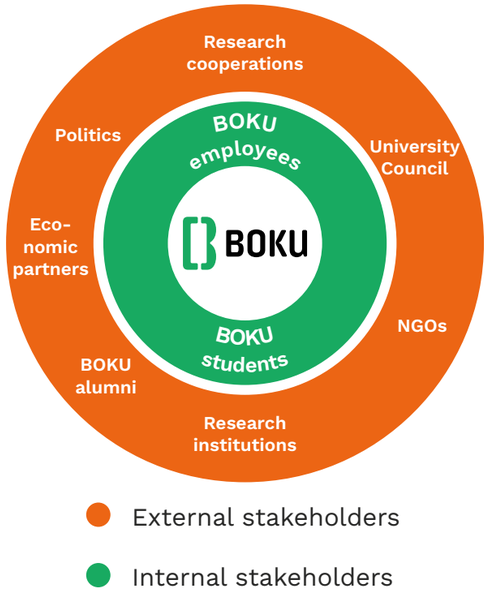


Figure 2: Visual representation of BOKU's internal and external stakeholders.

Assessing topics and impacts: First, a broad **stakeholder survey** was conducted online, engaging both BOKU members and selected external stakeholders from politics, administration, business, research, and civil society (Fig. 2).[11] Stakeholders were asked to rank the importance of BOKU's engagement in the surveyed topics. In total, 1,229 people filled out the survey. This was followed by four **impact workshops**, where internal experts from thematically relevant working groups and area managers participated in in-depth discussions, each workshop covering one or two subject areas. The experts discussed the potential/actual and positive/negative impacts on the economy, the environment, and people, keeping the significance of the impacts in mind. The experts then assessed these impacts holistically[12] on a scale of 1 to 10 per defined topic in an anonymous online survey.

Prioritizing the topics and results: Based on the combined results of the first two steps, the Sustainability Core Group reviewed and consolidated the results, leading to the determination of the final list of material and reporting topics, which was subsequently approved by the Rectorate (for further details, check Sustainability Report 2023).

Seven material topics were identified as having significant impact on people and the environment, based on BOKU's activities (Tab. 2). For these topics, BOKU is committed to driving progress through management approaches outlined in the Sustainability Report, which include setting goals, assigning responsibilities, defining measures, and allocating resources. Additionally, eight report topics were defined that are included without specific management approaches.

In 2025, the Sustainability Core Group reviewed the material topics and concluded that the outcomes from the previous year remain valid for the Sustainability Report 2024.

Management of Material Topics and External Review

GRI 2-5, GRI 3-2, GRI 3-3

Managing sustainability topics involves regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the established management approaches. As part of the Sustainability Core Group and in coordination with the responsible Vice Rectors, the process of Sustainability Reporting from the previous year was reflected upon and evaluated. It was examined whether the right indicators were chosen for management and whether the quality of the data was appropriate. Regarding the set goals, the degree of achievement was assessed, and new goals were established where necessary. This report was subjected to an external audit by Forvis Mazars Audit GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft, an independent third party.

Table 2: Overview over BOKU's material topics, including impacts and indicators.

Chapter	Material Topic	Internal and External Impacts	Indicators
Curriculum & Learning	Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	**Positive**: • BOKU students receive system- & problem-solving-oriented education and have essential sustainability skills • Understanding of complex, global problems • Students are prepared for current requirements of the labor market • Motivation for learning specialist knowledge is higher • BOKU alumni are empowered to actively contribute to sustainable development and engage critically with sustainability issues and Grand Challenges **Negative**: • Estimation of actual impact is difficult • Disciplinary knowledge may be lower • Teaching effort is higher • Tensions between normativity and objectivity	• Regular exchange with the relevant bodies • Number of ESD training sessions
Research	Research for Sustainable Development	**Positive**: • Contribution to sustainable development and the implementation of the SDGs • Higher acceptance and greater application potential of research through transparent inclusion of practical knowledge and expansion of transformative research • Stronger positioning of BOKU as a university with sustainability expertise • Contribution to the perception of social responsibility **Negative**: • Fewer SCI[13] publications due to focus on other publication and intervention formats • Additional workload due to inter- and transdisciplinary research	• COARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment) Membership confirmed (2024) • COARA Action Plan developed (2025) • COARA Report on Implementation Activities (2030) • Share and volume of acquired research projects that address the SDGs • Number of students in cross-departmental doctoral schools • Number of training and consulting offers in the field of Citizen Science per semester • Number of advisory services in the field of Citizen Science • Share of SCI publications with cross-institute co-authorship (BOKU-internal) • Share of newly acquired projects with cross-institute consortia (BOKU-internal)

11 See "Stakeholder Engagement", p. 130
12 For further Materiality Assessments, a separate valuation and prioritization of impacts is planned.
13 Publications in journals that are listed in the Science Citation Index (SCI).

Chapter	Material Topic	Internal and External Impacts	Indicators
Societal Impact	Societal Engagement	**Positive:** • Sustainable development in society is promoted and strengthened • BOKU as a sustainable and committed pioneer & image of BOKU • Facilitates networking and collaboration among diverse stakeholders • Provides a platform for critical dialogue and debate **Negative:** • Risk of reduced public trust in science if initiatives fail or miscommunicate	• Framework conditions for societal engagement of BOKU members (qualitative)
	Science Communication with a Sustainability Focus	**Positive:** • BOKU science communication as a channel for conveying scientific content externally → making well-founded knowledge effective • Improving scientific literacy and promoting the legitimacy and acceptance of science in society • Improved visibility and recognition of BOKU and its members in national and international sustainability discourse and the public • Quality assurance in science communication • Preparation and provision of knowledge and solutions for politics, society, and media • Breaking down the ivory tower of science **Negative:** • Less time for academic publishing and competing priorities with research • Risk of biased or selective messaging, miscommunication, or misinterpretation	• Number of training programs and participants to promote science communication at BOKU • Number of lectures in the areas of "Science to Public" and "Science to Professionals" in FIS • Number of mentions of BOKU in scientific contexts in the press • Number of followers on relevant social media channels
Environment	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	**Positive:** • Active reduction of GHG emissions contributes to climate action • BOKU gains experience and establishes itself as a pioneer in emissions management • Enhances understanding of emission drivers and supports better-informed decisions **Negative:** • Residual emissions remain despite reduction efforts • Narrow GHG focus may overshadow broader sustainability issues (e.g., energy efficiency) BOKU's GHG emissions are mainly caused by electricity, district heating, and business trips (especially air travel).	• Reduction of CO_2 emissions (compared to 2019) • GHG emissions from electricity • GRI 305-1,2,3: GHG emissions (Scope 1–3) • GRI 305-4: GHG emissions intensity • GRI 302-1: Energy consumption • GRI 302-3: Energy intensity • GHG emissions from business travel

Chapter	Material Topic	Internal and External Impacts	Indicators
Social	Employment Conditions and Work Climate	**Positive:** • Promotes staff well-being and productivity through health and engagement initiatives • Encourages a culture of appreciation and active participation • Ongoing improvements create a dynamic and supportive work atmosphere • Attractive employment conditions for BOKU employees **Negative:** • High proportion of fixed-term contracts (typical for university operations) can lead to stress for affected employees • High turnover results in a loss of expertise and institutional memory.	• Status of ISO 45001 certification at all BOKU locations valid (or: expired) • Status of BGF Seal of Approval valid (or: expired) • Completion of workplace mental stress evaluation (yes/no, every 3–6 years) • Catalogue of follow-up measures implemented after each evaluation (process-oriented) • Offerings in the Focus Area of "Psychosocial Health" (qualitative) • Courses and training sessions by Healthy BOKU (qualitative) • Increase/decrease in personnel in central administration as a percentage in FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) • Increase/decrease in personnel in academic staff category as a percentage in FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) • Number of offered training sessions • Completion of regular employee surveys (yes/no, every 3 years) • Catalogue of follow-up measures for improving leadership culture (process-oriented) • Number of leadership training offers (a total of approx. 20 workshops and seminars per year)
	Internal Communication and Transparency	**Positive:** • Increased acceptance of BOKU-wide initiatives through transparency • Increased efficiency in work processes, as well as more effective teamwork and collaboration • Increased appreciation through open communication • Building BOKU's image and reputation **Negative:** • Lack of clearly assigned roles leads to inconsistent internal communication • Communication may be neglected if not prioritized as a core responsibility, despite its importance as a core task • Lack of information transfer can lead to lower efficiency, stalled workflows, and dissatisfaction • Insufficient involvement of end users in university-wide changes can lead to dissatisfaction and underutilization of BOKU's expertise	• Catalog of measures for improving internal communication and information flows between surveys • Proportion of employees who are very satisfied or satisfied with the information and communication, measured every 3 years • Proportion of employees who rate the fulfillment of communication and information by the rectorate, direct supervisors, and colleagues as very well or well, measured every 3 years

Main Actors and Structures

There are a number of different actors, units, groups, and structures on all levels of the university that actively contribute to managing and implementing sustainability measures on BOKU's material topics and the respective impacts along the areas of Curriculum & Learning, Research, Societal Impact, Environment, and Social. An overview is provided in Tab. 3.

Table 3: Main actors and structures in relation to BOKU University's sustainability goals.

Main Actors and Structures	Chapter	Description
University Leadership	C&L, R, SI, E, S	Oversees teaching (Vice Rector for Teaching, Continuing Education and Students), research and societal exchange (Vice Rector for Research and Innovation), infrastructure (Vice Rector for Finances and Infrastructure) and HR (Vice Rector for Human Resources, Organization and Digitalization). Plays a role in the sustainability governance of all the sustainability areas of BOKU (see "Sustainability Governance at BOKU University" on p. 21 and "Leadership Structure and Composition" on p. 126).
BOKU Members	C&L, R, SI, E, S	All aspects of BOKU's sustainability are shaped significantly by the people within the university.
Departments and Institutes	C&L, R, SI, E	Most faculty in the departments and institutes are also primary carriers of teaching, making support essential for embedding ESD in their content and methods. They are primary drivers of research and are responsible for strategic positioning within their respective research fields. Most departments and institutes have implemented initiatives and activities in the sense of societal engagement and science communication. Several scientific institutes contribute specialized expertise to the environmental management of BOKU, for example knowledge on sustainable mobility or on energy efficiency and buildings.
Senate & Senate Study Commission	C&L	Responsible for (further) curricula development, alongside study-specific working groups.
Study Board	C&L	Platform for curricula and educational development, involving the Vice Rector for Teaching, the Senate Chair, the Dean of Studies, the Study Services, the Quality Management Office and the Chair of the BOKU Student Union (ÖH).
Teaching & Learning Services	C&L	Aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching through didactic and technical offerings with the goal of positively influencing the studying environment and learning outcomes for both teachers and students.
Students / BOKU Student Union (ÖH)	C&L, S	Active student involvement and participation is important in ESD, giving students the opportunity to shape education, starting with course evaluations, contributing to thematic focuses or even co-organizing lectures. Students are legally represented by the BOKU ÖH, serving as the first point of contact for issues and concerns related to studying and advocating for students' interests.
ESD Working Group of BOKU	C&L	Established in 2015 to strengthen sustainability in BOKU teaching as a result of the first Sustainability Strategy. It comprises dedicated staff from various departments, the Teaching Development team, the Center for Global Change and Sustainability, and student representatives, discussing implementation measures, open questions and actively supporting lecturers in integrating ESD into their own teaching. It is coordinated by the Center for Global Change and Sustainability.
ESD Working Group of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities	C&L	Holds regular workshops and two-day retreats with lively participation and intensive exchange with representatives from 16 Austrian universities. The coordination of this working group is provided by BOKU University.
Cross-cutting Scientific Centers, Initiatives, Clusters	R	Besides more discipline-oriented institutes, BOKU has several cross-cutting entities that drive exchange and collaboration within BOKU and beyond the university (see "Internal Cross-Linking" on p. 54).
Research Services & Information System (FOS / FIS)	R, SI	Support to researchers is provided by the Research Support, Innovation & Technology Transfer (FOS) unit. The BOKU Research Information System (FIS) documents all research activities at BOKU, provides public access through its research portal, and serves as a basis for strategic steering in research, legal reporting, and evaluation processes.
Working Group Sustainability Research	R, SI	Formed as main actor to align research with the Sustainability Strategy goals. The working group addresses key questions to advance research for sustainable development and emphasizes transdisciplinary and transformative research, aiming at societal impact.
Public Relations Office		The central communication interface to the outside world, providing scientists with support and know-how to communicate their findings to the public, thus strengthening BOKU's societal impact.
Competence Center for Climate Neutrality	SI, E	Has become a significant point of contact at BOKU and beyond – thanks to its high level of expertise in the field of climate protection and neutrality. Supports BOKU with expert knowledge in developing GHG balances and BOKU's climate protection strategy.
Facility Management	E	Manages BOKU's buildings, energy, procurement, as well as technical management activities, such as the vehicle fleet, cleaning, and procurement. Energy management is responsible for energy monitoring, energy-saving measures, and structural and operational measures, among other things.
Environmental Management Staff Unit	E	BOKU introduced the EMAS guidelines in 2006. An environmental management staff unit is responsible for the operational implementation of the environmental guidelines.
Network for Environmental Management	E	Plays a central role in establishing measures to reduce emissions and promoting sustainable practices in university operations and campus management, as well as overseeing their practical application. It has three specialized working groups: Energy and Buildings, Sustainable Mobility, and Resource Management. Members come from the Rectorate, BOKU experts, and people responsible for implementation, bridging the gap between management and operations[14].
Personnel Management	S	Supports all organizational units in matters related to personnel and employment law, and is responsible for the collection and management of personnel data[15].
Personnel Development	S	Supports the advancement of professional, methodological, and social skills of BOKU employees, enabling them to better meet workplace demands and organizational requirements[16].
Staff Councils	S	One for academic and one for non-academic staff.
Equal Opportunities Working Party ("AKGL")	S	Monitors recruitment, appointment, and habilitation procedures, provides advice, raises awareness, and engages in advocacy (see "Handling Critical Issues and Complaints" on p. 133).
Staff Unit for Employee Protection & Health	S	Ensures healthy and safe working conditions at BOKU through an occupational health and safety policy and management[17].
Coordination Office for Gender, Equality, Diversity and Accessibility ("Ko-Stelle")	S	Serves as a key contact for gender and diversity competence, inclusion, and equality, and addresses issues of discrimination and disadvantage[18].
Ethics Platform	S	Fosters a systematic and participatory dialogue on ethical issues to enhance ethical awareness and action[19].

C&L = Curriculum & Learning, R = Research, SI = Societal Impact, E= Environment, S = Social.

14 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/environmental-management/network-environmental-management-num
15 https://boku.ac.at/pers
16 https://boku.ac.at/en/personnel-development
17 https://boku.ac.at/en/universitaetsleitung/rectorate/staff-units/staff-unit-employee-protection-health
18 https://boku.ac.at/en/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/coordination-office-for-gender-equality-diversity-and-accessibility
19 https://boku.ac.at/en/universitaetsleitung/senate/ethikplattform

The BOKU Sustainability Strategy

The BOKU Sustainability Strategy outlines goals and measures across all key sustainability areas of the university. It thus forms the overarching process behind BOKU's sustainability efforts.

The main goals of the strategy were developed in two participatory processes in 2013/14 and 2019/20[20]. The participatory processes were designed as a series of workshops involving more than 100 participants in both cases. These participatory approaches ensured that diverse perspectives were incorporated.

12 strategic goals (Tab. 4), 35 operational goals, and numerous proposed measures form the Sustainability Strategy. The 12 strategic goals are long-term and foundational in nature, providing direction beyond the current planning period. They are allocated to five areas that were valid in 2020, with organizational culture including both social and governance topics.

Operational goals were prioritized based on a Materiality Analysis conducted in 2020[21]. This analysis helped identify the most pressing sustainability issues for BOKU and guided the allocation of resources and efforts. To ensure the strategy remains current and responsive to evolving priorities, a new Materiality Analysis was conducted in 2024[22]. The findings of this latest analysis form the foundation of the present Sustainability Report (p. 12).

Table 4: Overview of the strategic goals allocated to areas of the BOKU Sustainability Strategy.

Curriculum & Learning	Research	Environment	Organizational Culture	Societal Impact
Establish the SDGs as a guiding framework in teaching and research		Climate neutrality by 2030	Establish an integrative sustainability management / integrate sustainability into cross-cutting, consistent strategy and planning processes	BOKU as a point of contact for stakeholder groups in the field of sustainable development & inclusion of pertinent societal groups
Promote education and research that supports sustainable development		Conserve material resources and avoid waste	Strengthen transparency, participation, and internal communication	
Design business trips and employee mobility sustainably			BOKU as a socially sustainable workplace and educational institution	Support widespread public relations in the sense of sustainable development
Promote debates and reflections on issues and areas of tension relating to sustainable development		Live sustainability in everyday life at BOKU and promote sustainability awareness among BOKU members		

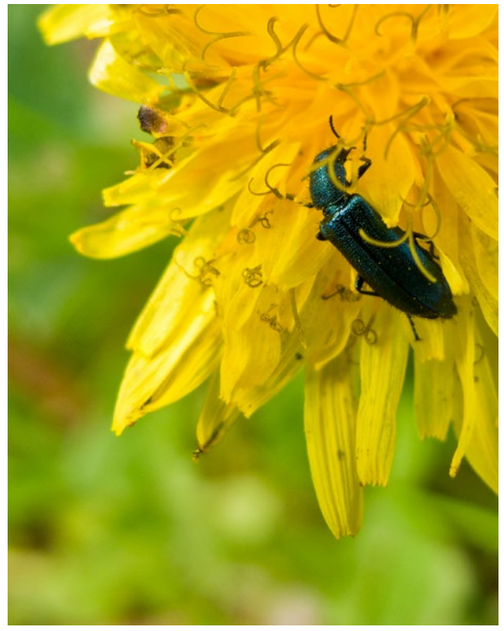
20 https://short.boku.ac.at/w34o92
21 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-sustainability-report/result-of-the-materiality-assessment-2020
22 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-sustainability-report/result-of-the-materiality-assessment-2024

Sustainability Governance at BOKU University

GRI 2-14, GRI 2-17

Sustainability management at BOKU aims at a comprehensive and institution-wide approach with clearly defined responsibilities to reach the goals defined in the Sustainability Strategy. This ensures that BOKU integrates sustainability into its operations, governance, and academic endeavors, aligning goals with measurable outcomes.

BOKU's annual Sustainability Report is one of the objectives of the Performance Agreements. The report is the central instrument to monitor and evaluate sustainability processes and their effectiveness systematically.



The management approach according to GRI serves to control the respective areas and includes:

- Developing indicators
- Setting goals and responsibilities
- Developing measures
- Providing resources

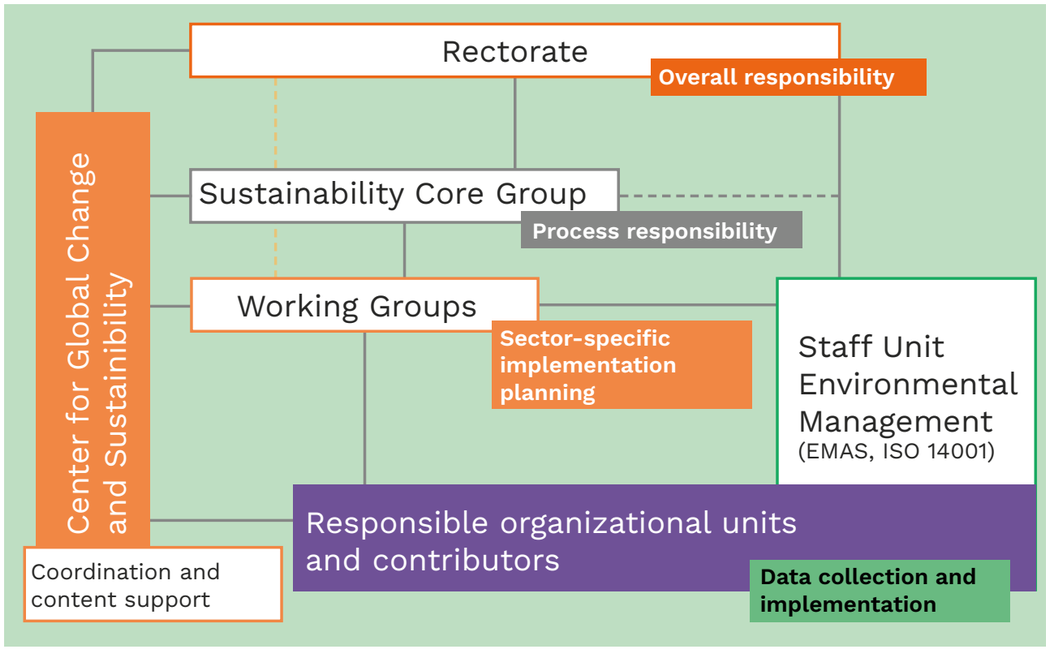


Figure 3: Sustainability governance at BOKU.

The **Rectorate** holds ultimate responsibility for achieving sustainability goals. In addition to making strategic decisions and maintaining communication with implementation teams, the Rectorate actively participates in the Materiality Analysis process and approves its results.

Vice-Rectors oversee strategic goals of the Sustainability Strategy and approve chapters of the Sustainability Report according to their areas of responsibility. They also contribute to and often chair working group meetings, ensuring alignment with institutional goals. During external audits, Vice-Rectors provide information on their areas of responsibility, further integrating sustainability into governance structures.

While no formal training measures have been explicitly defined for the Rectorate to expand their expertise in sustainability, ongoing exchange with BOKU internal experts enhances the Rectorate's understanding and awareness of sustainability-related issues. Their input is regularly discussed in Rectorate meetings and integrated into strategic documents, thereby contributing to the development of the Rectorate's knowledge and competencies in the area of sustainable development.

The **Sustainability Core Group**, commissioned by the Rectorate and consisting of six members, supports sustainability-related processes, including the development and advancement of the Sustainability Strategy and Reporting. Strategic discussions and assessments of sustainability progress are conducted regularly by the Sustainability Core Group, with input and supervision from the Rectorate. The Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation represents the Rectorate in the group, fostering collaboration and alignment. The Center for Global Change and Sustainability, a central coordination body for sustainability matters, is also part of the core group, further integrating the institution's efforts. Moreover, the BOKU's SDG coordinator and a representative of the Tulln campus are part of the group.

Working Groups function as coordination platforms that give direct input into strategic decision making. They ensure progress in the areas of BOKU's sustainability goals.

- The **Working Group on Education for Sustainable Development**[23] was active from 2015 to 2024, focusing on teaching and studies.
- The **Sustainability Research Working Group**[24], established in 2020, addresses research initiatives in sustainability.
- The **Environmental Management Network (NUM)**[25], implemented in 2021, focuses on operations and campus management through three dedicated working groups on mobility, energy, and resources.
- The **Data and Processes Working Group**, established in 2023, ensures efficient data collection for Sustainability Management. Various organizational units such as Facility Management, the Environmental Management Unit, Human Resources, and the Center for Global Change and Sustainability actively participate.

23 See chapter "Curriculum & Learning", p. 25
24 See chapter "Research", p. 41
25 See chapter "Environment", p. 75

BOKU emphasizes leveraging its existing well-functioning and engaged collaborations. Responsible **Organizational Units and Contributors** are structurally embedded into the sustainability governance through their participation in data provision, reporting process and implementation responsibilities.

As part of BOKU's sustainability governance, the **Environmental Management Unit**[26] ensures compliance with the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the ISO 14001 standard. Responsibilities include conducting annual audits, publishing the Environmental Statement, waste management, performing internal audits, and driving the continuous improvement process.

26 https://boku.ac.at/en/umweltmanagement

BOKU and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

As universities are central to research, innovation, teaching, and learning, BOKU University is committed to actively contributing to achieving the SDGs. BOKU critically engages with the SDGs, addressing potential conflicts among the goals. It also identifies leverage points and actively engages in dialog with decision makers from business, politics, administration, and civil society in order to offer and further develop solutions and implementation measures. The university's competence fields illustrate where BOKU researchers contribute expertise to advance the SDGs (Fig. 4).

The **SDG Highlights** in this report showcase key activities that significantly address the SDGs. While not exhaustive, these examples represent a broad spectrum of projects and initiatives aligned with the goals. SDG symbols mark these highlights throughout the report, with a table summarizing the focus SDGs and their contributions to sustainability on p. 147 in the latter part of this report.

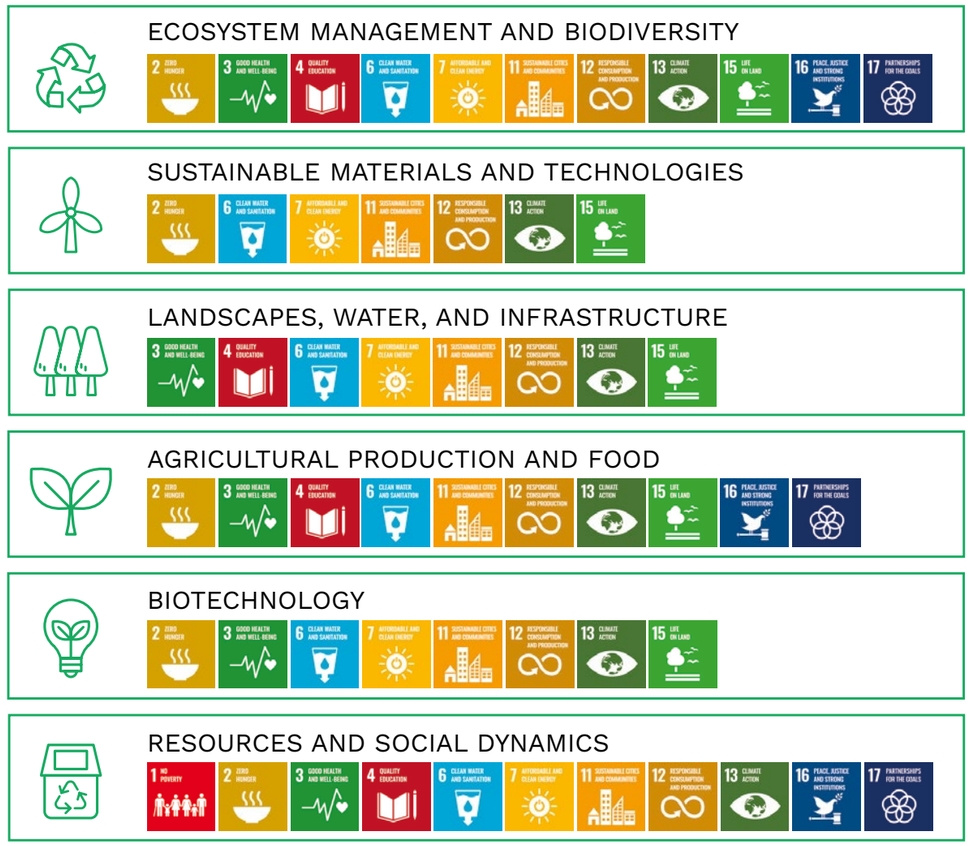


Figure 4: BOKU Competence Areas in the SDG Context.

Curricu-lum & [Learning]

Our vision: BOKU empowers students to critically engage with future issues and co-design transformative solutions for the global challenges of our time.

What Does Sustainability in Curriculum & Learning Mean for BOKU?

As a university committed to sustainable development, BOKU aims to enable students to contribute to ecologically sound, innovative, efficient, and socially just solutions. Sustainability competencies and specialized knowledge are key elements of its educational offerings, integrated through research-led teaching across BOKU's competence areas.

Depending on their field of study, students address topics such as food and nutrition security, innovative infrastructure and water management, sustainable resource management, biodiversity, rural and urban development, biotechnology, and societal transformation.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is both a teaching theme and a framework for strengthening a systemic understanding of sustainability. ESD encourages students to challenge and reflect unsustainable perspectives and behaviors while equipping them with the competencies to drive sustainable societal development. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are essential, as transformation requires diverse perspectives. Open exchange and critical reflection are prioritized, so spaces for discussion and reflection at BOKU are needed. Therefore, supporting ESD is important for shaping BOKU's teaching in line with a sustainability transformation.

While fostering ESD in teaching is vital, measuring and presenting these efforts, as in the current Sustainability Report, remains complex. Many of the efforts take place in informal settings, and adequate indicators have not yet been firmly established.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

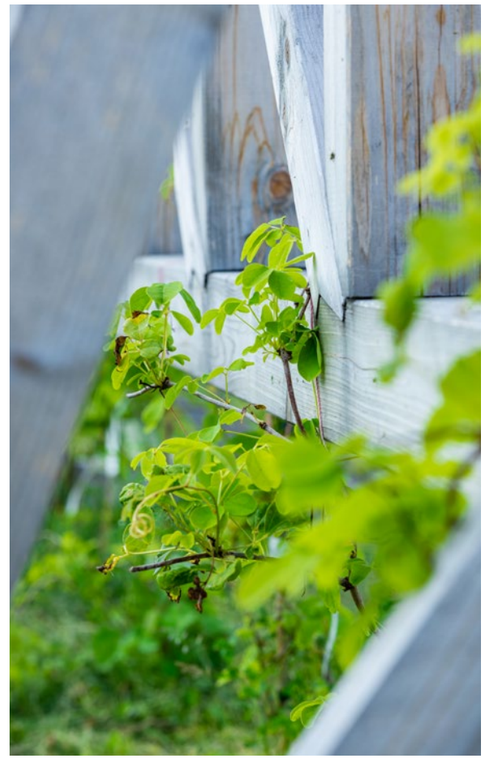
GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12)

ESD equips learners with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make decisions and take actions that protect resources, foster a just society, and promote socio-ecological transformation. It empowers individuals to act responsibly and sustainably and to integrate cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral learning.

Sustainability skills combined with the acquisition of in-depth specialist knowledge are at the center of ESD. Key didactic approaches of ESD include participatory, discursive teaching methods, system- and problem-solving-oriented approaches, and inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives, fostering collaboration between students and teachers (Fig. 5). As teaching staff require appropriate competencies for ESD, their continuing education[27] is essential for the effective implementation of ESD at BOKU.

The following pages provide details about measures which have already been implemented at BOKU to integrate ESD into teaching and learning. The first section focusses on the learning perspective, the second section focusses on the development of skills and tools for lecturers, and the last section presents networks and initiatives which support changes towards ESD.

Figure 5: Key aspects of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).



27 See also "Faculty Training", p. 32

Studying and Teaching Sustainability

Sustainability is a fundamental principle at BOKU, which is reflected in the structure of its curricula and in many courses. However, teachers are currently not obligated to report the inclusion of SDG's or in which way they follow the ideas of ESD in their courses. As for now, the focus remains on qualitative descriptions of good practice examples.

Good Practice Examples of ESD Teaching Initiatives

In preparation of this report, all students were asked to contribute by nominating their good practice examples of ESD. The inquiry was done for the first time for this report and we intend to repeat it annually. We summarize some of the replies in the following. Only one of them is a compulsory course; all of them have a seminar and/or practice character. The courses show that good practice also reflects the GRI report topics inter- and transdisciplinarity, as well as reflection and discussion spaces.

Institutional Innovation and Sustainability Transformation (3 ECTS): This lecture with exercises is an elective course on the topic of sustainable innovation in institutions and sustainability transformations. It critically reflects the concept of transformations and aims to promote system thinking and problem-oriented learning. The course particularly stresses the importance of social rules, norms, and regional innovations for societal transformation processes. It is described by the nominating student as very interdisciplinary, with plenty of room for discourse and a good relation to practice. It is organized by the Institute of Sustainable Economic Development.

Agroforestry in Mountain Regions (3 ECTS): This lecture and seminar form part of the compulsory curriculum for the Mountain Forestry Master's program, but are also available as electives for other postgraduate courses. It is delivered by the Institute of Forest Ecology and Agronomy. The course introduces the principles and variety of agroforestry approaches around the world, critically contextualizing this land use system and its role in global food production and forestry. The course also highlights traditional agroforestry systems and the cultural aspects involved in implementing agroforestry. A variety of teaching methods are employed, including role plays and interactive seminars. Students describe the course as innovative and relevant.

Management of Rural Development ("Entwicklungs- und Regionalmanagement", 3 ECTS): This seminar on development and regional management is an elective for several study programs. It is organized by the Institute of Sustainable Economic Development together with the Upper Austrian Future Academy (assigned to the Office of the Upper Austrian Provincial Government) and contributions from regional managers. The nominating student describes it as very inspiring, visionary, motivating, and future-oriented. Alternative and interactive teaching methods give much space for discourse. Moreover, different moderation methods can be experienced and reflected in the seminar.

Development of a Cross-Study Module "Sustainability"

As part of the modularization efforts for all BOKU study programs, a "Sustainability" Module has been developed as a cross-study theme. Preparatory work on a blended learning module began in 2023 and continued with the production of instructional videos created by BOKU teaching staff in 2024. This 6 ECTS module will be an elective for students from all Bachelor's programs starting in the spring of 2026.

Continuing Education Academy at BOKU

The Continuing Education Academy[28] supports BOKU's societal mission by offering part-time programs to deepen and expand professional and personal competencies, particularly in sustainability-oriented fields.

2024 developments and activities:

- A new University Program "Flächensparende Raum- und Siedlungsentwicklung" (Land-Efficient Spatial and Urban Development) was approved. This program is targeted nationwide at municipal officials and employees responsible for spatial and urban planning decisions.
- A second program initiative "Nachhaltigkeitsbewertung in Unternehmen" (Sustainability Assessment in Enterprises) with a focus on training future experts in companies, addressing the growing importance of corporate sustainability assessment, was approved for implementation in the portfolio.
- Curricular development began for the program "Life-Cycle and Sustainability of Infrastructures" as a follow-up format for the previous "Life-Cycle and Sustainability of Civil Infrastructure and Protection Systems".
- A new university course "Nachhaltiger Rebschnitt für kleine und große Gärten" (Sustainable Vine Pruning for Small and Large Vinyards) was established.
- After preparatory work and coordination for this membership in 2023, BOKU joined the Green Transformation Academy Austria (formerly Green Tech Academy Austria) initiative in 2024, with the goal of broadening its scope for developing and disseminating sustainability-focused continuing education programs.
- The unit also contributed to project work in the work package "Building Skills with Society" of the EPICUR European Universities Initiative.
- Continuation of established programs:
  - "Green.Building.Solutions.", a summer school for academics and professionals, organized by OEAD;
  - "Mycotoxin Summer Academy" that contributes to issues of sustainability and safety in the food chain and in feed supply;
  - University Course for sustainable arboriculture "Naturgemäßer Obstbaumschnitt" (Fruit Tree Pruning in Accordance With Nature);

28 https://boku.ac.at/en/academy-for-continuing-education

Faculty Skills and Tools

The implementation of ESD is heavily dependent on didactic competencies, skills and attitudes of teachers, which are shaped rather by their individual commitment than by the universities' structures and routines. Therefore, it is important to support the faculty and provide opportunities for strengthening ESD in their teaching, as well as recognizing individuals' efforts as role models.

Recognizing Exceptional Teaching and Learning Engagement

The **BOKU Sustainability Award**[29] includes an ESD category, where activities of BOKU members, such as courses, educational projects, further education or training initiatives, 3rd mission activities, student projects, etc. can be submitted. In 2024, eighteen projects were submitted that reflect the range of ESD activities at BOKU.

Selected as the 2024 winner in the ESD category was the student-organized lecture "Climate Communication at BOKU: A Student-Driven Approach to Sustainability Education". It combines theoretical foundations with hands-on application. Designed as a public lecture series with invited experts from academia, civil society, media, and politics, it provides an interdisciplinary perspective on effective climate communication. The focus is on active participation: students take part in small-group discussions, debates and reflection exercises. They also develop their own climate communication projects – such as articles, podcasts, videos, photography, and social media campaigns – to turn scientific knowledge into engaging stories for different audiences. 147 registrations in 2024 show great interest in this topic. The interactive and interdisciplinary course allows an examination of the topic from an academic, civil society, and practical perspective and ensures that students were also able to further develop their reflection and communication skills and competencies, as well as critical thinking.

Runners-up were the travelling exhibition "GewissensBISS" that informs consumers throughout Austria about how to avoid food waste, and the podcast "Hör mal, wer die Welt verändert" that takes a critical and future-oriented look at the many dimensions of the climate crisis.

Since 2021, BOKU has hosted the **"Evening of Teaching and Learning"**[30], a celebratory event showcasing the diversity and creativity in teaching at BOKU while highlighting the dedication of faculty and students. It has no explicit relation to ESD, but acknowledges good practice in didactics which is also relevant for ESD.

On the federal level, the BMBWF has been awarding the **Ars Docendi State Award** to outstanding teachers since 2013. In 2024, a new category "Society and sustainability-oriented teaching" was introduced. BOKU nominated the new concept of the BOKU course "General Microbiology Exercises" as it promotes transformative learning processes in a laboratory environment. Although it did not win the Award in the end, this class is an excellent example of re-designing a course according to ESD principles. The lecturers of this course impart theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills to develop and critically reflect on sustainability-relevant competencies, and a holistic understanding of microbiology and its role in the world is promoted. Moreover, as a "sustainable laboratory", it aims at reducing laboratory waste and conserving resources.

Focus 2024: Climate Emotions

As climate anxiety and other climate emotions are more and more evident in teaching, BOKU made an effort to highlight this topic at several events during 2024. In July, Michaela Zint, member of BOKU's University Council and Professor at the University of Michigan, held a well-visited presentation on "Turning Climate Anxiety Into Action" to inform teachers about the emotional component of global challenges. Subsequently, a group of committed teachers and students continued working on the topic to raise awareness at BOKU for emotional reactions to the multiple crises. Moreover, the BOKU Sustainability Day 2024 was dedicated to this topic under the motto "Climate Minds: Active & Resilient Against Fear and Powerlessness!" (p. 68). One session at BOKU Sustainability Day 2024 especially focused on BOKU faculty: "Fear, anger, and confidence in teaching and research. How do we as academics deal with the multiple crises?".

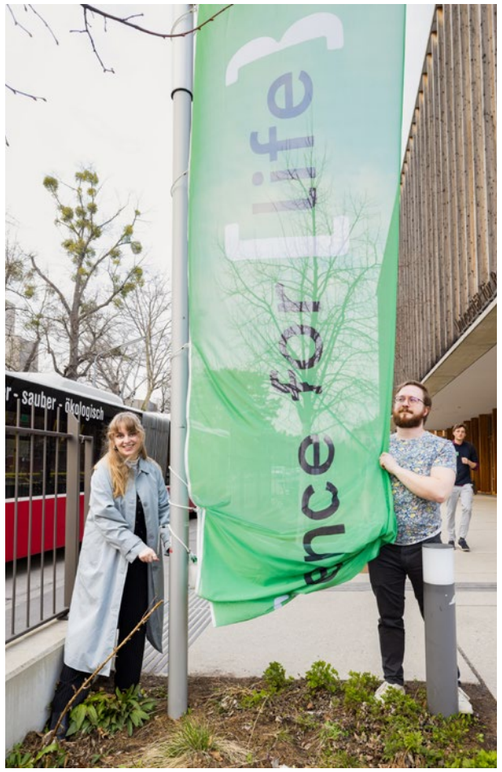
29 More on p. 68
30 https://short.boku.ac.at/6ro9ex

Faculty Training

Many faculty members are eager to contribute to sustainable development but need support to do so. An offer to develop expertise in ESD-related pedagogy and sustainability topics is the **ESD Certification Program**[31] of the ESD Working Group of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities (see below). Launched in 2022, this interdisciplinary, two-semester program includes five modules: fundamentals, content and didactics, in-house training, reflection and supervision, and outcome development. In 2024, 32 participants finished the program (8 BOKU members). In the 2024/25 cohort, 25 participants (including two from BOKU) are pursuing the certification. Additional workshops complement the program and are also available independently via the BOKU training pass.

The BOKU ESD Working Group organized a **Peer Learning Session** at the BOKU Sustainability Day 2024, where three former winners of the BOKU ESD Sustainability Award presented their approaches to help students experience self-efficacy. The aim of the workshop was to show teachers and students various ways in which they can contribute to the development of self-efficacy in themselves and others.

Broader pedagogical training enhances didactic methods and skill, thus indirectly contributing to ESD. In 2024, BOKU offered 48 didactic trainings for its teaching staff, attracting 539 participants (Fig. 6). This is less than in 2023 (59 courses and 706 participants), but still above the average number of 2019–2023 (41 courses and 468 participants). The peak numbers of 2023 results from a high number of courses on digital learning platforms and popular sessions on AI in teaching.



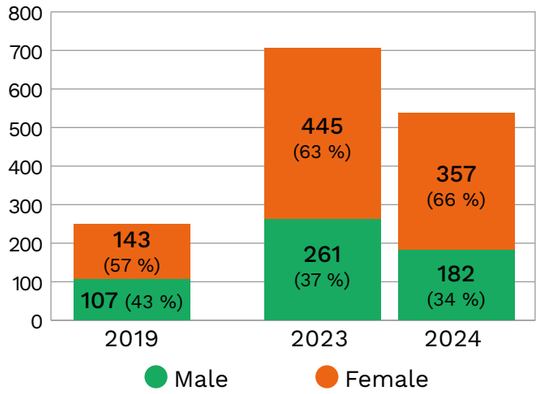


Figure 6: Number of participants in the field of didactics (including ESD training), by gender, 2019, 2023 and 2024.

31 https://nachhaltigeuniversitaeten.at/bne-zertifikat/

Teaching Tools: Sustainicum Collection

The Sustainicum Collection is an online collection of teaching and learning materials designed for educators aiming to integrate sustainability into their courses, to develop new programs, or to share their proven methods. This interactive collection promotes ESD and competencies such as holistic thinking and interdisciplinary action. All resources align with ESD principles or the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As of 2024, the Sustainicum Collection includes 294 teaching units and 48 methods for integrating ESD elements and the SDGs. The platform's expansion and increased use are supported by the ESD Certification Program, as participants in the certification process can develop a teaching resource for the Sustainicum Collection as their final project. Moreover, an introductory and an advanced workshop, providing hands-on practice, are offered as part of the certification program to familiarize educators with this teaching resource platform.

Networks and Initiatives

Networking and exchanging with colleagues and students from within and outside BOKU are essential to learn about new developments in ESD and promising approaches in other universities. Additionally, these initiatives strive to advance ESD and do ESD agenda setting.

ESD Working Group at BOKU

The ESD Working Group was established as an informal group in 2015 to strengthen sustainability in BOKU teaching. In 2024, the working group met three times. Moreover, several meetings of working group members with the Vice-Rectorate and the Senate took place. The working group was also invited to present its work in the Study Board. Several attempts were made to enter into a formalized, in-depth discussion on ESD at BOKU, but did not succeed. Therefore, the working group ceased its activities in December 2024.

During the last nine years, around 20 people (coming from 5 departments, E-Learning & Didactics, the Center for Global Change and Sustainability, and students) have been part of the ESD Working Group. Its contribution was manifold, e. g.:

- Organization of peer-learning trainings
- Contributions to the chapter “Curriculum and Learning” in the BOKU Sustainability Report since 2020
- BOKU Sustainability Award ESD category (call for applications, jury) 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
- Discussion paper “BOKU core topics of teaching on sustainable development” 2017
- ESD inputs to lectures and trainings
- 1–2 exchange meetings with Vice-Rectors per year since 2020
- Development of an SDG course in cooperation with PH Linz
- Initiation of the PhD-level course “Sustainability: Theories and Challenges for Doctoral Candidates”
- Participation in and networking with the ESD Working Group of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities
- Proposal paper on “Sustainability as STEOP content”
- Contributions to modularization

ESD Working Group of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities

At the national level, the ESD Working Group of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria coordinates an ESD certification program and hosts biannual retreats to discuss ongoing projects. The coordination of this working group is part of the workplace description of a BOKU member.

In 2024, the members of the Working Group offered over 50 hours of workshops on various ESD-related topics to the 32 participants of the ESD certification program. The certification program is designed, managed, and coordinated by the ESD Working Group. Moreover, the Working Group met in April 2024 for a two-day retreat to discuss ongoing topics, plan the next cohort of the ESD certification program and foster inter-university collaboration. As of 2024, the ESD Working Group has 34 active members from 16 universities.

Students’ Working Group of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities

The dialogue with student groups is also facilitated through the Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria, whose coordinator is situated at the Center for Global Change and Sustainability. The working group “Students” of the Alliance, which was founded in 2023, continued their work in 2024. The main project was the development and publication of a brochure “Sustainability compass for students” to provide students with possibilities within the university context to engage themselves for sustainability[32].

The working group has been awarded a silver “Sustainability Award”[33] in the category of “cooperation” for their work in bringing together and harnessing synergies between different student groups and university members working in the field of sustainability.

32 The brochure is only available in German: Nachhaltigkeitskompass – Broschüre AG Studierende
33 Sustainability Award 2024 – Forum Umweltbildung: https://umweltbildung.at/unsere-angebote/sustainability-award/

Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Teaching & Learning

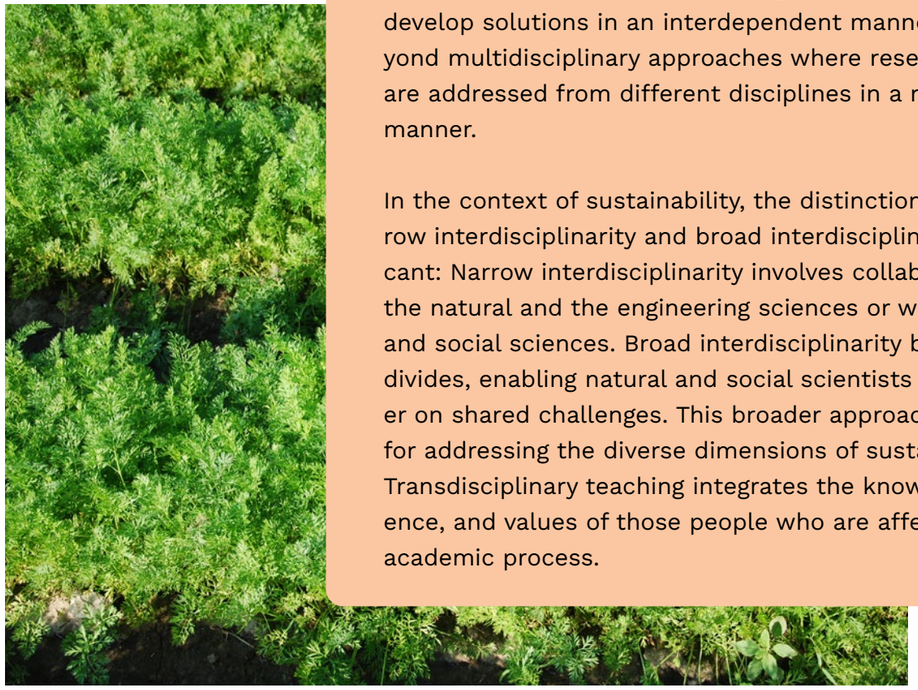
Inter- and transdisciplinarity (infobox, p. 36) in teaching can promote cooperation, exchange, effectiveness, and cross-linking across disciplinary boundaries and between science and society. Although inter- and transdisciplinarity are not necessarily related to sustainable development, they are key for sustainability education as sustainability with its ecological, social, and economic dimensions is an interdisciplinary topic that refers to societal needs.

Multi- and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange prepares BOKU students for careers where cross-sector collaboration is common, enabling them to work effectively with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, BOKU students learn to co-create and address questions alongside affected stakeholders and citizens, bridging the gap between academia and real-world practice in a transdisciplinary way.

Inter- and Transdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity involves approaching problems and questions not solely from the perspective of a single discipline but by applying the methods, approaches, and perspectives of multiple fields to collaboratively understand problems and develop solutions in an interdependent manner. It goes beyond multidisciplinary approaches where research questions are addressed from different disciplines in a non-integrative manner.

In the context of sustainability, the distinction between narrow interdisciplinarity and broad interdisciplinarity is significant: Narrow interdisciplinarity involves collaboration within the natural and the engineering sciences or within cultural and social sciences. Broad interdisciplinarity bridges these divides, enabling natural and social scientists to work together on shared challenges. This broader approach is essential for addressing the diverse dimensions of sustainability. Transdisciplinary teaching integrates the knowledge, experience, and values of those people who are affected into the academic process.



Through inter- and transdisciplinary approaches in teaching, students acquire the ability to understand complex challenges and to engage in interdisciplinary and holistic discussions with topics relating to sustainable development. These skills are key when it comes to understanding and dealing with sustainability topics, which are determined by a multitude of influencing factors and for which there are a variety of solutions.

In transdisciplinary courses, students gain hands-on insights and experience into social issues and tasks. Teachers can expand their contacts with practice partners. Practice partners can benefit from the exchange with the university in terms of content and social interaction. Thus, ideally all participants benefit and experience appreciation and a sense of purpose.

Nevertheless, inter- and transdisciplinary teaching requires a high level of commitment from all involved and challenges traditional forms of teaching:

- Interdisciplinary teaching requires coordination among instructors from different fields, sometimes involving co-teaching, which can be demanding both logistically and in terms of staffing.
- Collaboration with practice partners demands alignment and readiness to engage with diverse practical, theoretical, and methodological approaches.

BOKU recognizes the need for positive incentives and institutional support to sustain and expand its inter- and transdisciplinary course offerings. This support will enable the university to continue offering a robust curriculum that prepares students to tackle the complex challenges of sustainable development and the Grand Challenges.

BOKU's **Three-Pillar Principle**[34] structurally supports interdisciplinary teaching approaches. The combination of natural sciences, engineering, and social and economic sciences in all Bachelor's and Master's programs at BOKU is unique in Austria.

Also, BOKU's doctoral programs are highly interdisciplinary and, in some cases, transdisciplinary. This orientation is also evident in the courses offered within these programs. For instance, all doctoral students are required to take the course "Principles and Challenges of Research in Socio-Economics, Natural Resources, and Life Sciences", which fosters interdisciplinary exchange among PhD candidates[35].

34 https://boku.ac.at/en/universitaetsleitung/senat/boku-studien-fuer-die-zukunft/3-pillars-of-boku

35 For more details on interdisciplinary PhD programs, please refer to "Cross-departmental Doctoral School" in the chapter "Research", p. 41

Reflection and Discussion Spaces in Teaching

Critical reflection and constructive discussions are essential for sustainable development, enabling alternative ideas, innovative solutions, and new perspectives. Transformation processes often involve conflicting goals that require continuous negotiation. However, current study conditions at BOKU offer insufficient space and time for critical discourse and reflection, as indicated by the 2022 Student Survey (see Sustainability Report 2022). Addressing this issue will require medium- to long-term efforts. In the following, leverage points on three levels are described.

Guided reflection and discussion within courses, combined with embedding subject-specific knowledge in a broader sustainability context, encourage students to critically analyze their academic content and societal developments. Additionally, a constructive culture of discussion among students is actively promoted (see above: good practice examples of ESD).

Beyond formal coursework, BOKU offers numerous opportunities for critical engagement with scientific and societal issues through events such as panel discussions, conferences, the BOKU Sustainability Day, or lectures. The "BOKU Cinema – Film Series with Discussion"[36], organized by the BOKU Ethics Platform, is a particularly popular format. A calendar on the BOKU website[37] provides an overview of upcoming university events.

BOKU's campuses and surrounding areas feature a variety of **spaces where students can meet intentionally or spontaneously**. These spaces encourage lively discussion, independent learning, and critical reflection outside the classroom. Notable examples include study rooms in the Ilse Wallentin House; the TÜWI with its farm shop, libraries, and learning spaces; event venues across BOKU locations; communal areas such as the "Winter Garden" at IFA Tulln; cafeterias, dining halls, and outdoor areas.

In 2024, two new "Student Spaces"[38] projects were implemented in the Schwackhöferhaus in partnership with "JoyJoy Studio", who specialize in innovative interior design using up-cycled materials. Through this collaboration, two spaces were conceptualized specifically with students in mind, utilizing recycled components of used cabinetry to assemble furniture-scapes conducive to studying and socializing between classes. Following detailed prefabrication, the BOKU Construction and Project Management Team pitched in with tools and people power to assemble the furniture as a team-building exercise.

36 https://short.boku.ac.at/boku-kino.html
37 https://boku.ac.at/event/list
38 Further information, p. 34: https://www.yumpu.com/de/document/read/68808794/boku-magazin-3-2024-web

Table 5: Objectives and targets in the area of Curriculum & Learning.

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status in 2023	Status in 2024
Education for Sustainable Development	At least once a year, the ESD Working Group exchanges with the relevant bodies (Senate, Vice Rectorate for Teaching, subject-specific working groups) regarding the integration of ESD core themes into curriculum design	• Regular exchange with the relevant bodies (Vice Rectorate for Teaching, and subject-specific working groups)	• Discussions with subject-specific working groups, Vice Rectorate for Teaching, and the Senate • Offer to subject-specific working groups: Participation of the ESD Working Group in their meetings • Specific invitations for the subject-specific working groups to events organized by the ESD Working Group • Meeting between the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching and the ESD Working Group	✓4 ESD Working Group meetings ✓1 exchange meeting with the Vice- Rector ~ Exchange with the Senate Chair and study commissions planned for 2024	✓3 ESD meetings ✓3 meetings of working group members with the Vice-Rector ✓1 meeting with Senate and VR ✓1 presentation in Study Board ~ End of working group in December 2024; new goals pending
	At least three ESD training sessions for teaching staff are offered per year, thereby reaching an increasing number of individuals	• Number of ESD training sessions • Number of participants in ESD training sessions • Number of BOKU graduates with an ESD certificate	• Continuation and institutionalization of the ESD Working Group's training program • Promoting ESD training opportunities in the areas of teaching and didactics	✓1 peer learning meeting, 1 basic ESD course, 1 advanced course with in the certificate (can be booked individually	✓1 peer learning at BOKU Sust. Day ✓1 workshop for Faculty on climate emotions on BOKU Sustainability Day ✓1 basic ESD course, 1 advanced course within the certificate (can be booked individually) ✓2 courses on Sustainicum Collection

✓ = Objective/Target achieved | ~ = Objective/Target not yet achieved

[Re-search]

Our vision: Through our research we aim to initiate transformative processes that contribute to addressing the Grand Challenges of humanity and to the prosperous development of society and the natural environment.

What Does Sustainability in Research Mean for BOKU?

University research carries a responsibility toward society, especially in addressing global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, water scarcity, energy supply, and peacebuilding. The development of potential solutions and implementation pathways for a sustainable society – and thereby the support of societal transformation toward sustainability – requires not only disciplinary excellence but also increasing inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration (for a definition of inter- and transdisciplinary see chapter Curriculum and Learning, p. 36).

Sustainability-focused research generates knowledge that supports a socio-ecological transformation, i.e., system knowledge, target knowledge, and transformation knowledge. System knowledge analyzes current states and projects future scenarios, while target knowledge explores value-based goals. Transformation knowledge identifies pathways, strategies, and measures for achieving desired changes. By creating innovative methods and tools und generating these kinds of knowledge, research drives societal progress and helps address pressing global crises.[39]

Sustainability is a cornerstone of BOKU's research[40], focusing on natural resource management, food security, health, ecosystems, and societal and technological transformation. Recent Materiality Analysis has expanded the definition of Research for Sustainable Development, now including inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration as well as internal collaboration. Research approaches for sustainability also require human capacity building, which has become a GRI report topic.

Research for Sustainable Development

GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12)

Research for sustainable development can take different forms – starting from research that contributes indirectly to sustainability, to transformative research that explicitly aims at intervening and co-creating change (infobox, p. 44). Yet, scientific structures adapted to disciplinary research and current understandings of research excellence and research performance are often contradictory to the needs of research for sustainable development. The International Science Council[41] (p. 17) stated that "The existing science system supports research that is fundamentally limited in its ability to contribute to the transformative changes needed to thrive in the 21st century and beyond. It is simply not fit for purpose." The further away from disciplinary research, the more challenging the framework conditions for researchers.

BOKU aims to address challenges and hindrances for research for sustainable development and to strengthen inter- and transdisciplinary approaches that support systemic understanding and transformative changes.

This chapter focuses on BOKU's activities towards fostering research for sustainable development as well as aspects that indirectly contribute to it (Fig. 7). Indirect links are, e. g., interdisciplinary doctoral programs and scientific collaboration within BOKU that promote collaboration between disciplines, which is essential for research for sustainable development, but does not necessarily address sustainability. Similarly, citizen science has a strong transdisciplinary component by promoting collaboration with non-scientific actors, but does not necessarily address sustainability.
By advancing inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration, these activities improve the ground for future inter- and transdisciplinary research for sustainable development.

Advancing Research for Sustainable Development

- Advancing research for sustainable development at BOKU
- Reform research assessment according to COARA and sustainability

Sustainability Research Projects	Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs	Citizen Science at BOKU	Scientific Collaboration within BOKU
• Maintain high share of projects that address the SDGs	• Maintain proportion of students in cross-departmental doctoral schools and doctoral programs at min. 25 %	• At least one training session per semester and advisory services in the field of Citizen Science	• Maintain share of publications / newly acquired projects with cross-institute cooperation

Figure 7: Overview of sub-topics of the material topic "Research for Sustainable Development" that are described in this chapter, including targets. By contributing to inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration in general, the topics interdisciplinary doctoral programs, Citizen Science, and scientific collaboration only have an indirect link to sustainability. See text above.

39 Bohunovsky & Keller (2023)
40 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/sustainability-in-research
41 International Science Council (2021): https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/202108_Unleashing-Science_Final.pdf

Different Types of Research for Sustainable Development

Research for sustainable development can take various forms. In the context of a research project[42] conducted in 2023, a proposal was discussed and developed with scientists from various universities to differentiate four categories of research for sustainable development, although without clear-cut distinction:

Research with indirect reference to sustainability primarily does not focus on sustainability, but might contribute to specific sustainability solution pathways and provide valuable disciplinary knowledge to help understand sustainability issues. It rather uses monodisciplinary approaches and does not follow a systemic approach or integrate stakeholders. Its potential for direct sustainability-oriented societal impact is low. This type includes, e. g., research on ecological systems, poverty, or green technologies.

Sustainability-focused research addresses research questions related to sustainability topics and considers multiple social or ecological dimensions. Yet, it is rather multi- and narrow interdisciplinary research that does not account widely for trade-offs between these dimensions. Typically, it focuses on science-to-science discourse, and ambitions for transformation (knowledge) and (broad) involvement of stakeholders are low. This type contributes, e. g., to the fields of renewable energy, biodiversity, or climate change mitigation.

Sustainability research in sensu stricto is characterized by its aim to provide system- and solution-oriented contributions to sustainability challenges. It pursues a broad interdisciplinary and systemic research approach, as it acknowledges the highly complex and systemic character of sustainability challenges. Its aim is to generate system, target, and transformation knowledge.

Transformative research for sustainable development goes even further and explicitly aims to initiate and catalyze societal sustainability transformation processes. This necessitates inter- and transdisciplinary approaches and the production of target and transformation knowledge. This type co-creates and co-designs sustainable systems (e. g., in the fields of energy, food, mobility).

42 Hinterleitner et al. (2023): https://short.boku.ac.at/NH-Kriterien

SDG Hightlight:
Working Group Sustainability Research

SDG Hightlight:
Ethics Platform

Advancing Research for Sustainable Development

In November 2020, BOKU established a **Working Group Sustainability Research** to support its ambitious strategic sustainability goals in research. This working group addresses the goal “Advancing research for sustainable development at BOKU” by initiating discussions on critical issues in the context of this material topic along four key questions: How to strengthen the discourse on research and sustainability at BOKU? How to promote sustainability research at BOKU? How to measure, represent, and promote sustainability research? How to design research funding in the context of sustainability research? Discussions along these questions take into account the conditions of the scientific system in general. The second goal addresses BOKU’s endeavors to broaden assessment criteria and thus support transformative research. This goal replaces the former, narrower goal of improving methods and criteria for representing inter- and transdisciplinary research. In 2024, the working group met three times in plenum and put forward a number of activities in diverse sub-groups.

To highlight two activities of 2024: The Working Group Sustainability Research developed an “Action plan for career paths in transformative research at BOKU” (see chapter “Human Capacity Building”, p. 55). Furthermore, the Working Group initiated **BOKU’s membership in the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)**. The CoARA initiative addresses issues of fairness, visibility, and working conditions in research which are highly relevant for sustainability research. By widening the idea of research performance, CoARA makes many aspects of sustainability research and transformative aspects visible and acknowledgeable. Thus, it addresses fundamental challenges in the context of advancing research for sustainable development, namely performance indicators that are too narrow – resulting in career obstacles for researchers that leave traditional (disciplinary) pathways and strive for transdisciplinary or transformative research.

Besides the Working Group Sustainability Research, **BOKU’s ethics platform** stimulated discussions on the future and sustainability of BOKU University including research. In 2024, four discussions were organized in different contexts, building on the platform’s 2023 memorandum “Zukunft der Universität: Wie fit ist die BOKU für die große Transformation?”[43].

43 https://epub.boku.ac.at/urn/urn:nbn:at:at-ubbw:3-3498

Sustainability Research Projects

This sub-topic is reported in two parts. First, research projects that address the SDGs will be reported. Second – as this indicator does not address the question whether the projects only indirectly address the SDGs or are transformative (infobox, p. 44) – good practice research projects are reported.

Research Addressing the SDGs

Alongside climate protection and biodiversity goals, the SDGs[44], adopted by the UN in 2015, currently represent the most important international reference framework for achieving sustainable development. These goals are to be achieved by all countries worldwide by 2030. Many BOKU research projects contribute to the achievement of the SDGs on national and international levels or reflect their work in the context of the Agenda 2030. In doing so, BOKU plays an important role in contributing to implementing the SDGs in Austria.

Since 2019, the Sustainability Report explicitly documented the number of research projects addressing the SDGs. Researchers themselves state in the Research Information System (FIS) which SDGs their projects address. Since 2022, this statement has been mandatory and is limited to one main SDG and up to three additional SDGs, with the option to indicate “no SDG addressed”. However, this statement does not provide any information about the extent or depth of addressing SDGs in a project or the type of research for sustainable development undertaken.

In 2024, 91 % of all newly acquired research projects (including educational projects) at BOKU were allocated to SDGs, a minimal decrease compared to 2023 (Fig. 8). Despite the limitations mentioned above, this number demonstrates that a large proportion of BOKU projects (directly or indirectly) address sustainability issues. The total number of newly acquired projects (with and without addressing the SDGs) is more or less constant at 336 projects. The volume of newly acquired projects in 2024 has increased to a new maximum, almost 76 million euros (Fig. 9). But the seemingly linear growth is an illusion, as in 2022 (not included in the figure) the volume was already more than 75 million euros, which due to a large research fund was available only for a short period. At the same time, the proportion of projects that address the SDGs remained the same (92 %) since 2022.

The SDGs that are addressed have remained similar to the years before. Research is particularly focused on topics that can be associated with SDG 15 “Life on Land”, followed by SDG 13 “Climate Action”, SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities,” SDG 2 “No Hunger” and SDG 12 “Responsible Consumption and Production” (Fig. 10). The pattern is similar when looking at the main SDG or including all SDGs addressed (Fig. 11).

44 See also chapter “BOKU and the SDGs”, p. 24

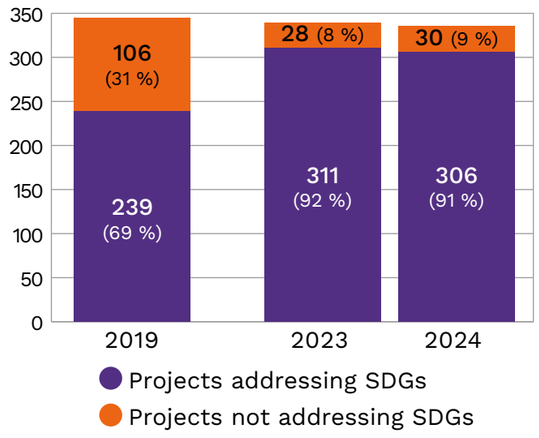


Figure 8: Number and share of newly acquired projects addressing SDGs or not addressing SDGs in 2019, 2023, 2024.

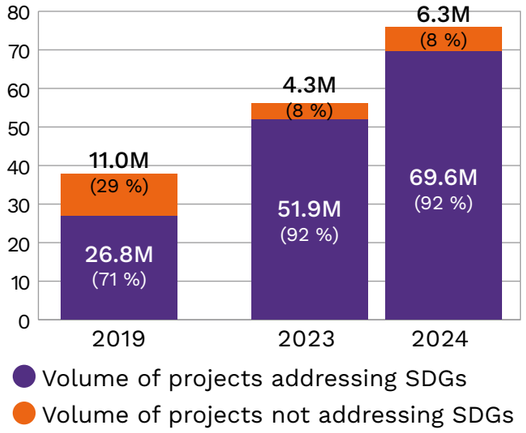


Figure 9: Volume of newly funded projects starting at BOKU and share of projects addressing the SDGs (based on newly acquired projects), in 2019, 2023, 2024.

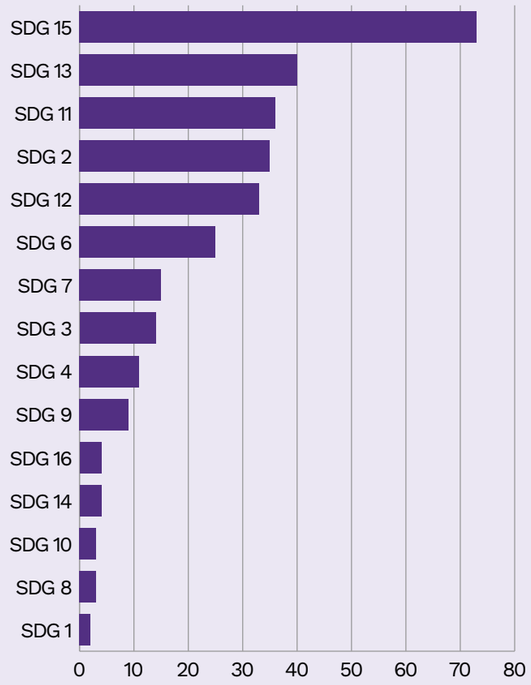


Figure 10: Main SDGs addressed in newly acquired projects (single entry), 2024.

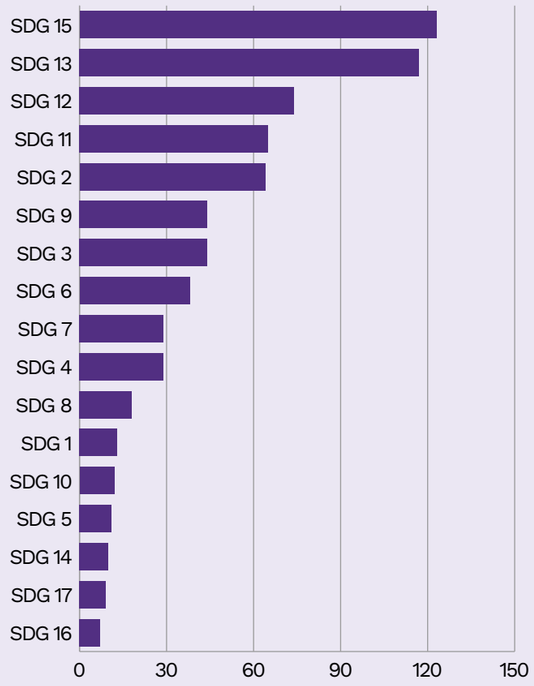


Figure 11: SDGs addressed in newly acquired projects (multiple entries), 2024.

Good Practice Research Projects

Three research projects funded by the Austrian Climate Research Programme (ACRP) that were finished in 2024 were selected as good practice examples for sustainability research in sensu stricto or transformative research for sustainable development (infobox, p. 44).

Build Back Better, "Leveraging systemic shocks for integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation" (Principal investigator [PI]: Thomas Thaler)[45]: Extreme environmental hazards, like floods, droughts, or SARS-CoV-2 can cause large-scale damage to human populations, physical assets, and the environment. These events are likely to increase in frequency and intensity in the future, potentially overwhelming individual and collective managing capacities. The project inquired how to effectively deal with such shocks and whether they can be leveraged as catalysts for fostering climate-resilient development pathways. Three case studies revealed that shocks were so far not utilized to promote climate-resilient development pathways, as adequate strategies are missing or the legal/institutional framework does not allow to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation. But some of these hinderances could be relatively easily addressed. Besides publishing the findings in academic journals, the results have been actively disseminated and discussed with non-academic stakeholders through presentations, policy briefs, and related formats to make the knowledge available and usable for those who could contribute to a more sustainable development pathway.

NetZero2040, "Developing model supported scenarios towards climate neutrality in Austria by 2040" (PI: Johannes Schmidt)[46]: Austria is committed to achieving "climate neutrality" by 2040. While existing climate and energy scenarios for Austria have several shortcomings, NetZero2040 established the first set of comprehensive and consistent alternative pathways for achieving climate neutrality in Austria by 2040 in the energy system. Quantitative modelling efforts were combined with a broad and iterative stakeholder process to ensure techno-economic consistency, increase legitimacy, facilitate acceptance of final scenarios and allow their use as guiding principles within the stakeholders' organizations. The scenarios were published in an academic journal[47], thus guaranteeing an academic quality assurance process. Moreover, they were widely disseminated in Austrian media (e. g. orf.at, Die Presse, Profil, Kurier, Der Standard, Ö1 Mittagsjournal), and have served as important input to the Second Austrian Assessment Report on Climate Change (AAR2) which will be published in 2025.

SDGVisionPath, "Co-creating future visions and transition pathways for the SDGs climate action, inequality, and decent work and economic growth" (PI: Mathias Kirchner)[48]: The SDGVisionPath project co-created transformation pathways and future visions to support the achievement of SDG 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 13 (Climate Action) by combining qualitative and quantitative modelling approaches with participatory knowledge integration methods. Based on this process, stakeholders developed a set of policy recommendations emphasizing system and intergenerational thinking, inclusive participation (e. g. citizens' assemblies), vertical and horizontal integration (e. g. embedding sustainability education across all levels), and the importance of addressing all dimensions of sustainability. A strong call was made to reduce social inequalities through progressive and equitable policy design. Thus, the project effectively generated system, target, and transformation knowledge.

45 https://buildbackbetter.joanneum.at/
46 https://www.netzero2040.at/
47 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421524005135
48 https://sdg.visionpath.at/

Cross-Departmental Doctoral Schools

BOKU emphasizes interdisciplinarity in its Doctoral Schools[49], offering networking opportunities and promoting early-career researchers. In contrast to traditional doctoral studies where students work rather independently with their supervisors, each of the ten Doctoral Schools (as of January 2025) comprises doctoral candidates and faculty members from different departments. Thus, according to BOKU's 15 departments in 2024, collaboration across up to eight departments was fostered (Fig. 12 on p. 50). Interdisciplinary exchange is supported through courses like seminars and Journal Clubs that represent a mandatory didactic component in each BOKU Doctoral School. Annual retreats provide a platform for doctoral candidates to present and discuss research with Faculty, complemented by social activities. Expanding these programs will enhance interdisciplinary research and cross-disciplinary networking among and between supervisors and students.

49 https://boku.ac.at/en/docservice/doctoral-studies/doktoratsschulen

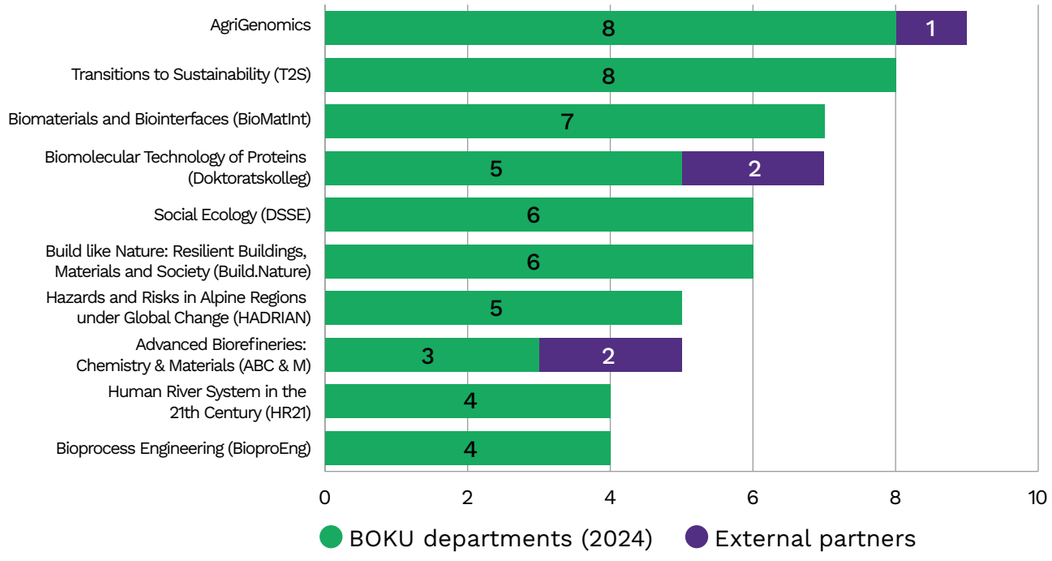


Figure 12: Number of departments involved in cross-departmental Doctoral Schools (as of October 2024, according to department-structure 2024).

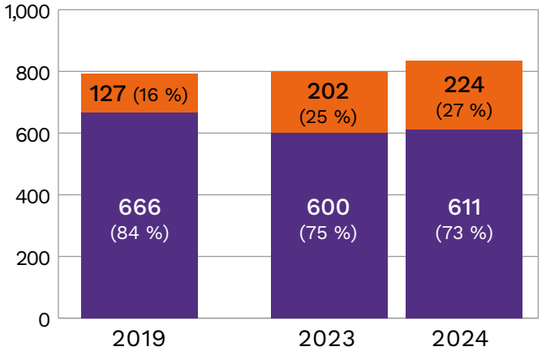


Figure 13: Number and share of doctoral students in cross-departmental Doctoral Schools and other BOKU doctoral studies, base years 2019, 2023, and 2024.

In the winter semester 2024/25, 224 candidates participated in these schools, accounting for 27 % of all BOKU doctoral students (Fig. 13). Yet, student places are limited in each Doctoral School. Therefore, the share of students in cross-departmental Doctoral Schools can only be increased when further Doctoral Schools will be funded. An attractive additional funding opportunity for existing BOKU Doctoral Schools is offered by the doc. funds programme of the Austrian Science Fund FWF. Obtaining this additional funding will enable the financing of 10 doctoral positions (30 hours/week) for 4 years. An international jury of experts decides on the funding. In 2024, the BOKU Doctoral School Biomolecular Technology of Proteins (BioToP) successfully secured funding for the doc.funds project “BIOTOPIA”.

Citizen Science at BOKU

Citizen Science involves scientific projects conducted with the assistance of or entirely by interested amateurs (lat. amator, meaning “lover”). Citizen Scientists raise research questions, report observations, take measurements, analyze data, and/or author publications. Adherence to scientific criteria is a prerequisite. Since individuals outside the scientific community actively participate in the research process, Citizen Science has a strongly transdisciplinary character. The active involvement of citizens in science and transparent research can significantly contribute to addressing major sustainability challenges.

Citizen Science has a long tradition at BOKU, with some BOKU researchers integrating citizen participation as a core research element. Moreover, BOKU structurally promotes this approach: Two BOKU researchers are funded to coordinate the central information and networking site of Citizen Science in Austria “Österreich forscht” and the underlying Citizen Science Network Austria. They also offer courses and trainings for students and researchers. In 2024, in addition to three other, already existing, Citizen Science courses, a module for interdisciplinary Citizen Science within the course “Inter- and transdisciplinary approaches and processes” was implemented for students of the “Climate Change and Societal Transformation” Master’s program at BOKU University, that lets students explore different roles within a Citizen Science project. Furthermore, three specific training workshops for researchers on how to implement Citizen Science in their research and on science engagement were organized and held. Throughout the year, four individual consultations on Citizen Science project proposals were provided to BOKU researchers.

In 2024, within the Austrian platform, several major achievements were made with strong BOKU contribution:

- The European Citizen Science Conference was held, together with the Austrian Citizen Science Conference at BOKU, welcoming more than 500 participants from all over the world.
- Together with the Ludwig Boltzmann Society, the Science Lounge invited the 60,000 visitors of Austria’s biggest book fair to explore Citizen Science.

Moreover, several BOKU Citizen Science projects could report first results. We present two examples:

- **AmphiBiom:** Results from the first season already showed that some artificial ponds in the gardens of the project participants were used by Green Toads and other amphibians for breeding.
- **Project Roadkill:** In this project, citizens report on roadkilled vertebrates to better understand where and why roadkills happen. The vision is to mitigate so called roadkill hotspots together with NGOs and public authorities to increase road safety for animals and humans. The project also highlighted the importance of roadkill in a special exhibition at Museum Niederösterreich and several publications, one of them written together with a Citizen Scientist[50].

Scientific Collaboration

This sub-topic is reported in two parts. First, projects and publications with participation of several BOKU institutes will be reported. Second, cross-cutting scientific initiatives and clusters that foster the cooperation of BOKU organizational units across disciplines are described.

50 Heigl et al. (2024): https://doi.org/10.5194/we-24-41-2024

Cross-Institutional Projects and Publications

Interdisciplinarity is also reflected in the collaboration among BOKU's institutes and departments. This is evident, for example, in publications with co-authors from several Institutes and projects involving multiple BOKU Institutes.

After reaching a record high of more than 1,100 annual publications in 2020 and 2021, the total number of SCI[51] publications declined since then, which also results from a change in targets: Instead of aiming at quantitative growth in publication numbers, BOKU now aims at improving the quality of publications as the number is relatively high in comparison with other Austrian universities. In 2024, the absolute number of publications has again increased slightly to almost 1,000. Nevertheless, the relative number of publications with BOKU-internal co-authorship has decreased (Fig. 14). This is probably a temporary phenomenon and should be critically reflected if the trend were to continue.

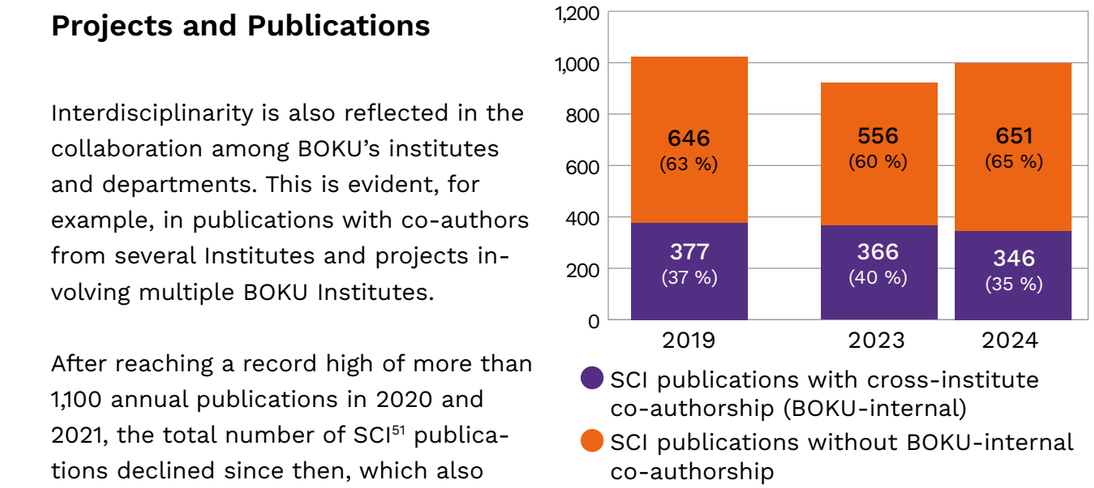


Figure 14: Number and share of SCI publications with and without BOKU-internal co-authorship, i.e., authors from different BOKU institutes, 2019, 2023, and 2024.

In 2024, the proportion of projects involving multiple Institutes was 16 %, representing a slight increase compared to 2023. The total number of newly acquired projects remained more or less stable (Fig. 15). These numbers are subject to fluctuations. The research system and research funding are complex, with numerous parameters contributing to potential increases or decreases (for interpretation, see Intellectual Capital Report 2024[52]). So far, no long-term negative trend can be observed.

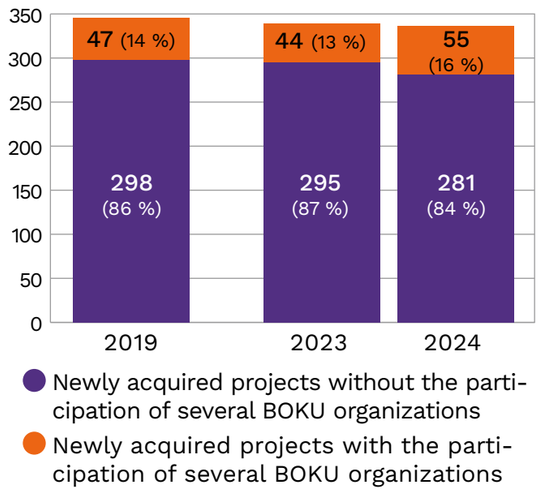


Figure 15: Number and share of newly acquired projects with and without the participation of several BOKU institutes, 2019, 2023, and 2024.

51 Publications in journals that are listed in the Science Citation Index (SCI).
52 https://boku.ac.at/fos/themen/boku-wissensbilanz/boku-wissensbilanz-2024, p. 111

Cross-Linking Structures at BOKU

Active networking among Institutes, Departments, and Administration aims at fostering discussions on controversial sustainability topics and enhancing collaboration on sustainability-relevant cross-cutting themes. This approach helps leverage synergies and pool competencies.

Various structures have been established or expanded at BOKU in recent years to strengthen content exchange and networking. **Scientific centers** are cross-cutting structures at BOKU that – in contrast to Institutes – also have a support and advisory function for the Rectorate ("staff unit"). In contrast to Clusters and Initiatives they are larger and have more resources. **Clusters and Initiatives** mainly focus on knowledge exchange, joint discussions, and events. Usually, they have a student assistant for support. Short descriptions, aims, and goals of these structures can be found online (see footnotes). The Intellectual Capital Report 2024 describes activities of the Scientific Centers in 2024.

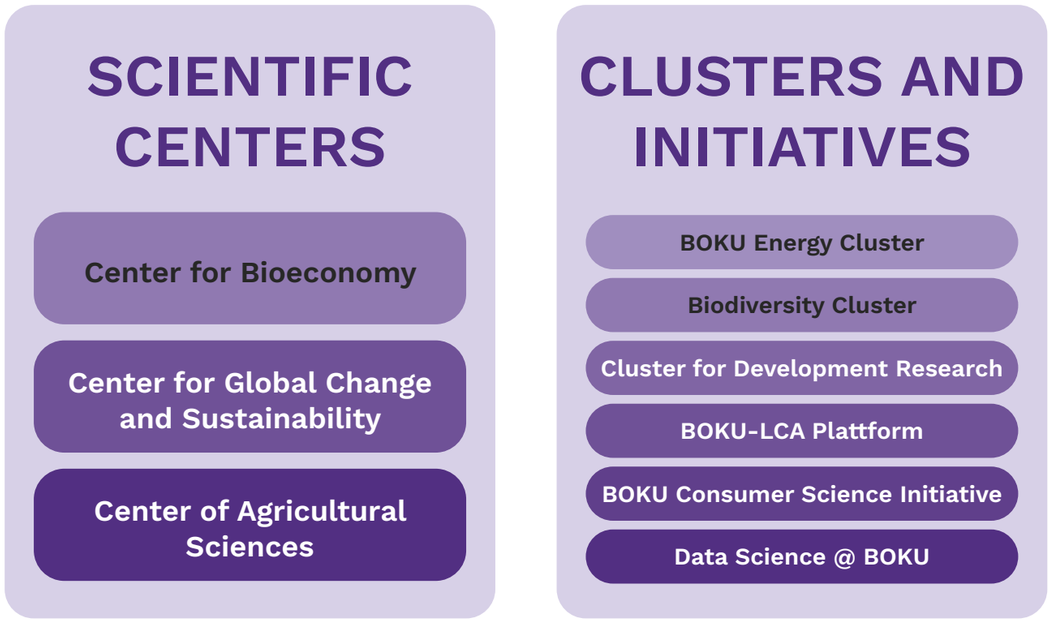


Figure 16: Overview of structures for sustainability related internal cross-linking. Links see below.

Centre for Bioeconomy: https://short.boku.ac.at/bioeconomy
Centre for Global Change and Sustainability: https://short.boku.ac.at/6gdez9
Centre of Agricultural Sciences: https://short.boku.ac.at/e6mrz3
BOKU- Energycluster: https://boku.ac.at/en/boku-energiecluster
Biodiversity Cluster: https://boku.ac.at/boku-biodiversitaetscluster
Cluster for Development Research: https://short.boku.ac.at/mqdgk4
BOKU- LCA Plattform: https://boku.ac.at/boku-lca-plattform
BOKU Initiative Consumer Science: https://boku.ac.at/boku-ics
Data Science @ BOKU: https://short.boku.ac.at/92e34x

Human Capacity Building

In order to strengthen transformative research, early-career researchers in particular must be supported and encouraged to qualify in this direction. But also established researchers may need to acquire additional competencies alongside their disciplinary expertise. In addition, structural, financial, and human resources are needed to support transdisciplinary research.

In 2024, the Working Group Sustainability Research developed an "**Action Plan for Career Paths in Transformative Research at BOKU**" that summarizes options to support early-career researchers in transformative research. It was elaborated in collaboration with doctoral students that conducted interviews and a survey within an elective class organized by the Working Group Sustainable Research. The survey among BOKU researchers showed that many of the respondents have some experience in inter- and transdisciplinary research. In contrast, transformative research is still new to many BOKU researchers, but they are interested in this approach (Fig. 17). This indicates a need for capacity building in this regard.

The Action Plan proposes four fields of action:

1. Continuously improve the structure and environment at the university for transformative research, such as including transformation as a task of a Vice-Rector, founding a Competence Center for transformative research, creating a professorship for transformative research.
2. Change the rules of the game and adapt criteria for careers, e. g., establish specific career paths for transformative research, or adapt criteria for hiring, evaluation, and tenure.
3. Community building, i.e., support early-career researchers to find networks and community, exchange between universities.

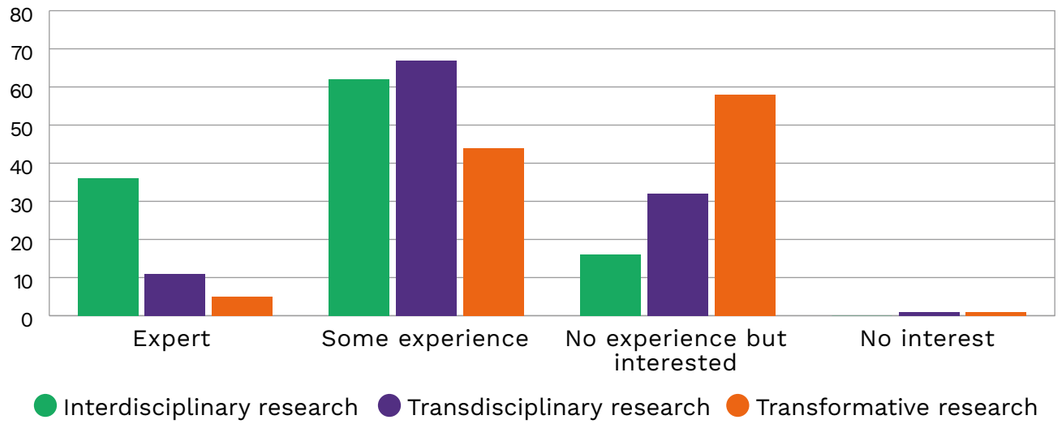


Figure 17: Thematic research experiences and interests in inter-, transdisciplinary, transformative research. Survey among BOKU researchers as part of an elective class organized by the Working Group Sustainable Research (N=114).

4. (Continuing) Education in transformative research, i.e., include transformative competencies in curricula starting from Bachelor level, provide specialized offers for continuing education in transformative research.

The action plan was discussed with the Rectorate in early 2025, first implementation activities are planned for 2025.
Some activities from 2024 are relevant for the future implementation: the Performance Agreement 2025–2027 that was prepared in 2024 includes the establishment of a new organizational entity for transformative science (field of action 1). Capacity building for transformative research is one of the main aims of this organizational entity. The CoARA membership, where activities also started in 2024, will strongly address the action field "Change the rules of the game and adapt criteria for careers" (field of action 2).
As criteria for careers strongly shape the focus that early-career researchers take, this will also have an impact on capacity building.

The topic of capacity building was also discussed in other contexts:

BOKU:BASE – Supporting Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development[53] offers events and workshops for students and staff to enhance entrepreneurial competencies in the context of sustainable development. It strengthens the entrepreneurial mindset with a focus on the challenges of our time through a diverse offering. In 2024, BOKU:BASE was awarded "Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year" for its dedication to foster sustainability and the development of entrepreneurial competencies starting in high school in the form of the "Youth Entrepreneurship Week". Moreover, BOKU:BASE organized a very successful spring school focusing on sustainability challenges provided by NGOs and start-ups together with EPICUR partners. A new format – the changemaker breakfast – was introduced to give insight into sustainability-driven organizations and open a space for critical and constructive discussions.

The cross-university working group of the Climate Change Center Austria, the **Working Group Social-Ecological Transformation**[54], which is also co-led by a BOKU researcher, organized a workshop in June 2024 that tackled capacity building (Workshop on Transformative Teaching: Structures, Competencies and Challenges).

Moreover, capacity building for transdisciplinary and transformative research also includes competencies in science communication (see chapter "Support Structures for Science Communication" on Societal Impact, p. 66).

53 https://base.boku.ac.at/
54 https://ccca.ac.at/en/ccca-activities/ccca-working-groups/wg-social-ecological-transformation

Table 6: Objectives and targets in the area of Research.

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Advancing Research for Sustainable Development	Advancing research for sustainable development at BOKU	Qualitative	**Working Group Sustainability Research:** Promotion of internal sustainability discourse at BOKU, further development of indicators in the field of research	✓Third "Nachhaltigkeit im Diskurs" discussion event on "Responsibility in the Climate Crisis". ✓Preparation, discussion, and publication of the final report "Intellectual capital reporting and sustainability" ✓Regular meetings of the Working Group Sustainability Research	✓Three meetings of the Working Group Sustainability Research ✓Development of an "Action plan for career paths in transformative research at BOKU" ✓Session at BOKU Sustainability Day 2024 on "Fear, anger, and confidence in teaching and research. How do we as academics deal with the multiple crises?"
	By 2030, research assessment at BOKU will be advanced in accordance with the principles of CoARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment) commitment and with a special focus on sustainability research	CoARA Membership confirmed (2024) CoARA Action Plan developed (2025) CoARA Report on Implementation Activities (2030)	Install a CoARA Working Group at BOKU Take part in (inter)national CoARA-related activities for exchange and learning	NA	✓CoARA Membership confirmed ✓CoARA Working group established, 3 meetings in 2024 ✓CoARA in Performance Agreement with BMBWF

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Research for Sustainable Development	Maintenance goal: more than two-thirds of all newly acquired research projects and volumes that address the SDGs is to be maintained	Share and volume of newly acquired research projects that address the SDGs	Promotion of sustainability-relevant research with a focus on the institutional level; considerations for improving data quality	✓92 % of newly acquired projects that address the SDGs ✓92 % of newly acquired project volumes that address the SDGs	✓91% of newly acquired projects that address the SDGs ✓92% of newly acquired project volumes that address the SDGs
	The proportion of students in cross-departmental doctoral schools should be maintained at a level of at least 25 %	Number of students in cross-departmental doctoral schools	Establish new doctoral schools and increase number of students per doctoral school	✓25 % of doctoral students in cross-departmental doctoral schools (number: 202)	✓27 % of doctoral students in cross-departmental doctoral schools (number: 224)
	To promote Citizen Science at least one training session per semester and advisory services by appointment for BOKU members in the field of Citizen Science are offered (starting in 2020)	Number of training sessions on Citizen Science per semester; Number of advisory services in the field of Citizen Science	Courses (LV) in the field of Citizen Science are offered at BOKU; Advisory services in the field of Citizen Science provided through the Research Service	✓5 courses on Citizen Science ✓3 citizen science training sessions were held ✓15 Individual consultations and workshops on Citizen Science project proposals provided through BOKU Research Support	✓4 courses on Citizen Science ✓3 training workshops on Citizen Science and science engagement were held ✓4 individual consultations on Citizen Science project proposals provided through BOKU Research Support
	The share of publications with cross-institute co-authorship is to be maintained at a high level (min. 35 %)	Share of SCI[55] publications with cross-institute co-authorship (BOKU-internal)	Strengthening BOKU's internal cross-linking through doctoral schools and networking scientific initiatives	✓40 %	✓35 %
	Maintain share of newly acquired projects with cross-institute consortia (approx. 15 %)	Share of newly acquired projects with cross-institute consortia (BOKU-internal)		~The share decreased by 1 percentage points compared to the previous year (2023 share: 13 %)	~The share increased by 3 percentage points compared to the previous year (2024 share: 16 %)

✓ = Objective/Target achieved | ~ = Objective/Target not yet achieved

55 SCI publications are publications in journals that are listed in the Science Citation Index.

[societal impact]

Our vision: In cooperative and reciprocal exchange with stakeholders from business, politics, and civil society, we seek and find answers to the pressing questions regarding the transformation of society and a sustainable future.

What Does Sustainability in Societal Impact Mean for BOKU?

Universities have a responsibility to society to support and co-shape the transition towards sustainability. They play a key role by providing evidence-based knowledge for political and societal action. BOKU strives for a cooperative exchange between science and society, recognizing the importance of engaging with policymakers, businesses, and citizens to make scientific insights more relevant and usable.

Scientists are increasingly called upon to bring their insights to the forefront, emphasizing the urgency of political and societal action. At the same time, societal actors are encouraged to approach universities to access expertise and integrate the voice of science into societal issues. Through knowledge transfer, public dialogue, participation, and transdisciplinary research, universities help address and find answers to global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss. Maintaining and expanding BOKU's bridges to society ensure that science effectively serves society and drives meaningful change.

The thematic orientation of BOKU University provides a strong foundation to be societally impactful in the context of sustainable development. Identifying and expanding the necessary conditions to support societal impact is crucial. Structural barriers to exchanges with society should be addressed and mitigated.

As transdisciplinary and transformative research[56] directly engage with society, there is a strong link between research and societal impact.

Societal engagement and science communication are particularly important for BOKU in fostering this exchange and enhancing societal impact, as identified in the Materiality Analysis (p. 12).

56 See infobox in chapter "Research", p. 36 (transdisciplinary) and p. 47 (transformative)

Societal Engagement

GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12)

Societal engagement at BOKU includes all projects and activities that provide direct and tangible value to society, as well as measures that recognize and strengthen the importance of such activities. However, there are varying views on what societal engagement by universities and their members should look like in practice – ranging from traditional knowledge production and subsequent dissemination, to transdisciplinary and transformative research that directly interact with society, to political consulting, or even supporting non-violent forms of resistance by scientists.

Many questions remain to be addressed, including exploring the legal framework and discussing the extent of societal responsibility that the university and individual scientists should assume. BOKU aims to engage with these issues and create space for this discourse.

To promote the social engagement of BOKU members in the context of sustainability, BOKU aims to address the framework conditions for social engagement. As part of the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy, corresponding measures are continuously developed. Especially, the Working Group Sustainability Research[57] focuses on transdisciplinary and transformative research, thus also addressing the material topic of societal engagement.

Structures Supporting Societal Engagement

Even if the framework conditions are not yet clearly defined, BOKU certainly does not lack motivation and engagement. With great effort, a variety of socially and politically impactful projects and initiatives are implemented each year with the goal of advancing sustainable development. The following provides a small selection of these activities in 2024.

57 See chapter "Research", p. 45

Climate Change Center Austria

The head office of the Austrian climate research network Climate Change Center Austria (CCCA)[58] has been based at the BOKU Center for Global Change and Sustainability since its establishment in 2011. The CCCA acts as a key communication platform for scientists on climate change and impacts, serving as a point of contact for politics, media, and the public on strategic and political issues related to Austrian climate and climate impact research. In 2024, the focus was on strengthening CCCA's role as Austria's central climate research platform. An exemplary highlight on the international level was the co-founding of the International Network of Boundary Organizations on Adaptation. The launch of the klima2go database[59] improves access to scientifically sound climate measures and shows CCCA's commitment to knowledge dissemination. Moreover, numerous BOKU scientists were involved in the CCCA project to analyze over 1,400 policy proposals for the national energy and climate plan (NEKP), identifying 79 key measure clusters. Events like the K3-Congress for Climate Communication and formats such as CCCA "Wissenssnacks" or Fact Sheets emphasized the importance of science communication and collaboration across sectors. These initiatives have reinforced CCCA's position as a key driver of climate research and transformation toward a sustainable society.

Disaster Competence Network Austria

BOKU University is part of the Disaster Competence Network Austria (DCNA)[60] which acts as a link between scientific research and practitioners in crisis and disaster management. DCNA aims at implementing findings from basic research and informing those interested in security and disaster research through knowledge and technology transfer.

In 2024, DCNA strengthened Austria's disaster resilience by advancing knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary collaboration. Highlights included the launch of the DCNA Science Plan, contributions to over 25 research projects, a workshop on the future of firefighting, and the international Disaster Research Days in Vienna. By supporting evidence-based prevention, critical infrastructure protection, and climate-adaptive risk management, DCNA played a key role in promoting sustainable crisis preparedness and long-term societal resilience. In-depth insights into DCNA's activities in 2024 can be found in the association's annual report[61].

58 More information on CCCA Activities in 2024 at BOKU and/or with involvement of BOKU scientists see Wissensblianz BOKU 2024 and CCCA Jahresbericht 2024: https://ccca.ac.at/ueber-ccca/jahresberichte
59 https://ccca.ac.at/wissenstransfer/klima2go-massnahmenkompass
60 https://www.dcna.at/index.php/en/home.html
61 https://www.dcna.at/files/tao/img/dokumente/DCNA-Jahresbericht%202024.pdf

BOKU Competence Center for Climate Neutrality

The BOKU Competence Center for Climate Neutrality[62] is committed to advancing climate action and achieving climate neutrality. Through targeted awareness raising, carbon accounting, and tailored advisory services, the Center supports institutions such as the Austrian Federal Museums and universities (see ClimCalc in the chapter "Environment", p. 77) project in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and implementing climate action plans. A key area of the center's work is the coordination and scientific quality assurance of climate mitigation projects in the Global South. These projects are initiated both within the university and in cooperation with external partners, particularly various dioceses of Caritas Austria.

A significant milestone in 2024 was the launch of the Climate Protection Platform BOKU X Caritas[63]. The renewed collaboration between BOKU and Caritas Austria has created innovative opportunities to combine climate action with poverty reduction. The platform enables companies and individuals to support high-quality, socially inclusive climate projects through donations. The strength of this partnership lies in its holistic approach: scientific expertise, independent review by an interdisciplinary advisory board, and close cooperation with locally rooted partner organizations form the basis for credible and effective projects. In 2024, two projects were launched in cooperation with Caritas Austria (SPEEC)[64] and the Caritas Diocese of Feldkirch (GREEN SEED)[65].

62 https://klimaneutralität.boku.ac.at/
63 https://klimaneutralitaet.boku.ac.at/klimaschutzplattform/
64 https://klimaneutralitaet.boku.ac.at/projects/speec/
65 https://klimaneutralitaet.boku.ac.at/projects/green-seed/

SDG Hightlight: UniNEtZ

UniNEtZ Project

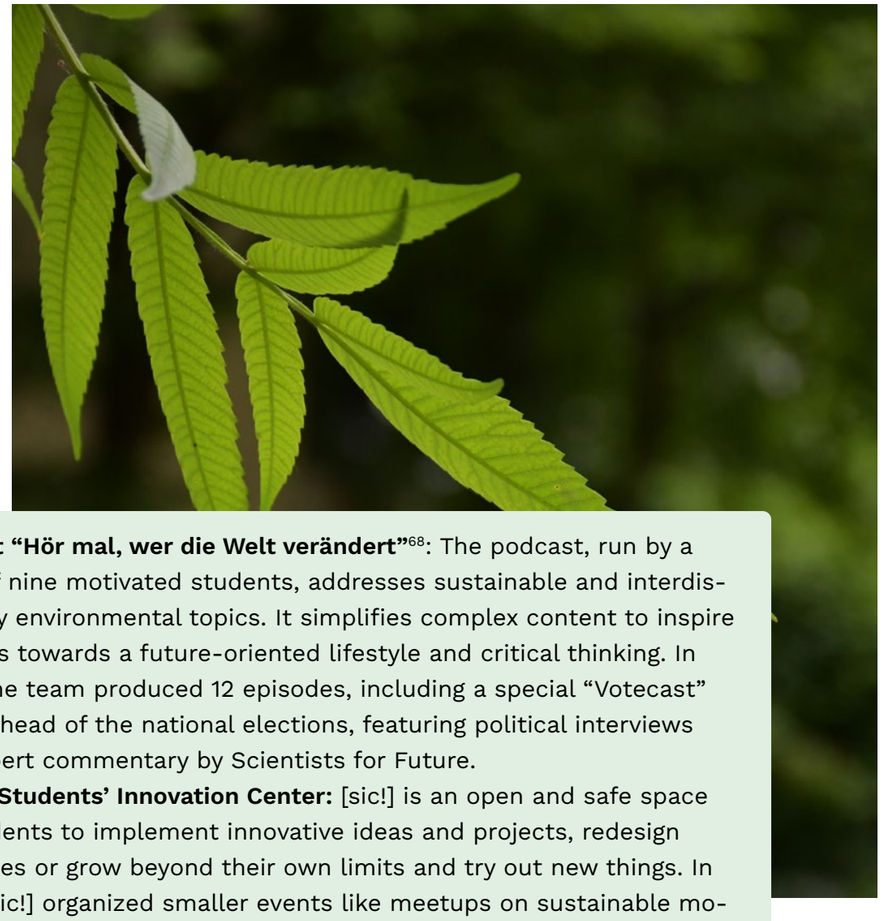
The **UniNEtZ**[66] project provided an important inter-university structure on SDGs between 2019 and 2024 in two project phases. It united over 300 scientists from 22 Austrian universities and research institutions with the aim of supporting and advancing sustainable development in Austria. The first phase concluded with the release of the "**Options Report**"[67], detailing Austria's potential strategies for achieving the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The second phase emphasized societal transformation and the transformation of universities themselves in alignment with the SDGs. BOKU University had a leading role in the UniNEtZ-transformation area SP I (Transdisciplinary dialogue with society) and SP V (Governance transformation). Within SP I, the cooperation of scientists with decision makers from politics, administration, business, and civil society was strengthened and further developed (see below "Highlights of Science-Policy Dialogue From BOKU"). In 2024, the UniNEtZ-project organized a "Future Dialogue" together with stakeholders from Austrian federal and state politics and administration, an "Evening of the SDGs in the Austrian Parliament" together with the SDG ambassadors of the National Council, several "UniNEtZ-beWEGt Walkshops" together with the city governments of Graz and Innsbruck, workshops for sustainable business with the Chamber of Commerce, and produced an image film "Let's walk together" and the information materials "Climate to go".

Engaged BOKU Students

Student work in social engagement should not be overlooked. Many BOKU students are engaged for a sustainable and livable future. Within the university, they participate, for example, in student representation, the ÖH commissions, or other student activities. Moreover, they also engage in society. Although these initiatives are not directly financed or supported by BOKU University, they partly use BOKU resources or get support from BOKU. As students are an important part of BOKU, some of their initiatives are presented in this report in more detail:

- **BOKU Hofmarkt:** The market, organized by the ÖH BOKU, offers a platform for regional producers, BOKU initiatives, students – and also BOKU alumni – to present and sell sustainable, handmade products. In 2024, the market was organized by the ÖH BOKU for the first time and has since regularly welcomed a wide range of visitors with regional delicacies, live music, and handmade crafts in the courtyard of the Gregor Mendel House. The event fosters a strong sense of community and promotes local value creation.

66 https://www.uninetz.at/
67 https://www.uninetz.at/en/optionenbericht



- **Podcast "Hör mal, wer die Welt verändert"**[68]: The podcast, run by a team of nine motivated students, addresses sustainable and interdisciplinary environmental topics. It simplifies complex content to inspire listeners towards a future-oriented lifestyle and critical thinking. In 2024, the team produced 12 episodes, including a special "Votecast" series ahead of the national elections, featuring political interviews and expert commentary by Scientists for Future.
- **[sic!] – Students' Innovation Center:** [sic!] is an open and safe space for students to implement innovative ideas and projects, redesign processes or grow beyond their own limits and try out new things. In 2024, [sic!] organized smaller events like meetups on sustainable mobility or female founders, as well as community events like the [sic!] nick. The main focus was on further developing the team, expanding the network, and strategizing.
- **The Climate Fresk**[69] is an interactive workshop on the climate crisis. It is based on the IPCC reports and presents climate science in a low-threshold and playful way. The solution-oriented bottom-up approach promotes collective intelligence and team spirit. A group of seven BOKU students from different fields of study completed the training as facilitators. In 2024, they volunteered about 40 hours and reached over 50 participants from different fields of study at two events.
- Moreover, two BOKU students, Sigrid Karl and Theresa Öllinger, were two of the four **official Austrian youth delegates** at the 2024 UN Climate Conference in Baku. They spoke on behalf of Austria's youth and did intense communication and press work. They also organized several information events before and after the climate conference (e. g., 2 local youth conferences [LCOY], information events at BOKU and other universities).

68 https://hoermalwerdieweltveraendert.wordpress.com/
69 https://climatefresk.org/world/

Science Communication with a Sustainability Focus

GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12)

Effective science communication is essential for connecting research findings with society. However, outreach and marketing are not usually part of traditional research processes. BOKU University is committed to actively sharing scientific knowledge and research results to diverse audiences, positioning itself as a competent and trusted contact point for policy, civil society, businesses, the media, and the general public on sustainability topics. Through evidence-based education and broad public outreach, BOKU ensures that knowledge has a meaningful social impact. BOKU members are encouraged to engage in public debates, providing reliable, quality-assured information on sustainability issues. However, challenges remain. Providing BOKU scientists with the necessary resources and incentives and reaching a wider audience beyond interested parties, stakeholders and specialized journalists is key. Therefore, BOKU has expanded its support structures and science communication activities over the years.

Support Structures for Science Communication

Effective science communication requires support. BOKU offers internal training programs, with 144 staff participating in 13 courses in 2024 (Fig. 18). The trainings cover a range of topics from engaging the public in scientific research (Citizen Science) to preparing scientists for public outreach events, including media training, effective presentation and storytelling techniques, utilizing social media, and improving scientific writing skills.

The Public Relations and Media Offices assist researchers in preparing content and communicating via BOKU channels. The public relations team proactively seeks out interesting content but also depends on information from researchers.

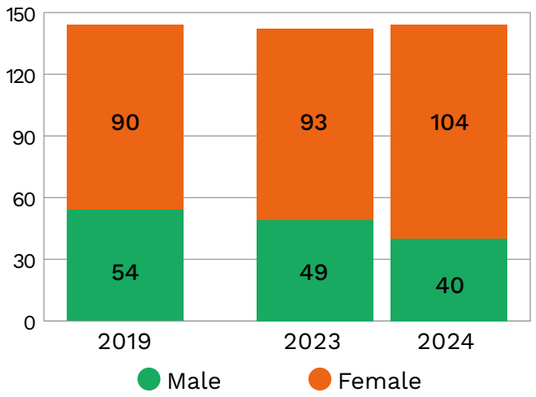


Figure 18: Participants in training on science communication, by gender, 2019, 2023[70], 2024.

70 GRI 2-4: In our 2023 Sustainability Report, training programs and participants were misstated due to a misunderstanding of which trainings to include and a calculation error. The corrected numbers are 11 training sessions and 142 attendees, replacing the previously reported 9 courses and 176 attendees.

Science Communication at BOKU

An overview of science communication in practice can be found in the following sub-chapters.

Lectures and Events

Public events at BOKU or events at other locations where BOKU researchers participate are an essential part of the dialogue with societal actors. With the inclusion of “science to public” and “science to professionals” metrics in the BOKU Research Information System (FIS), such activities are made more visible. The actual number of lectures given to the general public is likely higher than currently recorded, since incentives to log this type of activity into the FIS are still low. To better document and recognize these contributions, it was agreed that this type of lecture activity should be recorded in goal-setting meetings with department heads. This measure aims primarily at documenting and recognizing existing efforts, without adding extra burden to researchers.

Lecture numbers have decreased by 11 % from 2023 to 2024 (Fig. 19). The reason for this is probably the introduction of the new research information system FIS3+ with a different data entry process. It is possible that this had a negative impact on the efforts to encourage researchers to log their lectures held into the FIS.

The additional effort that researchers make to prepare and communicate scientific content to the general public should be appropriately rewarded. Visibility in the FIS is a key first step, but more action is needed to integrate this appropriately into performance evaluations. Within its CoARA efforts (see chapter “Research”, p. 45), BOKU aims to explore options to better ensure this recognition and further support its researchers.

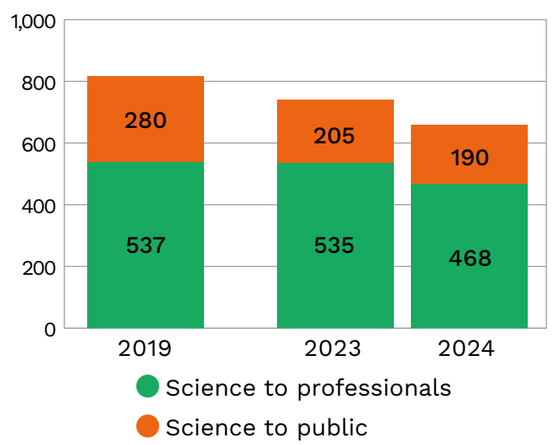


Figure 19: Number of lectures for a non-academic audience or the interested public (science to public) as well as professional lectures (science to professionals), 2019, 2023, 2024.

Regular BOKU Events – a Selection

The **BOKU Sustainability Day** is not only for BOKU students and staff. All interested individuals are warmly invited to participate in the various workshops, exhibitions, panel discussions, and networking opportunities. 2024, the topic was “Climate Minds: Active & Resilient Against Fear and Helplessness!”. It was also the ten-year anniversary of the BOKU Sustainability Day.[71]

As part of the Sustainability Day, the **BOKU Sustainability Award**[72] is awarded annually in four categories to highlight the outstanding engagement and achievements of BOKU members in the context of sustainability. In 2024, the BOKU Sustainability Award went to the following projects or research works[73]:

- **Education for Sustainable Development:** Luca Kräuter & Sigrid Karl – Climate Communication at BOKU: A Student-Driven Approach to Sustainability Education[74]
- **Research (Dissertations, publications):** Eleonora Charlotte Pichler et al. – Sustainable use of oat hulls in gluten-free bread – Incorporation of oat hulls to increase the nutritional value and improve the baking properties of gluten-free bread
- **Research (Master’s thesis):** Ulrich Sukop – Characterization of single-grain sourdoughs with a special focus on physical, chemical, and microbiological aspects
- **Social and Ecological Responsibility in University Operations:** Elisabeth Waldherr-Fabiani – Business travel behavior at BOKU University

Since the summer of 2009, BOKU has organized its own branch of **KinderuniWien**[75] with the aim of enabling young people to get to know the research topics at BOKU better. BOKU faculty and students offer a diverse program. In 2024, 33 courses for 7- to 12-year-olds took place on July 8–12.[76]

The **Featuring Future Conference**[77] offers experts from various specialist areas a platform to critically examine and discuss existing concepts for overcoming current challenges. BOKU researchers present and discuss with prominent speakers, scientists, and guests from politics, business, art, and administration. The topic 2024 was “FarmFoodFuture”. Solutions for future-proof agriculture and sustainable nutrition were discussed in an engaging program.[78]

BOKU University was represented at **Lange Nacht der Forschung 2024** with 50 stations at Türkenschanze, Muthgasse, and the Hydraulic Engineering Laboratory in Vienna, at the UFT and IFA in Tulln, and also at the two special “Research in the Center” locations organized by the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Climate Protection.[79]

71 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-sustainability-day
72 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-sustainability-award
73 For further information on winners: https://short.boku.ac.at/NH_Gewinner_innen
74 See chapter “Curriculum & Learning”, p. 30
75 https://kinderuni.online/
76 https://short.boku.ac.at/kinderuniboku
77 https://boku.ac.at/event/details/73938
78 https://boku.ac.at/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/featuring-future-conference-2024
79 https://boku.ac.at/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/lange-nacht-der-forschung-2024

BOKU’s Media Presence

Since late 2022, an Observer tool has been monitoring scientific mentions in Austrian print media and online media portals in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (Fig. 20). Articles that only marginally feature BOKU and portals with pay walls are excluded. Between 2023 and 2024, web mentions decreased by 18 % to 2,355 clippings, while print media clippings decreased even more by 35 % to 285 (Fig. 20). In total, 2,640 scientifically focused clippings were recorded in 2024. A clipping can include several articles with the same name if they are published on the same day but in regional editions of Austrian daily newspapers (e. g. Kurier).

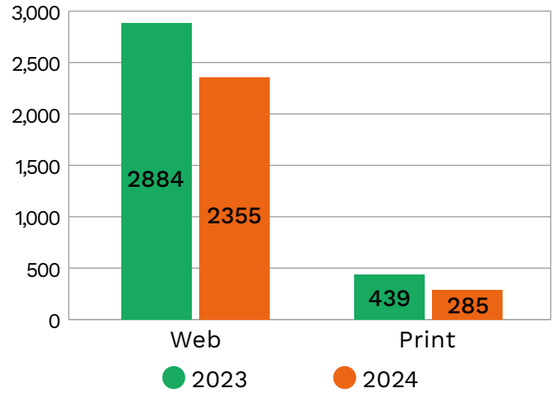


Figure 20: Mentions of BOKU in clippings in web and print media; 2023, 2024[80].

To better understand the thematic focus of articles related to BOKU mentions in the media, a set of predefined keywords was developed. Keyword frequency across articles was analyzed. Therefore, this does not assess the actual content or context of the articles. Climate and sustainability are the top two topics in 2024, closely followed by water, environment, and agriculture, in which content BOKU University is mentioned (Fig. 21).

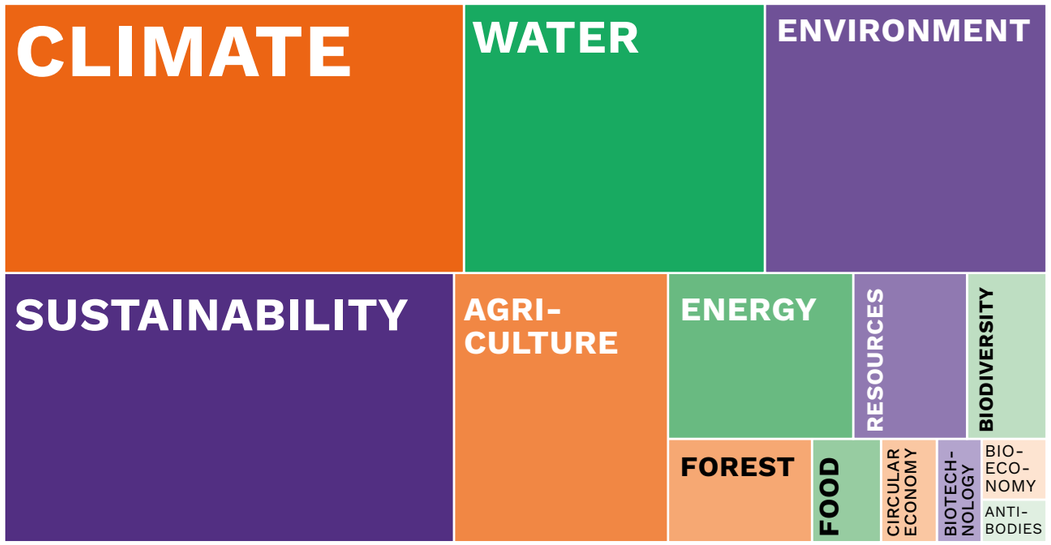


Figure 21: Visual representation of keyword frequency across articles with BOKU mentions, 2024.

80 GRI 2-4: In the 2023 Sustainability Report, media clippings that were initially excluded due to quality control were mistakenly included, resulting in higher figures than what was reported in the 2023 Intellectual Capital Report. The data for 2023 was therefore retroactively adjusted for consistency.

BOKU on Social Media

The growing importance of science communication has led BOKU University to strategically expand its social media activities. These platforms are essential tools for fostering evidence-based dialogue on sustainability and for presenting the University's research. Using concise texts, striking visuals, and mobile-first video formats like Instagram Reels and TikToks, BOKU makes complex research accessible and engaging. This approach has led to strong engagement and continuous growth in reach and followers (Fig. 22).

BOKU's social media team manages a diverse portfolio of platforms, each tailored to specific audiences and content types. Instagram[81] and TikTok[82] are used to tell visual stories connecting science, student life, and sustainability with short trend-based videos often reaching broad audiences. Facebook[83] serves as a channel for event announcements and institutional updates. LinkedIn[84] highlights research output, professional achievements, and academic collaborations.

Since November 2024, BOKU has paused its activity on X (formerly Twitter) due to strategic considerations. Instead, it is focusing on platforms that better reflect the university's values and long-term communication goals, particularly in relation to sustainability. In addition, Bluesky is being tested as a future-oriented platform for sharing scientific content and strengthening academic networks.

By aligning social content with platform culture while staying true to its mission, BOKU strengthens its connection with the community and makes science and sustainability visible, relevant, and engaging.

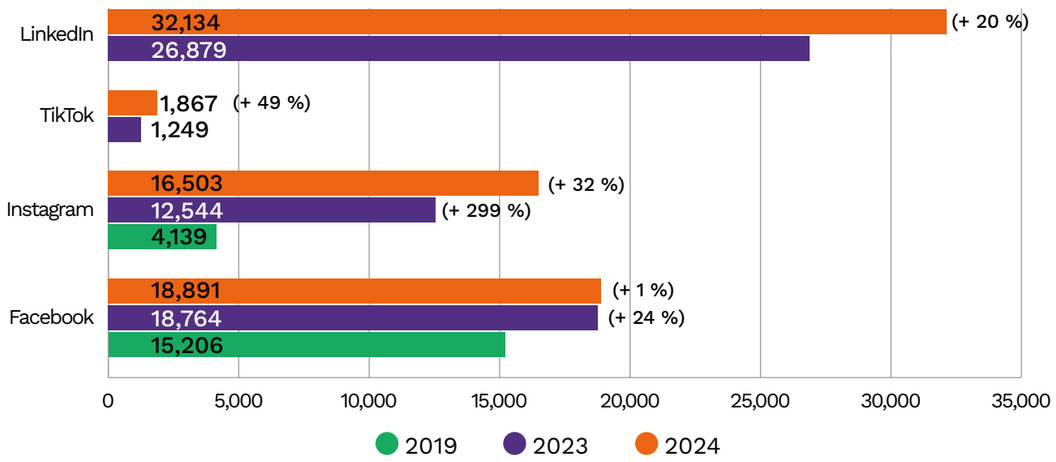


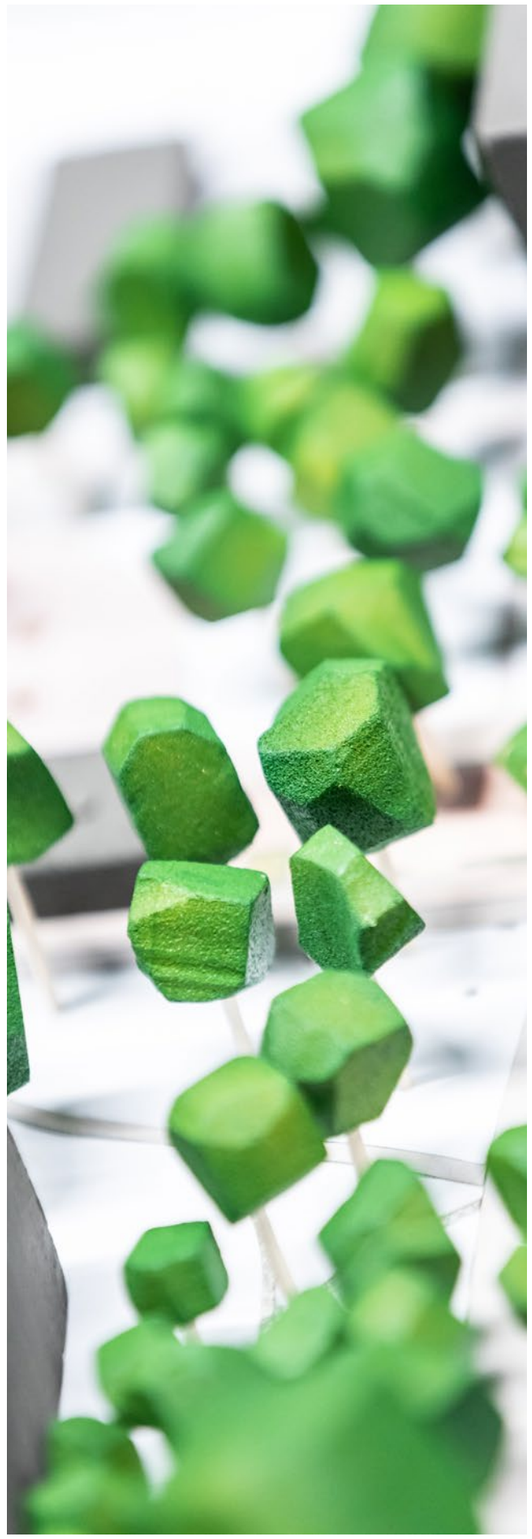
Figure 22: Number of followers by social media channels, 2019, 2023, 2024.

81 instagram.com/boku.vienna
82 tiktok.com/@bokuvienna
83 facebook.com/bokuvienna
84 linkedin.com/school/bokuvienna

In December 2024, BOKU launched its first podcast "Planet Shapers". In monthly 39-minute episodes, BOKU researchers and start-ups present sustainability-related topics and solutions along the lines of: Facts. Research. Ready-made solutions. The release of the first episode was very successful. 1st place on Apple Podcasts (science category), 17th place on Spotify (overall) and even 46th place in the German podcast charts (overall).

BOKU Magazine

Published by the Public Relations Office, BOKU Magazine[85] strengthens scientific exchange with stakeholders and society on sustainability-related topics, both within the university and among alumni and external stakeholder. Each themed issue highlights BOKU researchers' expertise, socially relevant topics, and features guest contributions from politics, business, NGOs, and interest groups, fostering diverse perspectives and exchange. In 2024 topics included biodiversity, sustainable nutrition, climate anxiety, and consumer science. The online edition averaged 48,000 views per issue on Yumpu.



85 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/stabsstellen/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/themen/boku-magazin

Science-Policy Dialogue

The relationship between science and politics is multifaceted. Interactive models of knowledge transfer see a mutual dependence and influence between science and politics. Scientific insights are not neutral and are closely linked to power relations and social contexts. This interplay is exemplified by the concepts of “boundary work”, which describes the “correct” distance between science and politics. If the relationship is too close, science loses autonomy and credibility; if it is too distant, scientific insights lose political relevance. Ideally, science and politics engage in a cooperative dialogue. A science-policy dialogue can fulfill various functions, from problem recognition to early warning and decision support, as well as a prestige and decor function. Science, particularly BOKU University, has the task of clarifying these functions and advancing with good examples of science-policy interaction.

Highlights of Science-Policy Dialogue from BOKU

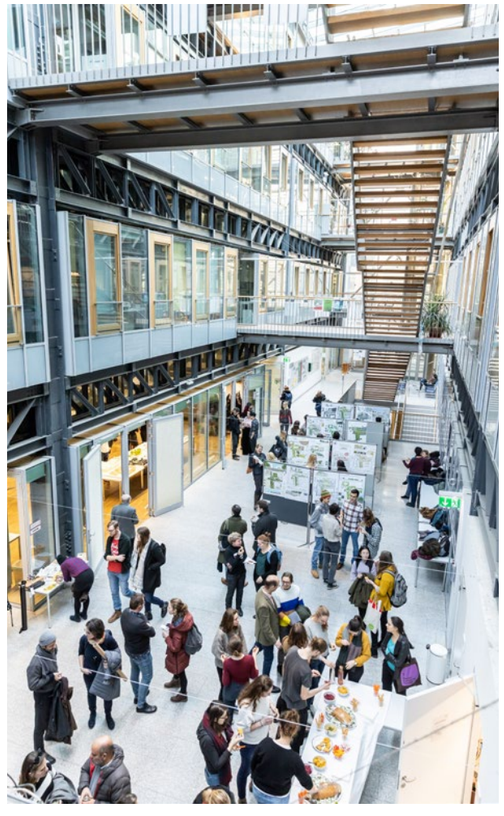
The following good practice examples were carried out as part of larger projects involving multiple universities and other stakeholders from society. Thus, they reflect good examples of scientific cooperation and science-policy dialogue.

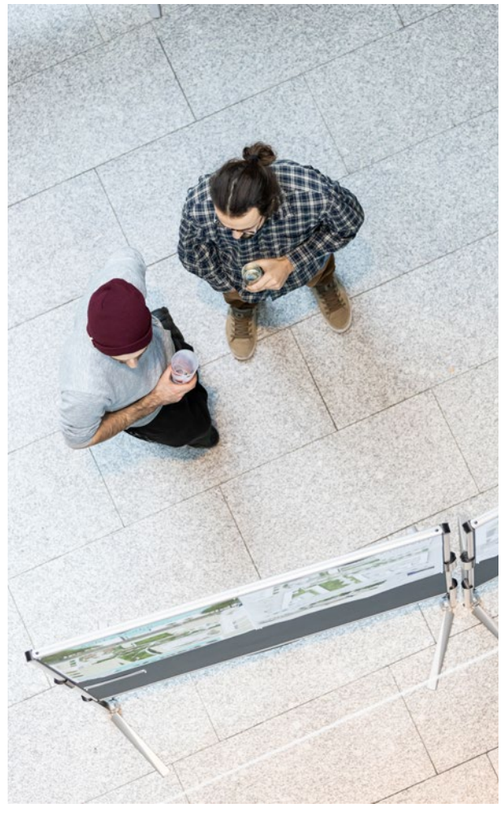
Figure 23: The UniNEtZ-project in the Austrian Parliament.

UniNEtZ @ UN in the Austrian Parliament

In July 2024, Austria presented its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the 2030 Agenda at the United Nations High Level Political Forum in the UN Headquarters, New York. Together with Federal Minister Caroline Edtstadler, BOKU SDG Coordinator Franz Fehr presented this VNR and, as Council Chair of the UniNEtZ project (see above), he illustrated and discussed UniNEtZ at the forum as Austria’s flagship project in the Voluntary National Review.

Moreover, in collaboration with the SDG ambassadors of the Austrian Parliament, a continuous dialogue between Austrian parliamentarians and scientists of the UniNEtZ project was organized from 2022 through 2024. For more than one-and-a-half years, at every parliamentary plenary day, UniNEtZ researchers presented their findings on one of the SDGs. BOKU Universities SDG coordinator led the overall project and BOKU scientists led the teams for SDG 2, SDG 6, and SDG 15. As a result, several invitations from parliamentarians to workshops and exchange meetings with experts in various Austrian regions were received.





High-Level Recommendations for Accelerating SDGs

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York on September 22 and 23, 2024, heads of state and government agreed to take bold, ambitious, accelerated, equitable, and transformative action to achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Shortly afterwards, an international group of experts, including BOKU scientist Nathalie Spittler, proposed three key approaches at the interface between science and policy to effectively implement these goals in the high-level journal “Nature Communications”[86].

APCC Special Report “Landnutzung und Klimawandel”

The Austrian Panel on Climate Change (APCC) was established by the CCCA. Renowned experts from the Austrian climate research community regularly compile the current state of research on climate change in Austria and potential measures for prevention and adaption. APCC reports offer consolidated knowledge, thus providing the public with a well-founded basis for decision making. In 2024, the APCC Special Report on “Landnutzung und Klimawandel in Österreich”[87] was published and broadly disseminated and discussed.

86 Press communication (German): https://short.boku.ac.at/5vxz3d
87 https://land.apcc-sr.ccca.ac.at/

Table 7: Objectives and targets in the area of Societal Impact.

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status in 2023	Status in 2024
Societal Engagement	Creation of enabling framework conditions for societal engagement of BOKU members in the context of sustainable development	Framework conditions for societal engagement of BOKU members (qualitative)	Identification of leverage points to promote societal engagement Broad BOKU-wide discussion on the topic of societal engagement and clarification of open questions Initiate changes in framework conditions that promote activities in societal engagement	✓ Discussion continued within the framework of the Working Group Sustainability Research → Collection of starting points ✓ Preparatory work for the development of an Action Plan 2024	✓ Discussion of how to promote transformative research at BOKU in Working Group Sustainability Research ✓ Development of an "Action plan for career paths in transformative research at BOKU" ✓ COARA[88] membership
Science Communication with a Sustainability Focus	Maintaining the current training programs to promote science communication at BOKU	Number of training programs and participants to promote science communication at BOKU	Continue and, if possible, expand the offerings	✓ Number of training sessions to promote science communication at BOKU: 11[89] ✓ Number of participants in the training sessions: 142	✓ Number of training sessions to promote science communication at BOKU: 13 ✓ Number of participants in the training sessions: 144
	Steadily increasing the number of lectures for a non-university audience and the interested public	Number of lectures in the areas of "Science to Public" and "Science to Professionals" in the FIS	Visibility through improved documentation	✓ Science to Professionals: 535 ✓ Science to Public: 205 ✓ Continuous improvement of documentation, including reminders for staff to make entries	~ Science to professionals: 468 ~ Science to public: 190
	BOKU maintains a strong media presence in the future (base year 2023)	Number of mentions of BOKU in the scientific context in the press (web and print)	Strengthen internal communication structures between researchers and public relations (e. g., by expanding the interfaces between public relations and researchers)	2023: 3,323 mentions in national print media and web portals in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland	~ 2024: 2,640 mentions in national print media and web portals in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (-20.5 %)
	Continuous growth in the number of followers on all BOKU social media channels as well as, if necessary, the establishment of new channels	Number of followers on relevant social media channels	Continued strategic management of platform-specific social media content Strong focus on campus-related storytelling using short-form video (e. g. Instagram Reels) Creative adaptation of digital trends to highlight BOKU's sustainability message Exploration of new communication channels (e. g. Bluesky) aligned with BOKU's values	✓ Follower numbers in 2023: - Facebook: 18,764 (+2.8 %) - Instagram: 12,544 (+22 %) - TikTok: 1,249 (–) - LinkedIn: 26,879 (+22.7 %) *The percentage growth refers to the increase compared to the previous year	✓ Follower numbers in 2024: - Facebook: 18,891 (+0.68 %) - Instagram: 16,503 (+31.6 %) - TikTok: 1,867 (+49.48 %) - LinkedIn: 32,134 (+19.6 %) *The percentage growth refers to the increase compared to the previous year

88 See chapter "Research", p. 45
89 GRI 2-4: please refer to footnote 70 on p. 66

✓ = Objective/Target achieved | ~ = Objective/Target not yet achieved

[Environment]

Our vision: Sustainability, climate protection, and ecological responsibility have become an integral part of our operational processes and campus management.

What Does Environmental Responsibility Mean for BOKU?

BOKU is committed to integrate sustainability as a guiding principle and to reduce its environmental impact across all central areas of its operations and campus management. The ambitious plan foresees a reduction of its own greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by two-thirds[90] by 2030. Achieving this goal requires a stringent plan and resolute action. This chapter will address the targets, management, and achievements related to the material topic GHG emissions, as well as the report topics energy use, and mobility – the two main drivers of BOKU's environmental impact.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12), GRI 305-(1-5)
Medium-term target: –66 % total emissions by 2030. Long-term target: –90 % total emissions by 2040.

Addressing and actively reducing GHG emissions is a critical component of climate action. Through its commitment, BOKU does not only contribute to global mitigation efforts but also builds expertise, deepens the understanding of emission sources and supports better informed decision making. At the same time, BOKU is aware of potential negative impacts, including unavoidable residual emissions and the risk of overlooking broader sustainability aspects due to a narrow focus on GHG emissions.

Yearly GHG balances help BOKU University to monitor its progress in reducing emissions and identify areas of improvement. We use the ClimCalc Tool (infobox "ClimCalc Tool and Methodology" on the next page) to calculate our GHG emissions. Since ClimCalc releases versions with the corresponding emission factors (EFs) for a given year only retrospectively, preliminary GHG balances are created in an initial step[91]. Once the respective ClimCalc version is published, preliminary GHG balances can be finalized accordingly. In the following, all results from GHG balances are preliminary. In 2025, BOKU plans to finalize the 2019 GHG balance, which forms the base year for the climate neutrality roadmap.

90 More details in the chapter "Climate Action at BOKU", p. 78

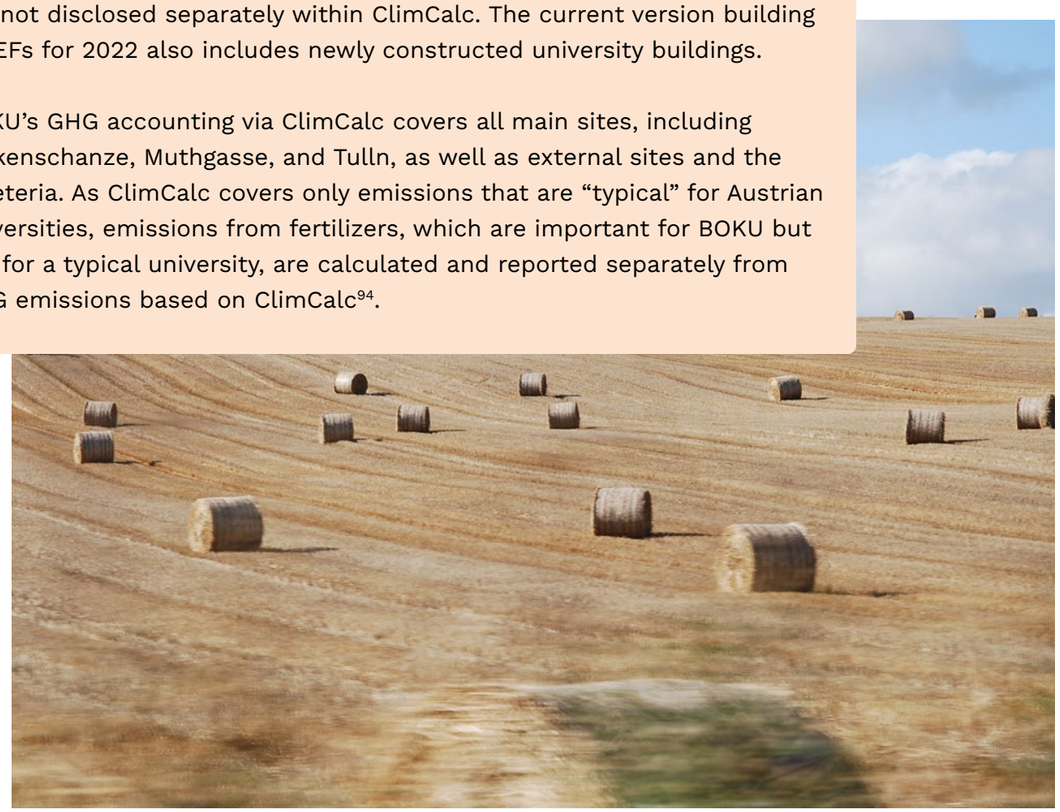
91 For the year 2024, calculations were made using the most current available EF from 2022. For the year 2023, the calculations were made using the most current available EFs from 2021. However, for the calculation of emissions from flights, long-distance bus and train journeys, the EFs from 2019 were used, following the recommendation of ClimCalc. This is because the 2019 EFs provide significantly more accurate estimates compared to the years 2020 and 2021, which were affected by travel restrictions. The base year 2019 was calculated with EFs from 2018.

ClimCalc Tool and Methodology

Since 2013, the Center for Global Change and Sustainability has compiled BOKU's GHG balances, serving as a strategic tool for decision making in sustainability and regarding BOKU's climate neutrality goal. "ClimCalc" is a GHG balancing tool which has by now become standard at Austrian universities[92]. The tool is based – as far as possible – on the Greenhouse Gas Protocol[93]. A relevance analysis in the first project phase examined which emission items are relevant for "typical" Austrian universities – these were included in ClimCalc. Emission categories include energy use (electricity, gas, district heating, district cooling, and other fuel use), mobility (business travel, commuting, outgoing students, and fleet), as well as material (refrigerants, IT equipment, paper, and cafeteria).

The tool's EFs, which are provided by the Federal Environment Agency and originate partly from its own calculations and partly from databases like GEMIS, are updated on a yearly basis. The greenhouse gases taken into account are CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFCs, PFCs, SF_6 and NF_3. Biogenic emissions are not disclosed separately within ClimCalc. The current version building on EFs for 2022 also includes newly constructed university buildings.

BOKU's GHG accounting via ClimCalc covers all main sites, including Türkenschanze, Muthgasse, and Tulln, as well as external sites and the cafeteria. As ClimCalc covers only emissions that are "typical" for Austrian universities, emissions from fertilizers, which are important for BOKU but not for a typical university, are calculated and reported separately from GHG emissions based on ClimCalc[94].



92 https://nachhaltigeuniversitaeten.at/arbeitsgruppen/co2-neutrale-universitaeten
93 https://ghgprotocol.org/
94 For more information on fertilizer emissions, please refer to footnote 106 on p. 88

Climate Action at BOKU

Austria has committed itself to the Paris Climate Agreement[95] and is aiming for climate neutrality by 2040. Accordingly, BOKU has set ambitious emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2040. BOKU is prepared to bear additional costs associated with climate protection measures to set a positive example for other universities and organizations. This objective was confirmed as part of an extension to the decision of principle[96] made by the Rectorate.

BOKU's Reduction Targets[97]

Based on BOKU's GHG inventory from 2019, reduction targets (Fig. 24) and an emission reduction path (Fig. 25) have been developed[98].

- Reduce emissions by two-thirds (66 %) by 2030 compared to the base year 2019.
- Achieve a 90 % reduction by 2040 compared to the base year 2019, offsetting residual emissions through climate projects to reach net-zero in line with the SBTi Corporate Net-Zero Standard.
- From 2030 onward, the remaining interim emissions are to be offset primarily through BOKU climate protection projects. An evaluation should take place on whether financial resources should be directed toward internal climate protection efforts instead of offsets. This will be communicated transparently.
- Due to ongoing operations and the growth of the university, emissions are estimated to increase by 6 % by 2030 in this area. This growth is currently not included in the two-thirds reduction and requires additional reduction measures.

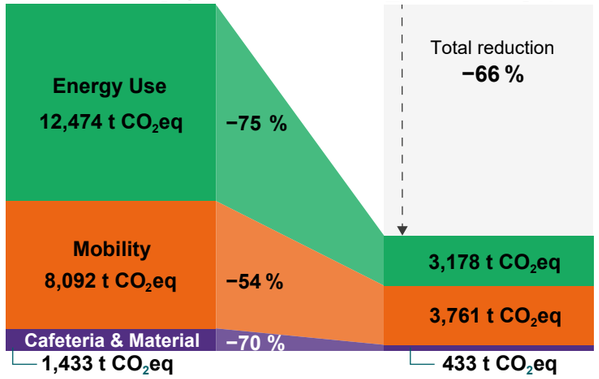


Figure 24: BOKU's emission reduction pathway until 2030*, **.

* The estimated emission increase due to new buildings – approximately 4–6 % – is not included in the two-thirds reduction and should be achieved in addition to the reduction target.

** Residual emissions which occur despite ambitious efforts for reduction are to be offset through BOKU climate protection projects starting in 2030, with BOKU continuing to strive for further emission reductions.

95 The so-called Paris Agreement established the goal of limiting human-caused global warming to 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels

96 The BOKU decision of principle is available for download at https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-on-its-way-to-climate-neutrality

97 https://boku.ac.at/en/nachhaltigkeit/boku-on-its-way-to-climate-neutrality

98 2019 was chosen as the base year because it was the most recent year unaffected by COVID-19 measures and the first year with an audited Sustainability Report, providing a reliable and accurate data basis for emission calculation and tracking progress.

SDG Hightlight:
Emission Reduction Path

The Emission Reduction Path of BOKU University

Reduction potentials were identified for individual emission categories. Based on this, sub-targets were set and proposals for measures were developed. These potentials are based on assumptions about future developments within and outside BOKU.

The most emission-intensive categories in the 2019 inventory – and hence those with the greatest savings potential – are electricity, district heating, and business travel (Fig. 25). Special attention is therefore being paid to these areas. Nonetheless, smaller categories must also be reduced as much as possible to achieve the ambitious reduction targets by 2030 and 2040 – every ton counts.

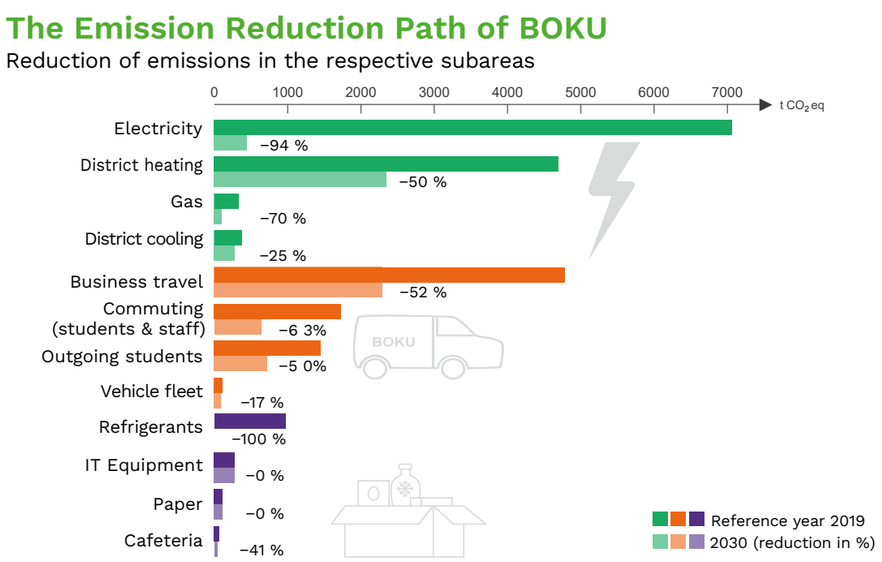


Figure 25: Emission reduction potentials for individual emission categories[99].

99 The figures are based on the preliminary GHG balance for 2019.

Table 8: Exemplary starting points and assumptions for the three major levers.

Electricity	District Heating	Business Travel
• Complete transition to UZ46-certified electricity (since 2021: 81 % UZ 46 electricity)[100] • Reduction of energy use through technical efficiency measures and behavioral changes • Demand-oriented regulation • Expansion of photovoltaic (PV) systems	• Efficient energy and building management • Ecologization of district heating by Wien Energie (no direct influence by BOKU) • Lower heating demand projected	• Guideline for promoting climate-friendly business travel • Awareness raising • Incentives for low-emission mobility • Support structures for travel planning • Expansion of video conferencing systems • Improvement of data availability

Building on the climate neutrality path, working groups within the Network for Environmental Management and responsible organizational units are developing detailed measures and interim goals to steadily progress toward the overall objective (Tab. 8).

Detailed approaches to deal with the emission categories mentioned above are discussed in the following chapters.

BOKU's Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends

BOKU's GHG emissions have shown significant reductions over recent years. It is important to note that in 2024, EFs used to calculate emissions from air travel were methodologically updated[101]. This adjustment was made in response to improved data availability and increased accuracy regarding emissions in the aviation sector, particularly with respect to more detailed emission values by flight distance and travel class. This enables a more accurate representation of actual environmental impacts, but makes comparisons with previous emissions difficult. In 2025, BOKU will evaluate the situation and make adjustments accordingly.

100 For more information see p. 87, Scope 2 emissions.

101 https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/publikationen/rep0852.pdf
https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/themen/mobilitaet/daten/ekz_doku_verkehrsmittel.pdf

Additionally, deviations in district cooling data occurred in 2023 due to an incorrect allocation of an invoice, meaning GHG emission and energy use figures in this category are not directly comparable to the previous year.

If one disregards these methodological changes and the resulting comparative difficulties, the 2024 GHG balance shows that emissions were 60 % lower compared to the 2019 base year, with a 7 % reduction from 2023. Table 9 shows the development of GHG emissions, comparing the reporting year 2024 with both the previous year (2023) and the base year (2019). Detailed trends are described in the following paragraphs.

Table 9: BOKU GHG Emissions of by emission items in 2019, 2023 and 2024, and changes compared to base year 2019 and previous year 2023 [t CO_2eq.].

Category	Emissions item	2019	2023	2024	Compared to base year 2019	Changes compared to 2023
Energy Use	Electricity	7,066	1,298	1,263	–82 %	–3 %
	Gas	332	261	185	–44 %	–29 %
	District heating	4,701	2,929	2,629	–44 %	–10 %
	District cooling*	375	330	211	–44 %	–36 %
	Other fuel use	Data not collected	127	147	–	15 %
Mobility	Business travel**	4,782	2,423	2,120	–56 %	–12 %
	Commuting (staff)	955	1,011	1,051	10 %	4 %
	Commuting (students)	780	270	285	–63 %	5 %
	Outgoing student**	1,458	324	202	–86 %	–37 %
	Fleet	118	146	148	26 %	1 %
Material	Paper	112	100	71	–37 %	–29 %
	Refrigerants	971	118	405	–58 %	243 %
	IT equipment	280	116	125	–55 %	8 %
	Cafeteria	69	59	51	–27 %	–15 %
Total		**21,999**	**9,513**	**8,893**	**–60 %**	**–7 %**

* Please note information on comparability with the previous year above.
** Please note methodological background information on emissions for 2024 in the section "GHG Emissions from Mobility".

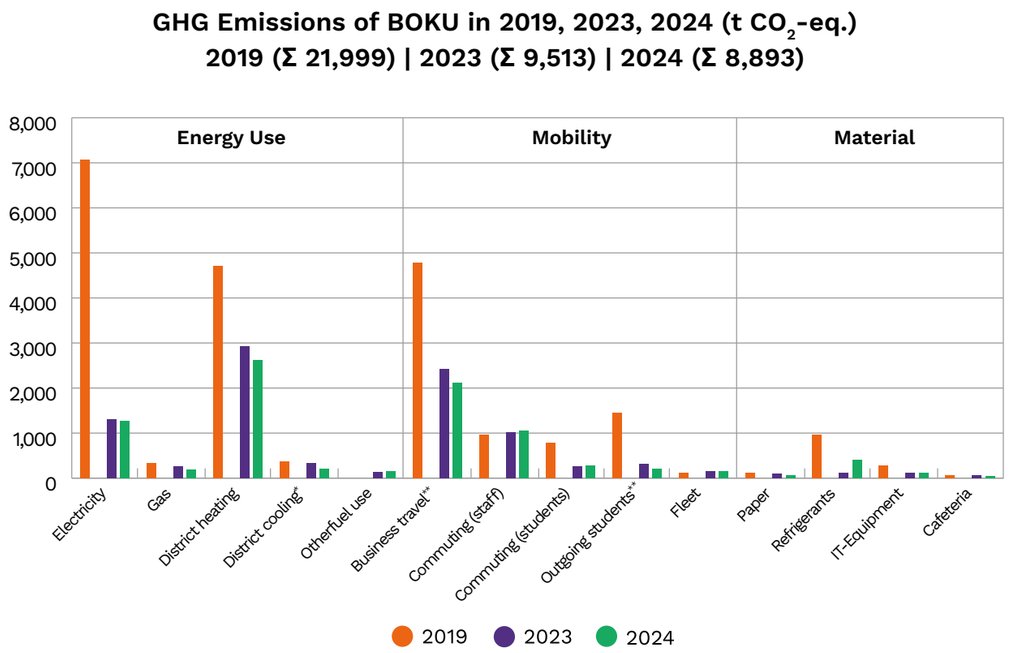


Figure 26: BOKU GHG Emissions by emission items in 2019, 2023, and 2024 [t CO_2eq.].

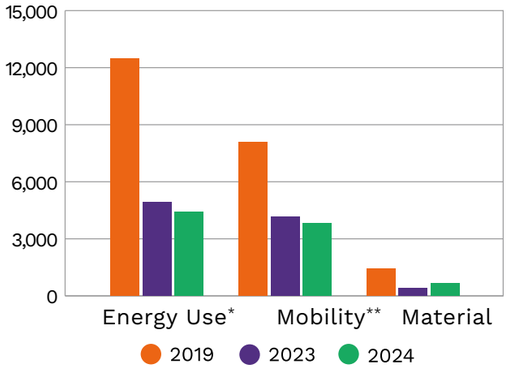


Figure 27: GHG emissions by university-specific categories in 2019, 2023, and 2024, in t CO_2eq.

* Please note that comparability with the previous year is not ensured due to deviations in district cooling data, refer to section “BOKU Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends” for more information.
** Please note methodological background information on emissions for 2024 in the section “GHG Emissions from Mobility”.

GHG Emissions From Energy Use

Overall GHG emissions from energy use were 64 % lower in 2024 compared to 2019, from 12,474 t CO_2eq in 2019 to 4,435 t CO_2eq in 2024 (10 % decrease compared to 2023, 4,945 t CO_2eq) (Fig. 27). Electricity emissions fell by 82 % compared to the base year 2019. This is mainly due to the purchase of certified green electricity[102]. This was already done in 2021. The 3 % reduction in emissions from 2023 to 2024 stems from using the most recent EF, since the use of delivered energy increased by roughly 1 %. Emissions from gas dropped by 44 % compared to 2019 (29 % compared to 2023). The reductions of emissions from gas are probably due to supply switch to renewable energy sources. Emissions from district heating fell by 44 %, while emissions from cooling appear to have decreased by 44 % from 2019 to 2024 (10 % and 36 %[103] compared to 2023). The reductions of emissions from district heating are probably due to actual energy savings, warmer winter periods, as well as using the most recent EF. Data on other fuel use was not collected in 2019. In 2024, there was a 15 % increase in emissions from other fuel use, which generally are subject to annual fluctuations due to irregular refilling, compared to 2023 (Fig. 26).

More on energy use trends and developments on p. 89.

GHG Emissions From Mobility

Emissions from mobility appear to have dropped by 53 % in 2024 compared to the base year 2019, from 8,092 t CO_2eq in 2019 to 3,807 t CO_2eq in 2024 (9 % decrease compared to 2023, 4,174 t CO_2eq) (Fig. 27). But emissions from 2024 can only be compared with those of previous years to a limited extent. This is due to a methodological change in the calculation of the EFs for flights that are being used by the ClimCalc Tool.

Methodological background information:

The change consists of a different categorization of distances, as well as differences in the aviation EFs. This is highlighted in Fig. 28 p. 84. The large reduction for short distance flights can be explained by technological improvements and methodological advancements in the calculation of EFs. The new categorization results from the fact that EFs can now build on more detailed information and that the composition of the aircraft fleets and manning levels have changed significantly since the COVID pandemic. EFs for other transport modes only slightly changed (Fig. 29 p. 84).

102 The switch to certified green electricity (UZ 46) has not yet been implemented at the University and Research Center Tulln (UFT), Schottenfeldgasse, and at the Muthgasse III location, Building Section B (which corresponds to 19 % of the electricity consumption in 2023). BOKU aims to cover its entire electricity demand with certified green electricity in the future.

103 Please note that comparability with the previous year is not ensured due to deviations in district cooling data, refer to section “BOKU Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends” for more information.

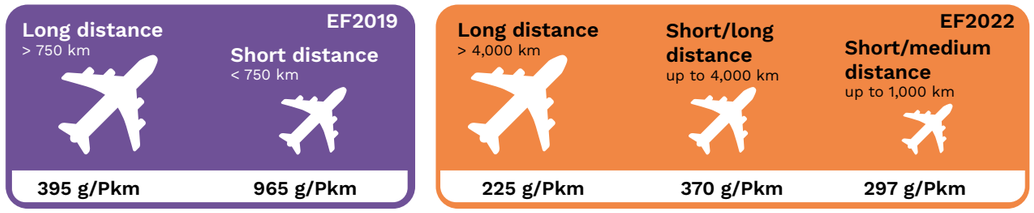


Figure 28: Changes of emission factors 2019 and 2022 for aviation and categorization of flights used by the ClimCalc Too (Pkm = passenger kilometers).

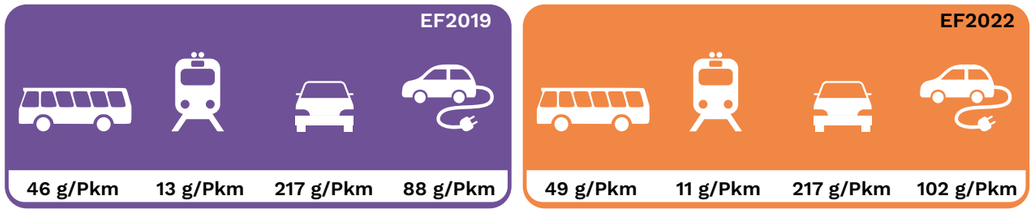


Figure 29: Changes of emission factors 2019 and 2022 for bus, train, car and e-car travels used by the ClimCalc Tool (Pkm = passenger kilometers).

The methodological change of aviation EFs becomes evident when looking at business travel emissions and outgoing students' emissions. While these emissions appear to have dropped by 56 % compared to 2019 (12 % compared to 2023) in the case of business travel emissions and 86 % compared to 2019 (37 % compared to 2023) in the case of outgoing students, this decrease does not reflect an actual reduction in travel activity. Employee commuting emissions rose slightly by 10 % and student commuting emissions decreased by 64 % compared to 2019 (4 % and 5 % compared to 2023). Here, as well, the latter decrease does not reflect an actual reduction in travel activity, but rather stems from the revised calculation methodology. BOKU fleet emissions have risen by 26 % compared with the base year 2019 (1 % increase compared to 2023) (Fig. 26 p. 82).

Traveled kilometers increased by 6 % compared to 2023, with the increase mainly stemming from increased business flight kilometers (35 %) as well as commuting and fleet kilometers (4 % and 3 %). Other business travel kilometers (car and train) as well as student outgoing flights and other outgoing students (car, car sharing, train, bus) kilometers decreased (3 %, 2 %, and 27 %) (Fig. 31).

When comparing the share of GHG emissions (t CO_2eq) with the share of kilometers traveled (Tab. 10), it becomes clear which transport modes are low-emission and which are high-emission. Business flights account for 18 % of kilometers traveled but are responsible for the largest share of emissions (51 %) in 2024. Other business travel (e. g., train, car) makes up 23 % of kilometers traveled but contributes only 5 % of emissions. Commuting represents the majority of kilometers traveled (55 %) and is the second-largest source of emissions (35 %). Outgoing students and the BOKU fleet only contribute minor shares. These findings are also illustrated in Fig. 30 and Fig 31.

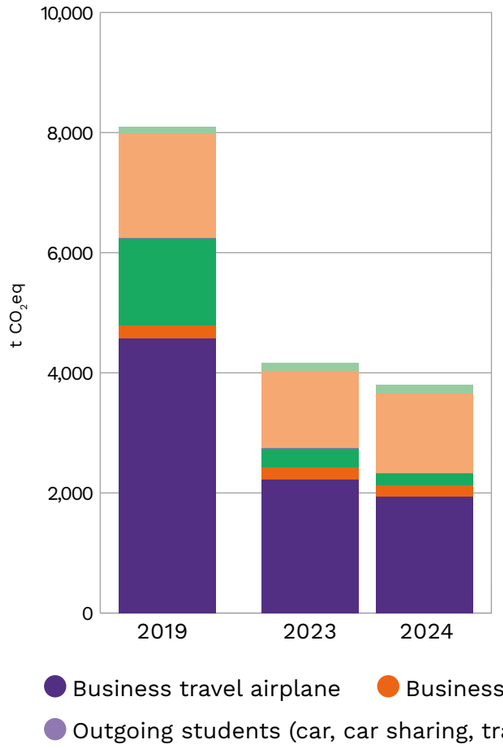


Figure 30: BOKU mobility in t CO_2eq, 2019, 2023, and 2024.*

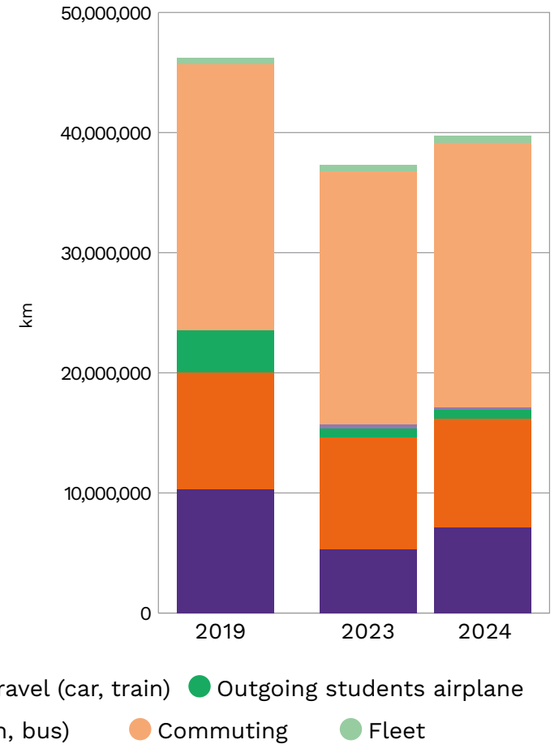


Figure 31: BOKU mobility in km, 2019, 2023, and 2024.

* Please note methodological background information on emissions for 2024 above.

Table 10: Shares of kilometers traveled and shares of t CO_2eq in 2024.

	2024		Share 2024	
Category	**kms**	**t CO_2eq**	**kms**	**CO_2eq**
Business travel (airplane)	7,137,209	1,935	18 %	51 %
Business travel (car, train)	9,008,194	186	23 %	5 %
Commuting	22,033,368	1,336	55 %	35 %
Outgoing students (airplane)	771,301	195	2 %	5 %
Outgoing students (car, sharing, train, bus)	196,786	7	0.5 %	0.2 %
Fleet	574,786	148	1 %	4 %
Total	**39,721,644**	**3,807**		

GHG Emissions From Material

Overall emissions from material decreased by 55 % from 1,433 t CO_2eq in 2019 to 652 t CO_2eq in 2024 (66 % increase compared to 2023, 393 t CO_2eq) (Fig. 27 p. 82). Emissions from paper consumptions decreased by 37 % compared to 2019 (29 % compared to 2023). Emissions from refrigerants decreased by 58 % compared to 2019 (243 % increase compared to 2023). These emissions are in general subject to large annual fluctuations. IT equipment-related emissions fell by 55 % since 2019, reflecting fewer unplanned breakdowns and changes in asset classification (8 % increase compared to 2023). Cafeteria emissions decreased by 27 % from 2019 (15 % compared to 2023) (Fig. 26 p. 82).

Further efforts and initiatives of BOKU in this area are shown in the EMAS[104].

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Intensity

GRI 305-4

In order to set the calculated GHG emissions in relation to the size or growth of BOKU, four intensity indicators were calculated, which indicate the amount of GHG in relation to the usable space, the number of students, the number of employees and the full-time equivalents (FTE) of the respective year (Tab. 12). Calculations were based on total GHG emissions of BOKU, comprising Scope 1, 2 and 3. In all cases, they show a significant reduction compared to the base year 2019 (Tab. 11).

Table 11: Intensity of GHG emissions, 2019, 2023, 2024.

Emission intensity ratios	2019	2023	2024*	Unit
Total emissions of BOKU	21,999	9,513	8,893	t CO_2eq
Emissions per employee (FTE)	12.73	5.12	4.67	t CO_2eq
Emissions per employee (headcount)	7.78	3.16	2.89	t CO_2eq
Emissions per student	2.01	0.94	0.86	t CO_2eq
Emissions per net floor area	0.14	0.05	0.05	t CO_2eq

* Please note methodological background information on emissions for 2024 in the section "GHG Emissions from Mobility".

Table 12: BOKU-specific metrics, 2019, 2023, 2024.

Organization-specific metrics	2019	2023	2024
Number of students	10,941	10,107	10,386
Employees (FTE)	1,728	1,859[105]	1,904
Employees (headcount)	2,829	3,008	3,078
Net floor area** [m^2]	153,999	174,635	174,487

** Since 2023: without use area of BIOMIN Holding GmbH

104 https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H01000/H10090/H10400/H10470/download/UE_2025_incl_Umweltprogramm_Datenvalidierung_V10.pdf

105 GRI 2–4: In the 2023 Sustainability Report, the FTE was reported instead of the annual FTE, which represents one person employed full-time over the entire year.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Breakdown by Scope

GRI 305-1, GRI 305-2 GRI 305-3

Scope 1 emissions include gas consumption, refrigerants, and fuel use in BOKU-owned vehicles, machinery, and emergency power generators. Reducing these emissions requires significant investments in energy-efficient systems and alternative heating technologies.

Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from purchased energy. These emissions come from electricity, district heating, and cooling purchases. Emissions from district heating and cooling can be addressed through efficiency measures and a shift to lower-carbon energy sources.

ClimCalc offers two methods for calculating emissions caused by electricity use (Scope 2). A simple method that uses only location-based EFs (Tab. 14 p. 88), and a dichotomous method, which differentiates between UZ 46-certified and non-UZ46-certified electricity (Tab. 13 p. 88). UZ 46-certified is the official, government-recognized eco-label for green electricity in Austria. This dichotomous method is the original method applied in the ClimCalc tool up until the version for 2022. But contrary to the guidelines of the GHG Protocol, it mixes the location-based and market-based approaches. Since the ClimCalc project has not yet developed a market-based method which would account for the environmental benefits of UZ46-certified electricity in conformity with the GHG Protocol, the current ClimCalc tool version used for the GHG balance at hand continues to also offer the "traditional" dichotomous approach. According to this approach, GHG emissions from electricity have already been reduced by 82 % compared to the base year 2019 – which mainly results from the switch of non-certified to UZ 46-certified green electricity. The simple location-based approach, by contrast, reflects only emission reductions from operational energy savings, infrastructure improvements, and regional grid decarbonization. By presenting both results, we aim to provide a comprehensive view of our emissions trajectory, illustrating both the relevance of energy procurement decisions and the effects of reducing on-site energy use.

Scope 3 are upstream and downstream emissions in the value chain but not directly owned or controlled by the university. These emissions include business travel, commuting, outgoing students, paper, IT equipment, and waste disposal. Efforts to reduce these emissions focus on business travel, which remains a challenge due to fluctuating demand, and the use of materials like paper and IT equipment. These emission items were considered relevant for universities as part of the ClimCalc project.

Table 13: GHG emissions by scope for the years 2019, 2023 and 2024 based on ClimCalc's dichotomous calculation method (without GHG emissions from fertilizers) [t CO_2eq].[106]

Scopes	2019	2023	2024	Compared to base year 2019	Changes compared to 2023
Scope 1	1,311	537	777	–41 %	45 %
Scope 2 (dichotomous method)	10,096	3,332	2,900	–71 %	–13 %
Scope 3[107] (dichotomous method)	10,592	5,645	5,216	–51 %	–8 %
Scope 3.1 purchased goods & services	462	276	250	–46 %	–9 %
Scope 3.3 fuel- and energy-related* activities (not included in Scope 1 and 2)	2,156	1,340	1,307	–39 %	–2 %
Scope 3.6 business travel**	6,240	2,747	2,323	–63 %	–15 %
Scope 3.7 commuting	1,734	1,281	1,336	–23 %	4 %
Total (dichotomous method)	**21,999**	**9,513**	**8,893**	**–60 %**	**–7 %**

Table 14: GHG emissions by scopes for the years 2019, 2023 and 2024 based on ClimCalc's simple calculation method (without GHG emissions from fertilizers) [t CO_2eq].

Scopes	2019	2023	2024	Compared to base year 2019	Changes compared to 2023
Scope 1	1,311	537	777	–41 %	45 %
Scope 2 (simple method)	10,096	6,948	6,236	–38 %	–10 %
Scope 3[108] (simple method)	10,592	6,304	5,847	–45 %	–7 %
Scope 3.1 purchased goods & services	462	276	250	–46 %	–9 %
Scope 3.3 fuel- and energy-related* activities (not included in Scope 1 and 2)	2,156	2,000	1,938	–10 %	–3 %
Scope 3.6 business travel**	6,240	2,747	2,323	–63 %	–15 %
Scope 3.7 commuting	1,734	1,281	1,336	–23 %	4 %
Total (simple method)	**21,999**	**13,789**	**12,860**	**–42 %**	**–7 %**

* Please note that comparability with the previous year is not ensured due to deviations in district cooling data, refer to section "BOKU Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends" for more information.
** Please note methodological background information on emissions for 2024 in the section "GHG Emissions from Mobility".

106 In 2024, emissions from fertilizers amounted to 56.7 t CO_2eq in Scope 1 and 135.9 t CO_2eq in Scope 3. This reveals that emissions from fertilizer application account for 7 % of Scope 1 emissions and emissions from fertilizer provision for 3 % of Scope 3 emissions. Total GHG emissions of BOKU would then amount to 9,086 t CO_2eq. For more information on GHG calculation, please refer to the infobox "ClimCalc Tool and Methodology" on p. 77

107 The ClimCalc tool currently does not provide a breakdown by Scope 3 sub-categories as proposed by the GHG Protocol. Splitting into sub-categories was done manually by BOKU:
Fully mapped: Scope 3.3 and 3.7. **Not fully mapped:** Scope 3.1 includes paper, IT devices, cafeteria purchases (meat, fish, fats & oils), refrigerants; Scope 3.6 includes business travel & outgoing students (e. g., bus travels, taxi and rented cars not included). Emissions from the remaining sub-categories are currently not recorded.

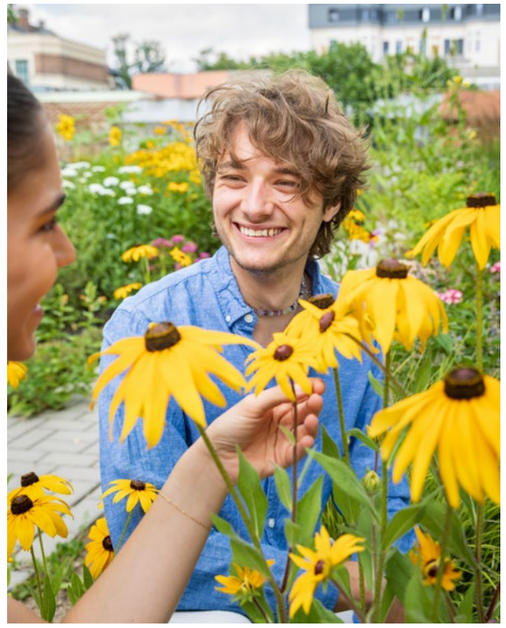
108 See previous footnote 107.

Energy Use and Supply

Medium-term target: –10 % to –15 % energy use (-94 % emissions from electricity, -70 % emissions from gas, -50 % emissions from district heating, -25 % emissions from district cooling.).

Because GHG emissions are closely linked to energy use, climate protection strategies always include energy-saving measures. By reducing demand and increasing efficiency, BOKU makes an important contribution to climate protection; however, significant investments are often required to implement energy-related projects.

Approximately three-quarters of the energy used is for the targeted control of indoor climate, with ventilation technology accounting for the largest share. About one-quarter is needed for the operation of user equipment, and approximately 1 % is used by the BOKU vehicle fleet. These figures are determined by BOKU's energy management through energy monitoring of individual buildings and extrapolations.



Energy Management

In 2021, a strategic coordination office for energy management was established within BOKU's Facility Management, continuing the efforts of the former BOKU Energy Efficiency Team. The energy management team collaborates with the BOKU Institute of Process and Energy Technology and BOKU Energy Cluster as well as with external actors (e. g. building owners and operators) to expand energy monitoring, reduce energy use through technical, structural, and awareness-raising measures, and promote the transition to renewable energy sources.

BOKU's energy management visualizes current energy use and potential savings to raise awareness and motivate action. Efforts focus on technical efficiency measures and structural adjustments. Additionally, energy use can be reduced through demand-based services for ventilation and climatization. Alongside technical measures, raising awareness among BOKU staff and end-users is crucial, as individual behavior significantly influences energy use. BOKU has intensified its efforts in non-technical measures (see below) and will evaluate the effects of implemented actions and refine future steps to achieve the desired reductions in energy use and GHG emissions.

Energy Savings Campaign at BOKU

In the fall of 2022, BOKU launched a comprehensive energy savings campaign[109] which was implemented in several phases throughout 2023 and 2024. In 2024, the focus was primarily on building optimization and structural adjustments. The campaign was developed in collaboration with the Rectorate, site coordinators, and user representatives and is effective across four areas of action that are being carried out in parallel:

The areas of action **(1) Information and Motivation**[110] and **(2) My Contribution**[111] provide general information on energy saving and use at BOKU. Ideas and suggestions of BOKU members[112] were collected and tips to contribute are being provided via posters and downloadable checklists, tailored to different user groups like seminar rooms, laboratories, and greenhouses. In 2024, for example, desk thermometers[113] were distributed to BOKU staff.

In the area of **(3) Operational Optimizations**,[114] building system controls are continuously optimized through time schedules and setpoint adjustments in coordination with teams and user representatives. In 2024, further buildings have been integrated in the central building automation system and their operation can now be optimized (Muthgasse 107, Cieslar-Haus, Experimental Farm Groß-Enzersdorf).

Action area **(4) Structural Adjustments**[115] includes technical modernizations and retrofits such as renewing lighting, heating, and ventilation systems, improving thermal insulation, and adding photovoltaic systems. In 2024, the major activities in this field were the modernization of heating systems (Cieslar-Haus, Muthgasse 107, Forest Demonstration Centre, Experimental Farm Groß-Enzersdorf) and LED transition of lighting systems (Guttenberg-Haus, Gutstav-Hempel-Haus). The “Phasing out Gas” initiative is another measure in this area of action. The aim is to convert buildings from gas supply to climate-friendly energy sources. In 2024, the BOKU site Groß-Enzersdorf was converted to biomass district heating, and Muthgasse 107 transitioned to geothermal local heating and cooling. Moreover, two new photovoltaic roof systems were implemented at Cieslar-Haus and BOKU Kindergarten. A feasibility study was started in 2024 to develop the most practical and efficient measures for sustainable cooling tailored to the particular demands of each building.

Further ongoing, implemented. and planned measures can be found in the environmental statement (EMAS)[116] of BOKU (only in German).

109 https://short.boku.ac.at/ESK
110 https://short.boku.ac.at/ESK-Ebene1
111 https://short.boku.ac.at/ESK-Ebene2
112 https://short.boku.ac.at/ESK-FAQ
113 https://short.boku.ac.at/Tischthermometer
114 https://short.boku.ac.at/ESK-Ebene3
115 https://short.boku.ac.at/ESK-Ebene4
116 https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H01000/H10090/H10400/H10470/download/UE_2025_incl_Umweltprogramm_Datenvalidierung_V10.pdf

Energy Use at BOKU University

GRI 302-1, GRI 302-3, GRI 302-4

Total energy use in 2024 decreased by 14 % compared to the base year 2019[117] from 48,989,514 kWh to 41,651,618 kWh (–4 % compared to previous year 2023, 44,103,052 kWh) (Tab. 16 p. 92). Total energy use excluding self-produced energy in 2024 decreased by 15 % compared to the base year 2019 from 48,818,506 kWh to 41,651,618 kWh (–5 % compared to previous year 2023, 43,640,127 kWh).

Energy use from delivered electricity, district heating, and district cooling from non-renewable sources has decreased by 40 % compared to the base year (–14 % compared to 2023). Energy use from delivered electricity, district heating, and district cooling from renewable sources has decreased by 69 % compared to the base year 2019 (–2 % compared to 2023). The decrease compared to the base year is in large parts caused by the switch to UZ-46 certified electricity wherever possible.

Particularly noteworthy are reductions in absolute gas use compared to 2019 by 40 % (–29 % compared to 2023). This is probably due to BOKU’s “Phasing out gas” initiative. Other fuel use increased by 15 %, with diesel consumption increasing (22 %) while gasoline consumption decreased (42 %) compared to 2023. The category “other fuel use” includes the Groß-Enzersdorf gas station as well as emergency generators. The category fleet includes fuel consumption for facility management vehicles and industrial vehicles. In 2024, the fleet energy use increased by 19 % compared to 2019 (2 % compared to 2023), with the changes resulting from diesel (18 %), gasoline (160 %), natural gas (22 %) and electric (45 %) (2023: 2 %, –28 %, 15 %, 1 %). As of 2024, the fleet consists of 4 electric vehicles.

In total, BOKU used 13,275,912 kWh district heating in 2024, 31 % less than in 2019 (–12 % compared to 2023) (Tab. 15 p. 92). Climatic conditions were warmer compared to the previous year, with a 15 % decrease in the number of heating degree days, leading to less need for heating. If climatic conditions had been the same as in 2019, district heating would show a decrease of 18 % (5 % increase compared to 2023).

Energy use data is based on internal energy monitoring data and invoices from energy suppliers. Conversion factors from the Environment Agency Vienna[118] for diesel, gasoline, and natural gas are used.

117 Since energy use is closely linked to the achievement of BOKU’s emission reduction targets, the base year is the same as that used for the climate neutrality pathway. For more information and rationale for choosing the base year, please refer to p. 92.
118 https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/publikationen/rep0948.pdf

Table 15: Total district heating use and climate-adjusted district heating use, 2019, 2023, 2024.

	2019	2023	2024	Compared to base year 2019	Changes compared to 2023
District heating	**19,109,390**	**15,014,742**	**13,275,912**	–31 %	–12 %
Climate-adjusted*	**19,741,000**	**15,483,626**	**16,232,395**	–18 %	5 %

Table 16: Energy use of BOKU based on primary energy carrier, divided into renewable and non-renewable sources, 2019, 2023, 2024 [kWh[119]].

	2019	2023	2024	Compared to base year 2019	Changes compared to 2023
Energy carrier	**kWh**	**kWh**	**kWh**		
Delivered electricity, district heating** and cooling from non-renewable sources	17,873,489	12,556,379	10,784,135	–40 %	–14 %
Gas	1,366,878	1,159,802	821,777	–40 %	–29 %
Other fuel use	0.00	384,838	444,433		15 %
Diesel	Data not collected	342,707	419,912		23 %
Gasoline		42,132	24,520		–42 %
Fleet	377,327	440,231	448,457	19 %	2 %
Diesel	365,015	423,814	431,259	18 %	2 %
Gasoline	1,123	4,026	2,916	160 %	–28 %
Natural gas	8,418	8,405	10,269	22 %	22 %
Electric	2,771	3,987	4,013	45 %	1 %
Total energy use from non-renewable sources	**19,617,694**	**14,541,250**	**12,498,802**	**–36 %**	**–14 %**
Share of energy from non-renewable sources	40 %	33 %	30 %		
Delivered electricity from renewable sources (UZ-46)	0	19,979,068	20,188,518		1 %
Delivered electricity (non-UZ-46), district heating*** and cooling from renewable sources	29,200,812	9,119,809	8,965,420	–69 %	–2 %
Self-produced electricity used for own consumption (PV)	148,886	448,534	522,510	251 %	16 %
Self-produced solar thermal energy	22,122	14,391	14,992	–32 %	4 %
Total energy use from renewable sources	**29,371,820**	**29,561,802**	**29,691,440**	**1 %**	**0 %**
Share of energy from renewable sources	60 %	67 %	70 %		
Total energy use excluding self-produced energy	**48,818,506**	**43,640,127**	**41,652,740**	**–15 %**	**–5 %**
Total energy use	**48,989,514**	**44,103,052**	**42,190,242**	**–14 %**	**–4 %**

* Based on the average heating degree days from 2013 to 2022: 3,264 K.d (Kelvin days, the unit for heating degree days)
** District heating use is not climate-adjusted in this table.
*** Please note that comparability with the previous year is not ensured due to deviations in district cooling data, refer to section “BOKU Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends” for more information.

119 1 kWh = 3,6 MJ

Table 17: Energy intensities based on m² and FTE of BOKU 2019, 2023 and 2024.[120]

	2019		2023		2024		Compared to base year 2019		Changes compared to 2023	
Energy carrier	**kWh/m²**	**kWh/FTE**	**kWh/m²**	**kWh/FTE**	**kWh/m²**	**kWh/FTE**	**kWh/m²**	**kWh/FTE**	**kWh/m²**	**kWh/FTE**
Delivered electricity, district heating* and cooling from non-renewable sources	116	10,344	72	6,689	62	5,664	–47%	–45%	–14%	–15%
Gas	9	791	7	618	5	432	–47%	–45%	–29%	–30%
Other fuel use	0.00	0.00	2	205.00	3	233.42			16%	14%
Diesel	Data not collected		2		2				23%	21%
Gasoline			0	182.55	0	220.54			–42%	–43%
Fleet	2.45	218.37	2.52	235	2.57	236	5%	8%	2%	0%
Diesel	2.37	211.25	2.43	226	2.47	227	4%	7%	2%	0%
Gasoline	0.01	0.65	0.02	2.14	0.02	1.53	129%	136%	–27%	–29%
Natural Gas	0.05	4.87	0.05	4.48	0.06	5.39	8%	11%	22%	20%
Electric	0.02	1.60	0.02	2.12	0.02	2.11	28%	31%	1%	–1%
Total energy use from non-renewable sources	**127**	**11,353**	**83**	**7,746**	**72**	**6,564**	**–44%**	**–42%**	**–14%**	**–15%**
Share of energy from non-renewable sources	40%	40%	33%	33%	30%	30%	–26%	–26%	–10%	–10%
Delivered electricity from renewable sources (UZ-46)	0.00	0.00	114	10,642	116	10,603			1%	0%
Delivered electricity (non-UZ-46), district heating and cooling from renewable sources	190	16,900	52	4,858	51	4,709	–73%	–72%	–2%	–3%
Self-produced electricity used for own consumption (PV)	0.97	86	2.57	239	2.99	274	210%	218%	17%	15%
Self-produced solar thermal energy	0.14	13	0.08	0.09	0.09	8	–40%	–38%	4%	9064%
Total energy use from renewable sources	**191**	**16,999**	**169**	**15,739**	**170**	**15,594**	**–11%**	**–8%**	**1%**	**-1%**
Share of energy from renewable sources	60%	60%	67%	67%	70%	70%	17%	17%	5%	5%
Total energy use excluding self-produced energy	**317**	**28,253**	**250**	**23,246**	**239**	**21,876**	**–25%**	**–23%**	**–4%**	**–6%**
Total energy use	**318**	**28,352**	**253**	**23,485**	**242**	**22,159**	**–24%**	**–22%**	**–4%**	**–6%**

* District heating use is not climate-adjusted in this table.

Energy use per net floor area has decreased by 24 % from 2019 to 2024. Energy use per FTE has decreased as well by 22 % since 2019 (Tab. 17). This decrease is happening relative to an increase in net floor area and FTE since 2019 (Tab. 12 p. 86).

120 Please refer to Tab. 18 on p. 94 for organization-specific metrics used for calculations. Information on the composition of electricity and district heating with regard to renewable and non-renewable sources comes from the eControl electricity labeling reports for the respective years (electricity) and from invoices from energy suppliers (district heating & cooling).

Self-Produced Energy Supply at BOKU

In 2024, approximately 573,300 kWh of solar energy (from photovoltaic [PV] systems and solar thermal energy) were generated at BOKU sites (Tab. 18). This is an increase of approximately 27 % compared to 2023, mainly attributable to the new PV system at the BOKU Kindergarten and Adolf-Cieslar-Haus. As of 2024, BOKU operates eight photovoltaic systems (at the Oskar-Simony-Haus, TÜWI, UFT, Lehrforstzentrum Heuberg, Schwackhöfer-Haus, the Water Research Laboratory, BOKU Kindergarten and Adolf-Cieslar-Haus). Additionally, a solar thermal system has been in operation at the TÜWI building since 2018.

Despite these increases, total in-house production covers only a small part of BOKU's energy use. The proportion of self-produced electricity from PV systems used for own consumption is currently only at around 1.3 % of BOKU's total energy use (Fig. 32). A feasibility study is currently underway for the establishment of a Renewable Energy Community for the individual BOKU sites, with the aim of significantly increasing the supply of renewable energy.

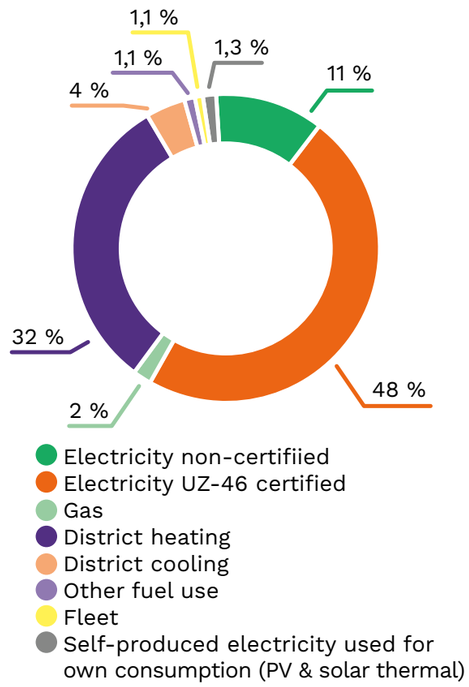


Figure 32: Energy use by energy sources in percentage, 2024.

Table 18: Energy production from renewable energy (BOKU-owned production) 2019, 2023 and 2024 [kWh[121]].

	Output of the PV systems [kWp]	2019	2023	2024
Simony-Haus	21	21,588	15,712	18,839
TÜWI	50	38,970	43,790	45,141
UFT	129	79,562	81,599	83,800
Lehrforstzentrum Heuberg	24	25,254	23,850	25,189
Schwackhöferhaus	94		88,565	87,264
Water Research Laboratory	252		227,000	274,646
Kindergarten/Gartencenter*	44			7,111
Adolf-Cieslar-Haus*	30			16,326
Solar Thermal System TÜWI	-	22,122	14,391	14,992
Total Renewables		**187,496**	**494,907**	**573,307**

*New in 2024.

121 1 kWh = 3,6 MJ

Mobility

Medium-term target: –54 % emissions from mobility (–52% emissions from business travel, -63% emissions from commuting, –50% emissions from outgoing students, –17% emissions from fleet).

BOKU is committed to climate and environmental protection by targeting a 54 % reduction in mobility-related emissions by 2030. Achieving this goal poses a particular challenge, as it depends to a large extent on behavioral changes within the BOKU community and must take into account the important role of mobility in research and teaching. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider social aspects, such as caregiving responsibilities, physical disabilities, income, and time constraints. Consequently, this reduction must be pursued through a multi-faceted approach, encompassing awareness, incentives, and regulations. This scope covers business travel, international staff and student mobility, commuting, and the BOKU vehicle fleet.

To ensure target-oriented pursuit of mobility goals and enhance strategic coordination, a new Mobility Manager position was conceptualized in 2024, scheduled for deployment in 2025. This role will oversee and communicate mobility-related measures concerning commuting, outgoing mobility, and business travel. Widespread adoption of sustainable mobility within the BOKU community is expected to generate positive ripple effects.

BOKU Business Travel: From Planes to Trains

BOKU University has set a goal to reduce GHG emissions from business travel by 52 % by 2030. Achieving this goal depends on sustained efforts, especially in limiting long-haul flights. International exchange, building networks across continents, and attending scientific conferences and congresses are integral to academic life.

New business travel policies from 2023 introduced stricter air travel rules and set incentives to use public transport and re-think travels. The rules were further tightened in 2024. Accompanying measures include support structures for travel planning and improving data availability.

The rise of business flight kilometers in 2024 by 35 % compared to 2023 is probably due to several issues with train infrastructure in Austria and Germany. In 2024, there was a noteworthy rise in train delays and failures from Deutsche Bahn and the floods in Austria in the fall of 2024, which resulted in important train routes in Eastern Austria being closed. Full service was available again from mid-December. This is also reflected in the slight decrease of other business travel kilometers (car, train).

Commuting Behavior of BOKU Members: Less Use of Cars, More Public Transport

Commuting behavior is analyzed based on mobility surveys, which are conducted at intervals of several years. BOKU surveys were done in 2014 and 2023. Each year, the most recent commuting data is extrapolated based on staff and student numbers, as well as working and study days (excluding weekends, holidays, vacation time for staff and exam-free periods for students). Commuting GHG emission calculations are based on the mobility survey 2023 from 2023 onwards. Before, calculations were based on the mobility survey 2014.

The mobility survey 2023[122] confirmed previous trends, demonstrating that the majority of BOKU members' trips are made using public transport, walking, or cycling. Increased opportunities for remote work from home and home study, as well as the expansion of short-term parking zones across Vienna, have influenced how often and by which means of transport BOKU members travelled to and from the university over the past years. The collected mobility data provides BOKU with valuable insights into how students and staff commute to the university and the resulting quantities of CO_2eq emissions.

The results of the 2023 mobility survey reveal that the vast majority of university-related trips by BOKU staff and students are made using environmentally friendly modes of transport: 61 % are completed by public transport, 19 % by bicycle, and 8 % by walking. Motorized individual transport (MIT) accounts for 10 %, while electrically powered motorized individual transport (eMIT) makes up 2 % (Fig. 33). Comparing the results of the 2014 mobility survey with those of 2023, changes can be observed in three areas:

1. **Avoid:** fewer people are travelling/ commuting
2. **Shift:** fewer people use fossil-fueled vehicles, shifting to public transport and bicycles.
3. **Improve:** more environmentally friendly technology like electric cars (e-cars) are used.

122 Specific approach in the Sustainability Report 2023 (German) or online https://short.boku.ac.at/q8vgzd

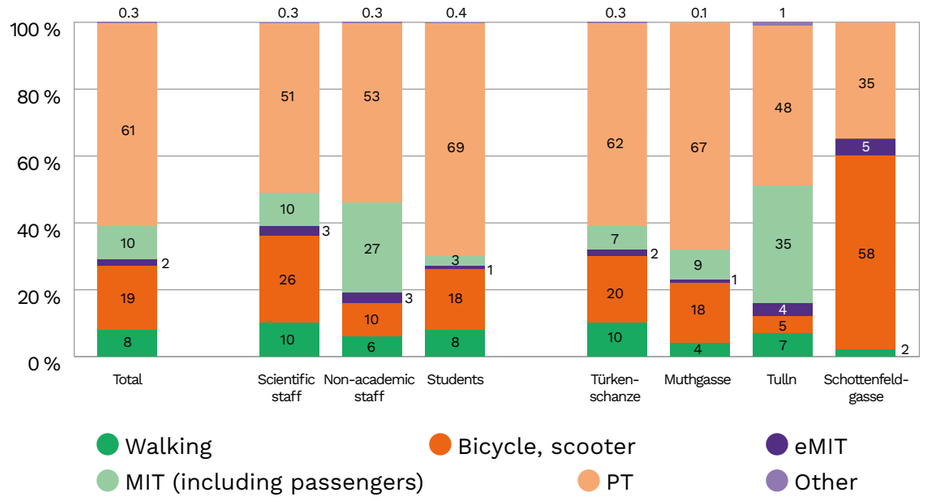


Figure 33: Mode of transport distribution of BOKU trips in percentage, mobility survey 2023, categories partially aggregated (MIT = motorized individual transport; eMIT = MIT with electric vehicles, PT = public transport).

Sustainable Infrastructure at BOKU Locations

SDG Hightlight: BOKU Bikes

BOKU has numerous bicycle parking spaces, including covered parking areas. There are eight electric charging stations for bicycles at the TÜWI building on the Türkenschanze campus. Public charging stations are available near the IFA-Tulln, at FH Tulln.

BOKU is particularly proud of its BOKU Bikes[123], which are available at a discounted price to BOKU members and stand out due to their distinctive green and white design. Since the initiative began, around 1,390 BOKU bikes have been on the roads, contributing not only to climate protection but also to the health promotion of BOKU members.

123 https://boku.ac.at/boku-university-marke-und-corporate-design/boku-bikes

BOKU Fleet: Less Diesel, More Electric

BOKU members have the opportunity to use the BOKU fleet, which offers vehicles at favorable conditions managed by Facility Management. The fleet currently includes over 20 vehicles, including four electric cars and two trailers. To further reduce the use of combustion engines in the BOKU fleet, six fleet-owned charging stations have been established. In addition to the bookable vehicles, some institutes and Facility Management also have their own vehicles, which are included in the present report (fuel consumption of fleet vehicles and institute vehicles is categorized under “fleet” in the GHG inventory).

BOKU International Mobility: Green-Mobility Initiative

BOKU International Relations encourages BOKU students, academic and general staff to make their study, internship, teaching, and training stays abroad more sustainable. In 2024, the Erasmus+ program introduced a new travel grant scheme for student mobility: participants now receive a general contribution to travel costs depending on the distance between their home and the host institution, with a significantly higher amount for those choosing environmentally friendly means of transport such as train, bus, or carpooling. This marks a considerable improvement compared to the relatively small Green Travel top-up that had been available since the academic year 2021/22, creating a stronger incentive and better support for sustainable travel choices. Around half of all outgoing BOKU students opted for low-emission transport in 2024, with the vast majority travelling by train. At the BOKU Sustainability Award 2024[124], sustainable study and business trips were also recognized in the category “Ecological and Social Responsibility in University Operations”.

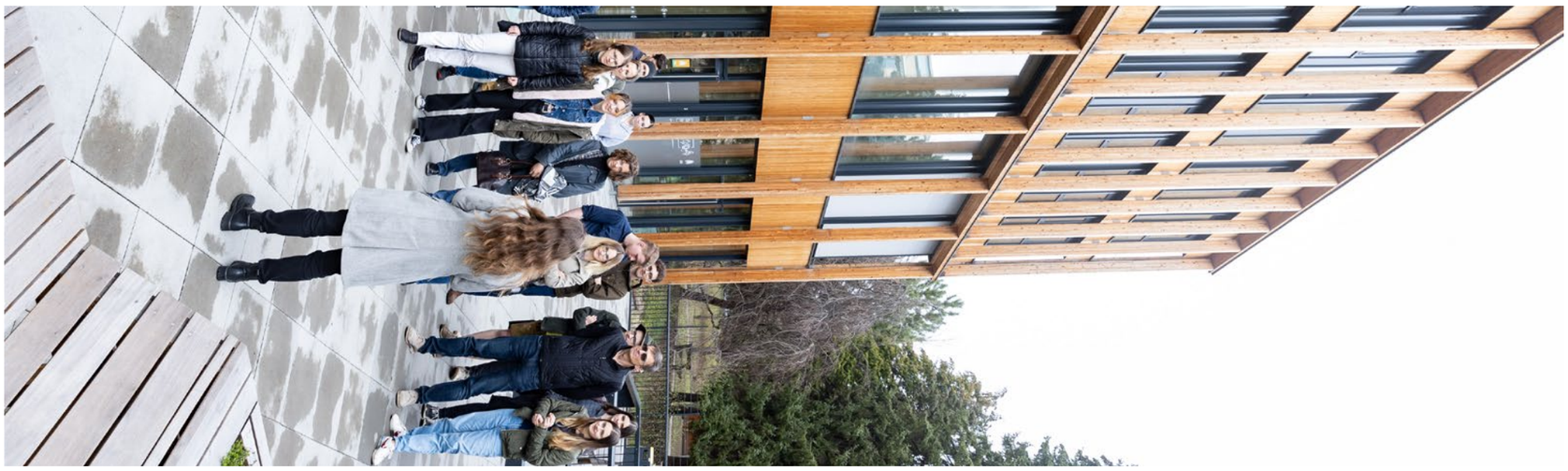
124 See also “BOKU Sustainability Award”, p. 68

Table 19: Objectives and targets in the area of Environment.

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	BOKU aims to achieve a two-thirds reduction in its emissions by 2030 (base year 2019)	Reduction of CO_2 emissions (compared to 2019)	Specification and implementation of a set of measures to achieve the two-thirds reduction by 2030 Development of interim targets Compensation for unavoidable residual emissions starting no earlier than 2030	57 % reduction in BOKU CO_2 emissions (compared to 2019)	60 % reduction in BOKU CO_2 emissions (compared to 2019)* * Please note information on comparability for 2024 in the section “BOKU’s Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends”
	Reduction of GHG emissions caused by electricity by 90 % by 2025 and continuous reduction of all GHG emissions (base year 2019) Percentage values are based on the base year 2019	GHG emissions from electricity GRI 305-1, 2, 3: GHG emissions (Scope 1–3) GRI 305-4: GHG emissions intensity (per FTE, employee, student, m^2)	Continuous reduction of electricity use through technical measures and behavioral changes Ongoing reduction of GHG emissions	Successful transition to UZ-46 certified electricity starting in 2021 (covering 82 % of total electricity use in 2023)	Successful transition to UZ-46 certified electricity starting in 2021 (covering 82 % of total electricity use in 2024)* * Please note information on how the use of UZ-46 certified electricity contributes to GHG emission reduction in the section “Greenhouse Gas Emissions Breakdown by Scope – Scope 2”
				~ GHG emissions from electricity: 1,298 t CO_2eq (–82 %) GRI 305-1, 2, 3: GHG Emissions in t CO_2eq - Scope 1: 537 t CO_2eq (–59%) - Scope 2: 3,332 t CO_2eq (–67%) - Scope 3: 5,645 t CO_2eq (–47%) GRI 305-4: GHG Emissions Intensity in t CO_2eq - Per FTE: 5.07 t CO_2eq (–60%) - Per Employee (MA): 3.16 t CO_2eq (–59%) - Per Student (Stud.): 0.94 t CO_2eq (–53%) - Per m^2: 0.05 t CO_2eq (–62%)	~ GHG emissions from electricity: 1,263 t CO_2eq (–82 %) GRI 305-1, 2, 3: GHG emissions in t CO_2eq - Scope 1: 777 t CO_2eq (–41%) - Scope 2: 2,900 t CO_2eq (–71% - Scope 3: 5,216 t CO_2eq (–51%) GRI 305-4: GHG Emissions Intensity in t CO_2eq - Per FTE: 4.67 t CO_2eq (–63 %) - Per Employee (MA): 2.89 t CO_2eq (–63 %) - Per Student (Stud.): 0.86 t CO_2eq (–57 %) - Per m^2: 0.05 t CO_2eq (–64 %)

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Energy Use	Reduction of energy use of delivered energy (excluding self-produced) by at least 10-15% by 2030 (base year 2019) Percentage values are based on the 2019 baseline	GRI 302-1: Energy Use GRI 302-3: Energy Intensity	Establishment of a comprehensive energy management system and implementation of energy efficiency measures	~ GRI 302-1 Energy Use (in kWh): 43,640,127 kWh (–11 %) ~ GRI 302-3 Energy Intensity: - kWh/m²: 250 (–21 %) - kWh/FTE: 23,246 (–18 %) + Energy-saving campaign rollout	✓ GRI 302-1 Energy Use (in kWh): 41,652,740 kWh (–15%)* ~ GRI 302-3 Energy Intensity: - kWh/m²: 239 (–25%) - kWh/FTE: 21,876 (–23%) * Please note that comparability with the previous year is not ensured due to deviations in district cooling data, refer to section "BOKU Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends" for more information
Mobility	Reducing GHG emissions from business travel by 52 % (base year 2019)	CO_2 emissions from business travel	Evaluation of the effects of the new business travel policy Improvement of data availability Explore further incentives for low-emission mobility	GHG emissions from business travel in 2023 in t CO_2eq: 2,423	GHG emissions from business travel in 2023 in t CO_2eq: 2,120* * Please note methodological background information on emissions for 2024 in the section "GHG Emissions from Mobility"

✓ = Objective/Target achieved | ~ = Objective/Target not yet achieved



[social]

Our vision: Appreciation, diversity, respect and cooperation are not just empty phrases, but an integral part of our daily organizational culture.

What Do a Good Organizational Culture and Social Sustainability Mean for BOKU University?

Organizational culture encompasses interactions within an organization and the structures shaping them, reflecting aspects such as working atmosphere, transparency, appreciation, and inclusion. Universities, including BOKU, differ from other organizations due to their high autonomy, shared goals (e. g., academic status), dependencies (e. g., funding, recognition), traditions, and values like integrity and academic freedom.

BOKU's community includes scientific and administrative staff, lecturers, students, and external service providers (e. g., canteen operators, cleaners), with varying roles, employment relationships, and connections to the university. This diversity enriches BOKU, but it also poses challenges. A sustainable organizational culture at BOKU prioritizes respect, appreciation, skill-building, health promotion, and practicing principles like diversity, inclusion, gender equality, and anti-discrimination, supported by transparent communication.

This holistic approach defines the **BOKU Spirit** – fostering positive collaboration and a strong sense of community for a sustainable future.

Employment Relationships and the Working Atmosphere

GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12)

This section addresses employment relationships and the working atmosphere to ensure long-term employee satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Key factors include effective personnel management, a respectful working atmosphere, skills development, and career opportunities as well as various support services such as the Staff Unit for Employee Protection & Health, the Equal Opportunities Working Party, and occupational psychology and health counseling. Detailed targets in the context of employment relationships and the working atmosphere, including indicators and progress status, are listed in the Table of Objectives and Targets (p. 122).

BOKU goes beyond legal requirements to promote employee well-being, offering initiatives for work-life balance, health, and professional development.

By fostering a socially sustainable organizational culture, BOKU aspires to serve as a role model, consistently acting on and embodying sustainable values.

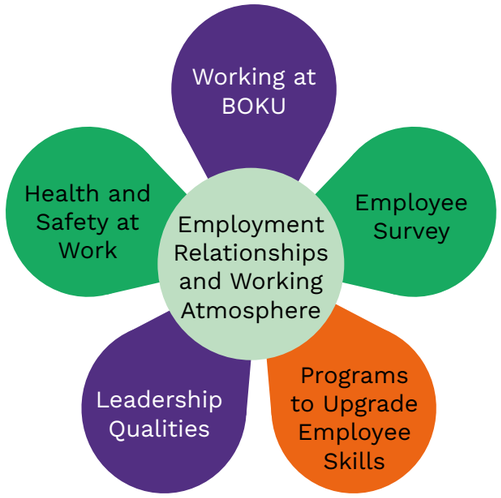


Figure 34: Sub-topics of material topic Employment Relationships and Working Atmosphere.

Working at BOKU

GRI 2-7, GRI 2-8, GRI 2-30, GRI 401-1

The following section provides an overview of staff numbers and categories, employment contracts, and transition assistance.

The Employees at BOKU[125]

Table 20: Total BOKU Employees (adjusted headcount), Fixed-Term and Permanent Employees, Part-Time and Full-Time Employees (2024)[126].

	Total	Global budget	Third-party funds
Total employees	3,078	1,851	1,227
Female	1,492	896	596
Male	1,586	955	631
Employees fixed-term and permanent			
Non-academic staff	827	691	136
Female	478	396	82
Male	349	295	54
Non-academic staff, fixed-term	158	81	77
Female	94	51	43
Male	64	30	34
Non-academic staff, permanent	669	610	59
Female	384	345	39
Male	285	265	20
Academic staff	2,251	1,160	1,091
Female	1,014	500	514
Male	1,237	660	577
Academic staff, fixed-term	1,756	776	980
Female	830	360	470
Male	926	416	510
Academic staff, permanent	495	384	111
Female	184	140	44
Male	311	244	67
Employees full-time/part-time			
Non-academic staff	827	691	136
Female	478	396	82
Male	349	295	54
Non-academic staff, part-time	342	253	89
Female	243	187	56
Male	99	33	66
Non-academic staff, full-time	485	438	47
Female	235	209	26
Male	250	229	21
Academic staff	2,251	1,160	1,091
Female	1,014	500	514
Male	1,237	660	577
Academic staff, part-time	1,646	781	865
Female	810	380	430
Male	836	401	435
Academic staff, full-time	605	379	226
Female	204	120	84
Male	401	259	142

The main employment groups at BOKU are collective agreement employees (92.82 %), civil servants (2.96 %), and contract staff (3.93 %), all of whom are covered by annual salary agreements. A small number of individuals fall outside these categories, including members of the Rectorate and nine freelance contractors, who make up an insignificant proportion of the workforce. Each year, the number of collective agreement employees increases, while the number of civil servants and contract staff decreases, as new hires can only be made under the collective agreement. The overall number of employees has remained stable during and between reporting periods (Fig. 40 p. 107).

BOKU's personnel structure is strongly influenced by its two main funding sources: the global budget (federal funds within the framework of the performance agreement) and third-party funding (public and private project funds). The number of staff within these two areas is now almost evenly balanced.

Third-party funding, which constitutes a significant portion of BOKU's total budget compared to other universities, is project-based and typically provided for a limited period to support the implementation of research projects. This funding model inherently leads to high and desired turnover, particularly among scientific staff. In contrast, the global budget supports long-term employment, primarily for technical and administrative staff[127].

125 Cut-off date: December 31, 2024; excluding employees on leave / released from duty, without duplicates, including freelance contractors.

126 Due to limited data availability, it is not possible to report on gender diversity beyond the binary categories.

127 As a result, staff turnover at BOKU cannot be meaningfully represented. A combined calculation of turnover does not yield useful results, and even a separate analysis of the two funding areas produces constant values with limited significance. For these reasons, staff turnover is not considered a suitable index for the Sustainability Report.

The majority (73 %) of BOKU employees belong to the academic staff category (Fig. 35). In addition to the basic funding provided by the federal government (global budget), third-party funds obtained from public research funding programs or contract research play a crucial role in financing (Fig. 36). This reliance on third-party funding highlights the dynamic nature of BOKU's workforce, particularly in the academic sector.

Administrative staff work in university administration, staff units, and service departments, ensuring the university's daily operations run smoothly. Third-party funded academic staff primarily work on fixed-term research projects. This distinction reflects the composition of the workforce in terms of funding sources and types of employment (Fig. 37 and 38). Additionally, the proportion of part-time employees is much higher among academic staff (73 %) than among non-academic staff (41 %) (Fig. 39). At BOKU, full-time employment is defined as a workload of 40 hours per week, and anything less is considered part-time. Compared to the previous year, the number of non-academic staff increased by 19 individuals (+2.3 %) (Fig. 40).

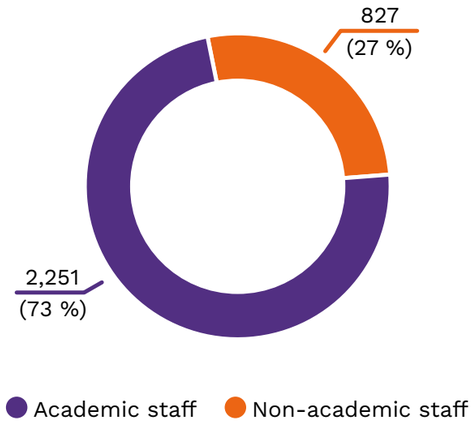


Figure 35: BOKU Employees by Employment Category, 2024.

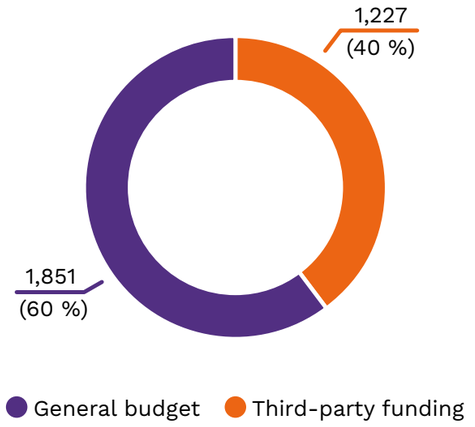


Figure 36: BOKU Employees by Funding Source, 2024.

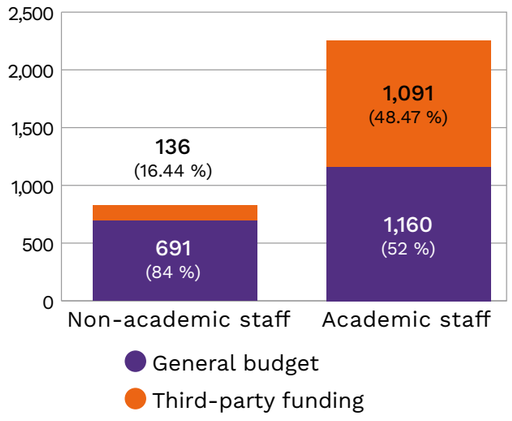


Figure 37: Share of Third-Party Funding and General Budget in Academic and Non-Academic Staff, 2024.

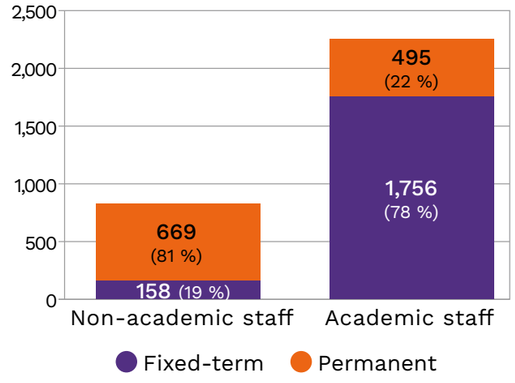


Figure 38: Employees by Contract Type, 2024.

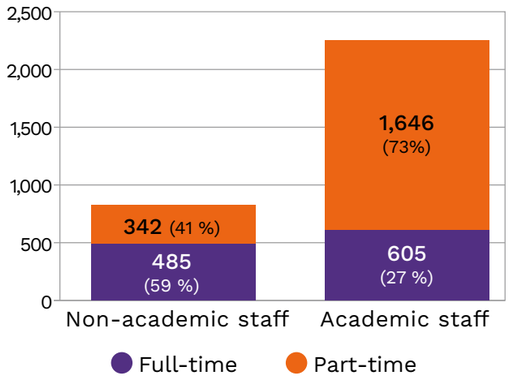


Figure 39: BOKU Employees by Employment Scope, 2024.

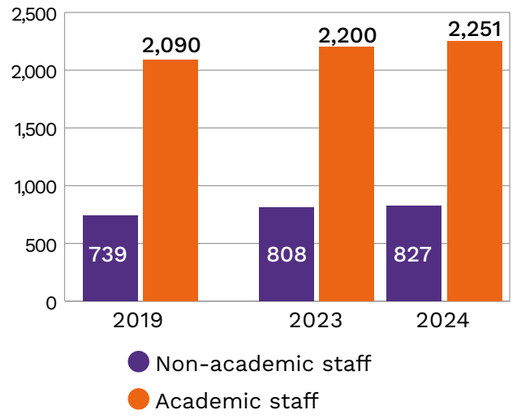


Figure 40: Development of Non-Academic and Academic Staff According to the Intellectual Capital Reporting 2019, 2023, and 2024.

Management of Fixed-Term Employment Contracts

Fixed-term employment contracts, especially in the third-party funding sector, pose challenges for many academic staff in terms of career planning. BOKU is aware of this issue and is working to mitigate these structural circumstances. A guideline for permanent employment of academic staff with a doctorate (for PostDocs both in the global budget and third-party funding) was published in August 2023[128]. With this guideline, BOKU creates the possibility of permanent employment for academic staff after completing their doctorate in the case of exceptional academic achievements or methodological knowledge and skills that are essential for BOKU. Such academic staff are thus offered the opportunity of a career perspective. Since entry into force, contracts of 21 PostDocs could be transferred to permanent employment.

Support for Retirement and Career Transitions

GRI 404-2b

In Austria, part-time retirement and partial pension allow a gradual transition into retirement with employer consent, preserving pension entitlements, sickness benefits, severance pay, and unemployment benefits. BOKU offers all legally supported models for these arrangements.
Additionally, retraining or reskilling is mandatory under the collective agreement (§ 22 para 3) if an employee of a certain age and length of service cannot continue in their current role due to changes in work volume, university organization, or working conditions. Although rare, such cases are addressed appropriately.

Severance payments upon departure are determined by length of service, with further details outlined in the 2011 company agreement on retirement, occupational disability, and survivor benefits.

128 https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H01000/mitteilungsblatt/MB_2022_23/MB28/RL_Entfristung_zur_Beschlussfassung_final_220823_1.pdf

Employee Survey 2023

Employee surveys offer valuable insights into job satisfaction as well as the desires and needs of the workforce. The 2023 employee survey provided insights into job satisfaction, working conditions, communication, health promotion, and the work situation of individuals with disabilities. The survey achieved a response rate of 33 %, with 808 employees participating.

The key results 2023 were:

- 87.4 % reported being very satisfied or satisfied with BOKU as an employer (Fig. 41)
- 62.7 % of participants are satisfied with Healthy BOKU offerings
- 32.1 % are aware of counseling services; 19.2 % participate in physical activity programs
- Highest requests for measures: physical activity (46 %) and mental health (41.1 %)
- Nutrition needs: 40.3 % of non-academic staff vs. 19.8 % of academic staff
- 11 % of participants reported having a disability or health impairment

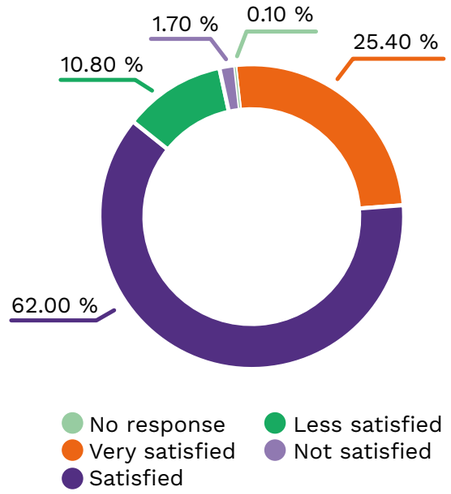


Figure 41: General Satisfaction with BOKU as an Employer; Employee Survey 2023.

Process for Handling the Results

Results of the survey 2023 were discussed with both staff councils at BOKU in April 2024 and an overview was presented to all BOKU employees in an article in the BOKU Magazine 2/2024[129].

The work program established based on the 2023 survey focused on action areas in three departments and three service units where specific fields were rated particularly poorly. In 2024, key topics and action areas were identified based on employee feedback, with areas showing poor results discussed and measures developed. Heads of units with particularly negative results were invited to individual discussions, and specific measures were agreed upon. The next survey is scheduled for 2026.

129 https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/68728362/boku-magazin-2-2024

Programs Implemented and Assistance Provided to Upgrade Employee Skills[130]

GRI 404-2a, GRI 404-1

Training and upskilling are central to fostering collaboration and raising sustainability awareness at BOKU. Therefore, the primary goal in this area is to provide and promote training opportunities through the BOKU Training Pass, coordinated by the Personnel Development team.

The BOKU Training Pass

The BOKU Training Pass[131] consolidates BOKU's training offerings, providing employees with a quick overview of enrolled courses.

Notably, the BOKU Training Pass enhances internal knowledge management, with nearly half of the training sessions conducted by BOKU employees, who continuously share their professional expertise and process knowledge with (new) colleagues. In addition to the BOKU in-house trainings, BOKU employees have the opportunity to record externally attended training sessions in the BOKU Training Pass.

BOKU Training Data

The GRI 404-1 indicator cannot be meaningfully assessed because the total number of employees includes a high proportion of marginally and temporarily employed groups (such as lecturers, student staff, and short-term project staff) who are not part of the university's core staff. These groups are not the primary target audience for internal training but are not excluded from participation either. While it would be possible to filter the core staff from the total number of employees, it is not feasible to do so for the course attendance data, as the registration data does not provide information about the type of employment. Consequently, the data can only be presented as follows:

Since 2019, course attendance has significantly increased: Employee participation has increased from 884 to 1,142 employees, and total attendances have increased from 1,940 to 3,091. Training days rose from 1,929 to 2,355 (Fig. 43)[132]. In 2024, BOKU maintained its internal course offerings with 201 courses (2023: 198). On average, participants attend 2 to 3 courses per year, most of which are shorter than one day. Women make up about two-thirds of the participants (Fig. 42).

130 https://short.boku.ac.at/personalentwicklung/fortbildungsprogramm

131 https://boku.ac.at/en/personalentwicklung/themen/boku-training-pass

132 The key figures include one- or multi-day training courses and seminars, as well as half-day formats or two-hour introductory workshops. To calculate the number of training days, the total duration of all training activities is divided by a standard duration of 8 hours per training day. In contrast, the number of course attendances counts each participation in a training activity, regardless of its duration.

Further trends and data:

- **AI Training in 2024:** Due to recent technological advancements, the focus in 2024 was on training skills for using artificial intelligence in daily work and higher education. Thirteen AI-related trainings were held, with a total of 211 participants.
- **E-Learning Developments:** Another ongoing focus is on diversity awareness and scientific integrity, available to BOKU staff on the Moodle e-learning platform. Courses such as "Unconscious Bias," "Intercultural Competence," and "Good Scientific Practice and Research Integrity" provide essential skills that staff can access and complete at their own pace.

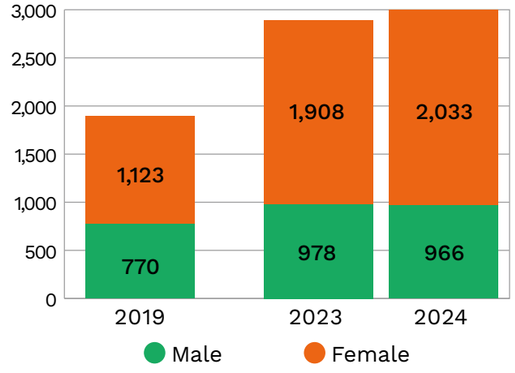


Figure 42: Number of Course Attendances in Internal BOKU Trainings 2019, 2023, and 2024, by Gender.

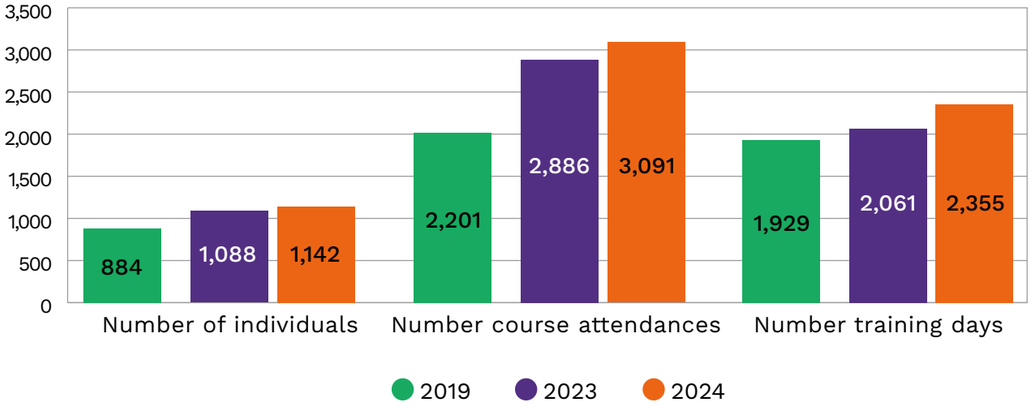


Figure 43: Number of Individuals, Course Attendances, and Training Days, Compared Across the Years 2019, 2023, and 2024.

Career Advancement for Academic Staff

Career advancement[133] measures were further intensified in 2024. BOKU has consistently implemented the career track model[134] since the introduction of the collective agreement. It also leverages career opportunities within the professorial ranks.

By the end of 2024, BOKU had 63 individuals in career positions, including 37 associate professors, 21 assistant professors, and 5 university assistants in tenure-track positions according to § 13b para 3 UG.

The “Shape your career[135]“ program offers career support through events and workshops. In 2024, 26 events with 234 participants covered topics like “Strategic Career Planning” and “Researchers and teachers go international”.

The PostDoc Coaching Group started its third session in April 2024. In monthly meetings, peers challenge each other in developing their scientific profiles and submitting habilitations. Club Doc was launched in 2024 and provides a platform for PhD students to exchange ideas and tackle dissertation challenges. Additionally, a career orientation workshop for student employees was offered for the first time in 2024, aiming to reflect on values, aspirations and possible career paths.

BOKU Focuses on Leadership Qualities

A culture of competent leadership is fundamental to BOKU’s sustainable organizational development. To support this, BOKU continuously strengthens leadership practices through targeted measures based on employee feedback and tailored training. Detailed objectives in this area are listed in the Table of Objectives and Targets (p. 122).

The 2023 staff survey showed that 44 % of employees were very satisfied and over 30 % were satisfied with their direct supervisors (Fig. 44). Building on these results, BOKU offers various initiatives to further enhance leadership competencies.

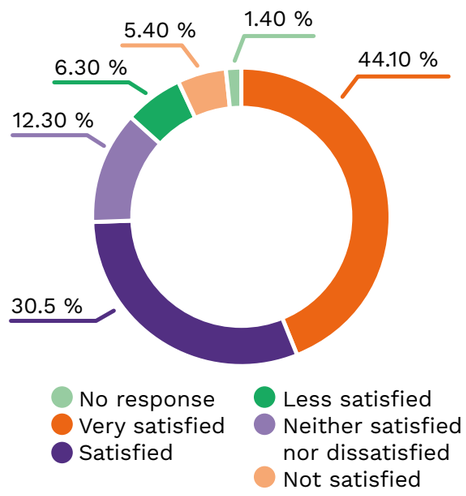


Figure 44: Satisfaction with the Relationship to the Direct Supervisor.

133 https://boku.ac.at/en/personalentwicklung/themen/scientific-career-and-career-promotion
134 https://boku.ac.at/en/personalentwicklung/themen/scientific-career-and-career-promotion/career-positions-and-qualification-advisory-board
135 https://short.boku.ac.at/shapeyourcareer

Leadership Development at BOKU in 2024[136]

GRI 404-2a

In 2024, BOKU enhanced leadership skills through 22 training sessions attended by 217 participants (127 women and 90 men). The sessions covered a wide range of topics, including:

- **Core Leadership Skills:** “Basic Leadership Competencies,” “Leading in Change,” “Positive Leadership” and “Agile Leadership.”
- **Communication:** “The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback”, “Words as Walls or Bridges - Effective Communication”
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** “Inclusion in the Workplace”, “Unconventional Colleagues and Other Learning Opportunities”
- **Legal Knowledge for Managers:** “Basic Labor Law for Managers”, “Conflict, Bullying, Sexual Harassment – What is What and What to Do?”. These two courses were newly designed in 2024 and aim to address specific knowledge gaps in the legal aspects of personnel management.
- Additionally in 2024, BOKU launched its first **Management Science course for Associate Professors**, with 14 participants enhancing leadership skills and networking over three days. A follow-up for past leadership course graduates also brought together 12 professors to reflect on their leadership experiences.

Principles of Personnel Management

Developed in 2017 through extensive discussions with managers, the Rectorate, and committee delegates, these principles outline the values and attitudes guiding employee management at BOKU. They include:

- Role model behavior
- Fostering a culture of mutual responsibility
- Setting goals and achieving them
- Transparency, communication, and participation
- Trust, appreciation, and respect

One tool to ensure adherence to these principles is appraisal interviews. Any deficiencies identified during these discussions can be addressed by the supervisor. If no improvement occurs, the employee has the option to escalate the issue to the next level, such as the Department Head or the Staff Council.

136 https://boku.ac.at/en/personalentwicklung/themen/personnel-development/fuehrungskraefteentwicklung

Appraisal Interviews[137]

GRI 404-3

These annual discussions between employees and direct supervisors are a key tool for personnel management at BOKU, complementing daily communication and addressing strategic issues and individual development. They also aim to advance the development of organizational units and the entire university.

In 2024, BOKU conducted a comprehensive evaluation of appraisal interviews using an online questionnaire. Over 600 colleagues responded, showing a positive attitude and high acceptance: 88.8 % consider the interviews “very important” or “important,” and 90.8 % are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the interview atmosphere. The efforts in monitoring and quality management of appraisal interviews are paying off.

The employee appraisals include a review of the previous working year and a plan for the future working year, but no “performance evaluation” in the literal sense. At the level of professorships, however, individual evaluations are mandatory every six years. Approximately 22 professors, or 16.67 % of professorships (full professorships and associate professorships), are evaluated annually with regard to their performance.

Health and Safety at Work

BOKU’s objectives and targets in the area of employee safety and health promotion focus on maintaining key certifications (ISO 45001, BGF Seal of Approval), regularly evaluating psycho-social risks, and further developing successful initiatives such as the Healthy BOKU formats. Detailed targets, including indicators and progress status, are listed in the Table of Objectives and Targets (p. 122). Some objectives have been revised for 2024, as earlier goals have already been achieved. The Staff Unit for Employee Protection & Health is responsible for the operational implementation and evaluation of measures.

ISO 45001:2018[138]

GRI 403-1

In 2023, BOKU became the first Austrian university to achieve full certification to ISO 45001:2018, a management system for occupational health and safety. This certification supports the promotion and protection of the physical and mental health of both employees and students. Building on this achievement, in 2024, BOKU continued to focus on key improvements such as safer and healthier workplaces, transparent and structured work processes, clear responsibilities, enhanced communication channels, accident prevention, better integration of new employees, increased legal certainty, defined reintegration processes, and higher motivation and qualification levels.

137 https://boku.ac.at/en/personalentwicklung/themen/personnel-development/appraisal-interviews
138 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/stabsstellen/an-gesund/iso-45001

Occupational Health Management – Healthy BOKU[139]

Healthy BOKU promotes employee health and well-being through holistic, long-term measures addressing body, mind, and soul. All employees have access to these services, and a limited number of psychological counseling sessions are also available for students.
The following projects and initiatives demonstrate BOKU’s commitment in this area:

BGF Seal of Approval: BOKU received the quality seal for 2025–2027 by “Netzwerk Betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung (BGF)”.

BOKU Health Day 2024: Celebrating 15 years of Health Day, two events on physical, mental, and emotional health drew over 300 participants.

Focus on Psychosocial Health: BOKU’s “Psychosocial Health” project aims to prevent and address workplace stress and mental health issues, fostering awareness and reducing stigma as part of occupational health management. The following initiatives were implemented and continued:

- Occupational Psychological Counseling[140]: available in German and English with on-site office hours at Türkenschanze, Muthgasse, and Tulln
- Online Consultation – Healthy BOKU: available as needed
- Counseling by the Association “Chronically Ill”[141]: offered at least twice per semester
- Mental Health Coaching for Return-to-Work Part-Time[142]: provides support for a gradual re-entry into professional life after long-term illness
- Trusted Advisor Program[143]: modeled after the “Mental Health First Aid Helpers,” this program was implemented in collaboration with the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna in 2022 and the University of Klagenfurt in 2024; a total of 19 advisors are currently active at BOKU
- Further measures were developed based on the evaluation of mental stress in the workplace 2023, including a new working group on “Working in a Changing Climate” and a subgroup on “Climate Emotions”; workshops and seminars on topics such as restful sleep, resilience and burnout prevention were offered through the staff development program

Focus on Movement: Healthy BOKU offered and promoted various courses and programs to support health through exercise, such as Pilates, Yoga, back training, mobile Chair Shiatsu, and the digital movement tool “Mobile Training Bürobuddy.”

BOKU 4.0 – Health in the Digital Workplace 4.0: The FGÖ-funded project (Fonds Gesundes Österreich) aims to promote health literacy and fair health opportunities through a digital platform. All documents and recordings of past events are available on “BOKU 4.0”[144].

139 https://boku.ac.at/gesunde-boku
140 https://boku.ac.at/an-gesund/themen/arbeitspsychologische-beratung
141 https://boku.ac.at/gesunde-boku/chronisch-krank
142 https://boku.ac.at/en/betriebliches-gesundheitsmanagement-gesunde-boku/partial-reintegration-wietz
143 https://boku.ac.at/en/betriebliches-gesundheitsmanagement-gesunde-boku/trusted-advisor
144 https://boku.ac.at/gesunde-boku/gesundheit-in-der-digitalen-arbeitswelt-4-0

Internal Communication and Transparency

GRI 3-3 (Material Topic, p. 12)

The main focus in this area is on optimizing communication structures and processes to ensure transparency, reduce friction, and boost employee satisfaction. The specific objectives are listed in the Table of Objectives and Targets (p. 122). Some objectives have been revised for 2024, as earlier goals have already been achieved.

Transparency includes participation and engagement, from feeling well-informed about BOKU University initiatives to having a say in decisions. Involving future users in university-wide initiatives, such as construction projects and new process workflows, increases acceptance and integrates the knowledge and competencies of BOKU members into internal processes.

How Does Internal Communication Work at BOKU?

Effective communication is vital for fostering collaboration and transparency at BOKU. The university employs a variety of channels to ensure that information is disseminated efficiently and that all members are engaged in the decision making process. The ultimate responsibility for internal (and external) communication lies with the Rectorate.

Rectorate meetings are held weekly to discuss current issues and make decisions. Depending on the topic, department heads, professors, academic staff representatives, non-academic staff, service managers, heads of staff units, site managers from various BOKU locations, student representatives and external persons may be invited.

Committee meetings occur regularly between Rectorate members and various BOKU stakeholder groups:

- The University Council meets four times per year. Participants include Members of the University Council, the Rectorate, the Chair of the Senate, the Heads of both staff councils, the Chair or a representative of the Equal Opportunities Party, and the Chair of the Student Union.
- The Senate Chair team meets monthly with the Rectorate. The Rector and/or a Vice-Rector participate in Senate meetings upon invitation to discuss specific topics.
- The Rector or a Vice-Rector provides updates on current topics at the monthly meetings of the association of university professors at BOKU (Professor's Club).
- The Rector meets with representatives of the junior faculty (Mittelbau) twice per semester and also participates in the newly established meetings of female professors at BOKU.
- The Vice-Rectorate for Personnel, Organization, and Digitalization coordinates with staff council chairs every three months or as needed. Additionally, there are staff council meetings twice per semester involving the Rector, the Vice-Rector for Finances and Infrastructure, and the Vice-Rector for Personnel, Organization, and Digitalization. Additionally, one- or two-day retreat meetings are held annually, e. g., to discuss planned company agreements or strategic aspects, with the involvement of the staff councils.
- Regular conferences are held between the department heads, the heads of service offices and staff units and the Rectorate to facilitate information exchange and coordination. Since October 2023, the Rectorate and department heads have also held regular retreat meetings to discuss strategic topics.

At the **Department and Institute levels**, communication structures vary to meet specific needs, leading to differing perceptions of internal communication quality. The statutes of the 15 departments generally stipulated that the Departmental Board, composed of elected representatives, must convene at least once per year to discuss, e. g., resource allocation to the Institutes or strategic issues related to departmental development, functioning as an advisory board to the Head of Department. Additionally, an annual departmental plenary meeting was required. In 2024, the departmental statute was revised through a participatory process as part of the BOKU2025 reorganization. As a result, it was decided that, starting in 2025, additional regular meetings of the Heads of Institutes, as well as plenary meetings for the members of each Institute, will become mandatory.

Written communication includes information letters from the Rectorate, Senate and Staff Councils sent via email to all staff and students. BOKU newsletters, such as the research, international relations, and sustainability[145] newsletters, provide topic-specific information. The BOKU website serves as a public platform and intranet for staff and students. The BOKU Magazine[146], published quarterly, highlights projects, research areas, and developments.

New communication formats have been introduced to enhance transparency and employee engagement. In 2024, significant emphasis was placed on communicating the reorganization process BOKU2025 and actively involving all employees through various initiatives. These included on-site Town Hall Meetings held in April and October 2024, as well as online Open Spaces in April and June 2024. To further support this effort, the Vice-Rector for Personnel was available to address questions about the reorganization during online staff assemblies organized by the staff councils in June and November 2024. The Round Table, held in March, June, and November 2024, involved all BOKU stakeholder groups in strategic processes.

145 https://short.boku.ac.at/mm52ed
146 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/stabsstellen/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/themen/boku-magazin

Diversity and Inclusion

This section outlines the structures, objectives, and initiatives implemented to foster diversity and inclusion at BOKU.

Diversity Strategy at BOKU[147]

In 2021, the Coordination Office for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Accessibility[148] ("Ko-Stelle") was tasked with strategically and operationally managing BOKU's Diversity Strategy on behalf of the Rectorate (responsibility) and in collaboration with various partners. The strategy positions diversity as a core principle of a sustainable, inclusive, and socially just university culture, adopting a systemic and intersectional approach to address structural inequalities and link individual challenges to broader societal developments.

Six key goals of the Diversity Strategy:

1. Gender equality and anti-discrimination
2. Accessibility and inclusion
3. Social inclusion
4. Intergenerational justice and cooperation of all BOKU members
5. Ethnic diversity and criticism of racism
6. Work-study-life balance

The strategy spans **seven action areas:** management, research, teaching, study, personnel, internationalization, and communication. Diversity is viewed as dynamic and multidimensional, encompassing social, cultural, physical, and psychological factors. Aligned with national and international frameworks (e. g., UN SDGs), it aims to transform university structures, processes, and culture through participatory processes, transparent governance, and continuous monitoring for measurable impact.

Since 2023, BOKU has developed different measures with active involvement from university members. By 2024, many of these – along with additional initiatives – were already implemented or actively ongoing across various action fields as part of the Diversity Strategy. These included the continued use and development of inclusive language and images and the publication and rollout of a university-wide inclusive language guide. The status of the measures is continuously published via various communication platforms (BOKU Magazine, screens, social media) and reports (Sustainability Report). In the context of social sustainability, efforts focused on reducing access barriers and supporting underrepresented student groups.

The Coordination Office for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Accessibility was

147 https://boku.ac.at/en/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/coordination-office-for-gender-equality-diversity-and-accessibility/diversity/sustainable-diversity-boku-diversity-strategy

148 https://boku.ac.at/en/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/coordination-office-for-gender-equality-diversity-and-accessibility

systematically integrated into university processes and played a key role in embedding DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) in teaching, including the development of dedicated modules on gender, diversity, and inclusion.

Teachers and administrative staff are continuously trained in inclusive and accessible teaching methods and accessible documents.

BOKU continued its tradition of recognizing academic contributions to diversity through the Diversity Award for Research. Knowledge-sharing formats such as DEI competence trainings, the university-wide Awareness Days, and intercultural competence workshops were held. Visibility and community engagement were strengthened through inclusive events, the Diversity Day, and symbolic actions such as the Pride flag initiative.

To further raise awareness, DEI content was integrated into BOKU media, and thematic discussions like "Values in Transition" and "Climate Emotions" addressed the emotional and ethical dimensions of transformation.

As a measure for barrier-free access in buildings, the tactile guidance system for blind people at BOKU is constantly being expanded, as well as the expansion of all-gender and inclusive toilets. We are also continuously working on accessible documents and inclusive IT solutions. Finally, care work was given stronger institutional recognition through initiatives like the UniCare platform, the "Show your care" awareness campaign, and the online care roundtable, emphasizing the relevance of caregiving in academic life.

Coordination Office for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Accessibility

The Coordination Office for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Accessibility serves as the central hub at BOKU for promoting gender equality, fostering diversity, and ensuring inclusion and accessibility. It initiates and supports projects, organizes events and knowledge-sharing as well as spaces for reflection, provides advice, develops and implements strategic measures in close cooperation with internal and external networks. The Coordination Office also offers training and awareness-raising activities on gender, diversity, and accessibility. Every three years – aligned with BOKU's Performance Agreement – it publishes a comprehensive report on the status of gender equality and diversity at the university[149].

Trainings in 2024

- Basic training on equality, diversity, inclusion / onboarding new lecturers
- Creating accessible documents for executives
- Handling students in psychological crises (training for lecturers)
- Inclusion at BOKU – How people with disabilities positively influence teams (leadership training)
- Lectures/workshops for students on ADHD and autism
- Basic course on "Austrian Sign Language"
- Depression and psychological crises among students
- (Non)binary Universities? Gender Diversity in Administrative Spaces – Challenges and Potential
- Climate Anxiety? – Mapping an antiracist and intersectional critique
- Ending Gender-based Violence (lecture by Franziska Saxler)
- In 2024, we accompanied twice the BOKU cinema in terms of content and operation
- During Pride Month and during Awareness Days, where there was even a play with the ensemble "Die Fremden".

Focus on People With Disabilities

In the 2023 employee survey, 89 participants – representing 11 % of the total 808 respondents – reported having a disability or impairment. In response, and as part of its ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive university culture, BOKU has implemented and planned several measures to support people with disabilities. Initiatives in 2024 include a resilience training for students entitled "Strengthening strengths, reducing excessive demands". Additionally, we are working on offering a tailored support and advice during job interviews for applicants with disabilities, helping to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities. There is a letter of recommendation for HR managers to specifically recruit people with disabilities. Ongoing advisory services for students with health impairments have also been expanded. Looking ahead, a department-specific training program on equality, diversity, and inclusion is being developed for managers with personnel responsibilities, as part of the upcoming Department tour in 2025.

149 https://short.boku.ac.at/gleichstellungsbericht

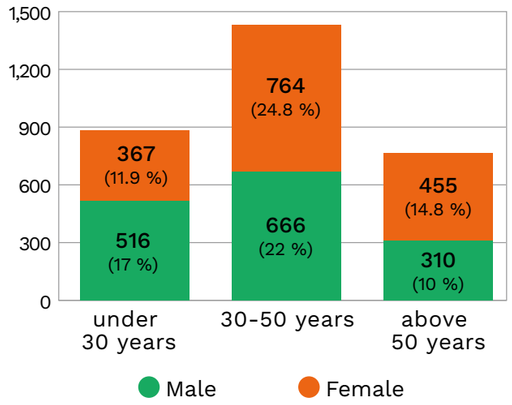


Figure 45: BOKU Employees by Age Group in 2024.

Overview of Selected Diversity Indicators

GRI 405-1

This section provides an overview of selected diversity indicators at BOKU, focusing on the age and gender distribution across various organizational levels, including the rectorate and university leadership.

The age structure of the Rectorate is as follows: one person is between 30 and 50 years old, and four people are over 50 years old.

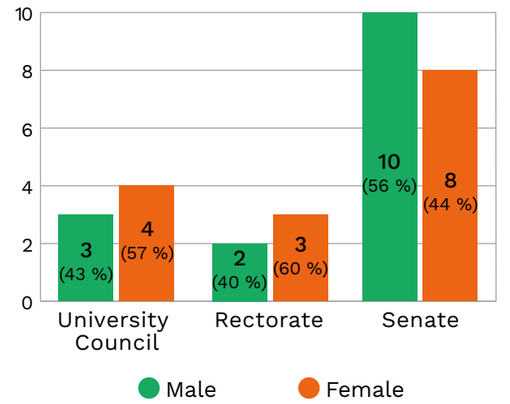


Figure 46: Gender Distribution of University Leadership in 2024.

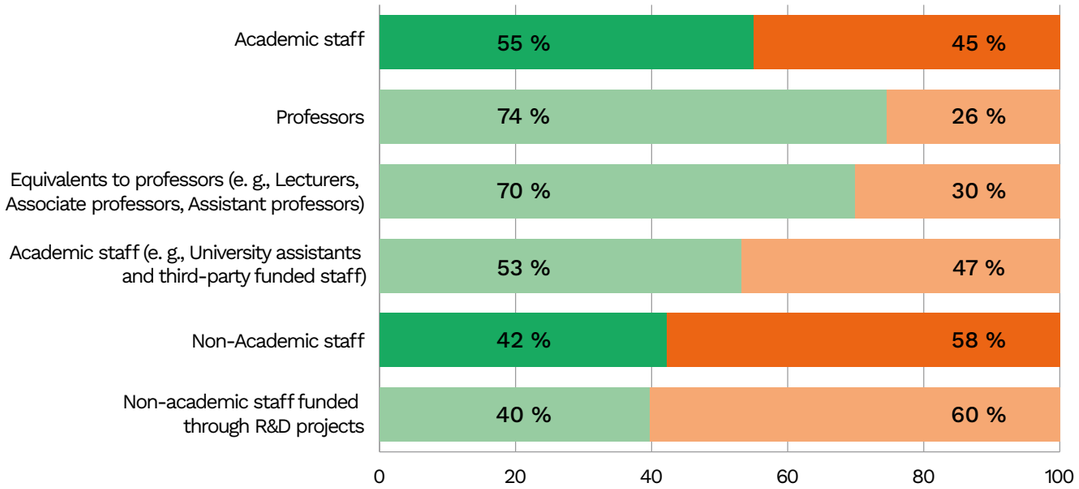


Figure 47: Gender Distribution by Personnel Categories, Represented in Percentages, 2024.

Table 21: Objectives and targets in the Social area.

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Employment relationships and work environment	From 2024 onwards, BOKU aims to maintain its **ISO 45001 certification** for all three locations (Muthgasse, Türkenschanze, Tulln) through successful completion of the required annual surveillance audits and the recertification process every three years	Status of ISO 45001 certification at all BOKU locations valid (or: expired)	Implementation across all BOKU locations and overall certification	✓ The entire BOKU, including all departments and locations, is certified according to ISO 45001 ✓ The ISO 45001 audit took place in November 2023 and is valid until May 2026	✓ Status of ISO 45001 certification at all BOKU locations valid
	Maintain the **BGF Seal of Approval** by continuously fulfilling the quality criteria for workplace health promotion	Status of BGF Seal of Approval valid (or: expired)	Ongoing implementation and documentation of workplace health promotion activities in accordance with BGF criteria	✓ BGF Seal of Approval for 2022-2024 received/valid	✓ BGF Seal of Approval for 2025-2027 received/Valid
	Based on the regular (every 3–6 years) **evaluation of mental stress** in the workplace, appropriate follow-up **measures** will be developed and implemented to support employee well-being	1) Completion of evaluation of mental stress in the workplace (yes/no, every 3–6 years) 2) Catalogue of follow-up measures to support employee well-being between surveys (process-oriented)	1) Conduct evaluation of mental stress in the workplace in accordance with national legal requirements every 3–6 years 2) Develop targeted interventions and implement measures	✓ Healthy BOKU facilitated the evaluation of mental stress in the workplace, completed in September 2023, as part of the survey on psycho-social stress	✓ Derivation of further measures as part of the evaluation of mental stress in the workplace; focus on stressed organizational units
	Maintain and (if necessary) further develop offerings in the focus area of **"Psycho-social Health"**, based on regular participation and evaluation	Offerings in the Focus Area of "Psycho-social Health" (qualitative)	Organization and promotion of offerings in the Focus Area of "Psycho-social Health"	✓ Continuation of the offerings ✓ Launch and film premiere of "BOKU 4.0 – Health in the Digital Working World 4.0"	✓ The following initiatives were continued and implemented in 2024: - Occupational Psychological Counseling - Online Consultation - Counseling by the Association "Chronically Ill" - Mental Health Coaching for Return-to-Work Part-Time - Trusted Advisor Program
	Maintain and (if necessary) further develop **Healthy BOKU formats** (e. g. Health Day, Vital Brunch), based on regular participation and evaluation	Courses and training sessions by Healthy BOKU (qualitative)	Organization and promotion of Healthy BOKU offerings	~ The Health Day did not take place in 2023 ✓ Vital Brunches and health-specific courses took place	✓ 15th Health Day with 300+ participants ~ No Vital Brunch due to the BGF quota being used up for other priorities

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Employment relationships and work environment	**Maintaining staffing levels** in both non-academic and academic staff categories	Increase/decrease in personnel in central administration as a percentage in FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Increase/decrease in personnel in academic staff category as a percentage in FTE (Full-Time Equivalent)		~ –1.3 % decrease in general staff ✓ +3.5 % increase in academic staff ✓ +1.7 % increase in total staff	✓ +2.35 % increase in non-academic staff ✓ +2.32 % increase in academic staff ✓ +2.33 % increase in total staff
	At least 130 **training sessions** are offered annually through the BOKU Training Pass	Number of offered training sessions	Continuation of the training offerings	✓ Number of training sessions: 198	✓ Number of training sessions: 201
	Based on the regular (every 3 years) **employee surveys**, focus areas, action fields, and targeted **measures for leadership culture** will be developed and implemented	1) Completion of regular employee surveys (yes/no, every 3 years) 2) Catalogue of follow-up measures for improving leadership culture between surveys (process-oriented)	1) Conduct regular employee survey (every 3 years) 2) Develop targeted interventions and implement measures	✓ Survey 2023 conducted ✓ Measures from the 2020 employee survey have largely been implemented; new measures are being developed	✓ Implementation of measures from the 2023 employee survey is in process (e.g focus group discussions at 5 organizational units with particularly negative results) ~ Focus on general measures, as the reorganization of the departments took place in 2024 and department-specific measures are only possible to a limited extent
	Continuous and needs-based development of its leadership culture through decentralized workshops and centrally organized **seminars and trainings on leadership skills for various management levels** in science and science-supporting areas	Number of leadership training offers (a total of approx. 20 workshops and seminars per year)	Conducting leadership seminars in all departments	✓ By the end of 2023, a total of 11 departments had held leadership seminars; due to the planned restructuring of BOKU, the focus must now shift to fostering a successful leadership culture in the new and larger departments starting from January 1, 2025	✓ 22 training sessions attended by 217 participants

Topic	Objective/Target	Indicators	Measures	Status 2023	Status 2024
Internal communication and transparency	Based on the regular (every 3 years) employee surveys, focus areas, action fields, and **targeted measures for improving internal communication** will be developed and implemented	1) Completion of regular employee surveys (yes/no, every 3 years) 2) Catalogue of follow-up measures for improving internal communication and information flows between surveys (process-oriented)	1) Conduct regular employee survey (every 3 years) 2) Develop targeted interventions and implement measures	✓ Measures defined in the target agreement and largely implemented; missing measures will be integrated into the new action program ✓ Regular evaluation ✓ Company meeting: Presentation of the survey results	✓ Implementation of measures from the 2023 employee survey is in process ✓ Focus on general measures, as the reorganization of the departments took place in 2024 and department-specific measures are only possible to a limited extent
	Maintain the 2023 level of employee satisfaction (87 %) regarding information and communication within their organizational unit	Proportion of employees who are very satisfied or satisfied with the information and communication, measured every 3 years		✓ Employee satisfaction has increased since 2020: 87.4 %	no new evaluation; next evaluation of employee satisfaction will take place in 2026
	The assessment of i**nformation and communication fulfillment** by the Rectorate, direct supervisors, and colleagues should show continuous improvement by 2026, based on the 2023 baseline	Proportion of employees who rate the fulfillment of communication and information by the Rectorate, direct supervisors, and colleagues as very well or well, measured every 3 years	Evaluation of the measures and continuation of their implementation	The employee survey was conducted in 2023 (as of 2023:) Rectorate: 63.3 % Supervisor: 71.4 % Colleagues: 79.2 %	no new evaluation; next evaluation of employee satisfaction will take place in 2026

✓ = Objective/Target achieved | ~ = Objective/Target not yet achieved

[Governance]

Good corporate governance is a necessary basis for sustainable practices. BOKU's governance structures are mainly determined by law.

What Does Good Corporate Governance Mean for BOKU?

Good corporate governance is the driving force behind sustainable development and practices. BOKU's governance structures are mostly determined by law. Further, the application of the central objectives of the Federal Public Corporate Governance Code 2017[150] (B-PCGK 2017) reporting were contractually agreed between the BMBWF and BOKU University as part of the Performance Agreement 2025–27.

Leadership Structure and Composition

GRI 2-9, GRI 2-11, GRI 2-15

In line with the University Act UG 2002[151], the highest governing bodies at BOKU University are the University Council, the Rectorate, Rector, and the Senate (§ 20 UG).[152] In 2024, the central teaching and research units of the university consisted of 15 departments, each of which houses various institutes. Numerous staff and service units directly under the Rectorate ensure smooth administration and operations. Additional scientific initiatives and institutions focus on strategic topics and connect BOKU's internal and external actors (Fig. 48)[153].

The Rectorate and the Senate perform executive functions, while the University Council acts as a supervisory body. The University Council does not have dedicated committees for overseeing the management of the university's impact on the economy, environment, and people. Instead, it collectively oversees the management of impacts and provides feedback on management decisions. The Rectorate is responsible for decision making and managing these impacts. Substitute members are not executive in a strict sense.

150 https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/egovernment_moderne_verwaltung/Seite.800600.html
151 https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20002128
152 The gender composition of BOKU's leadership bodies is detailed in the chapter "Social" on p. 121
153 Internal Cross-Linking at BOKU, p. 54

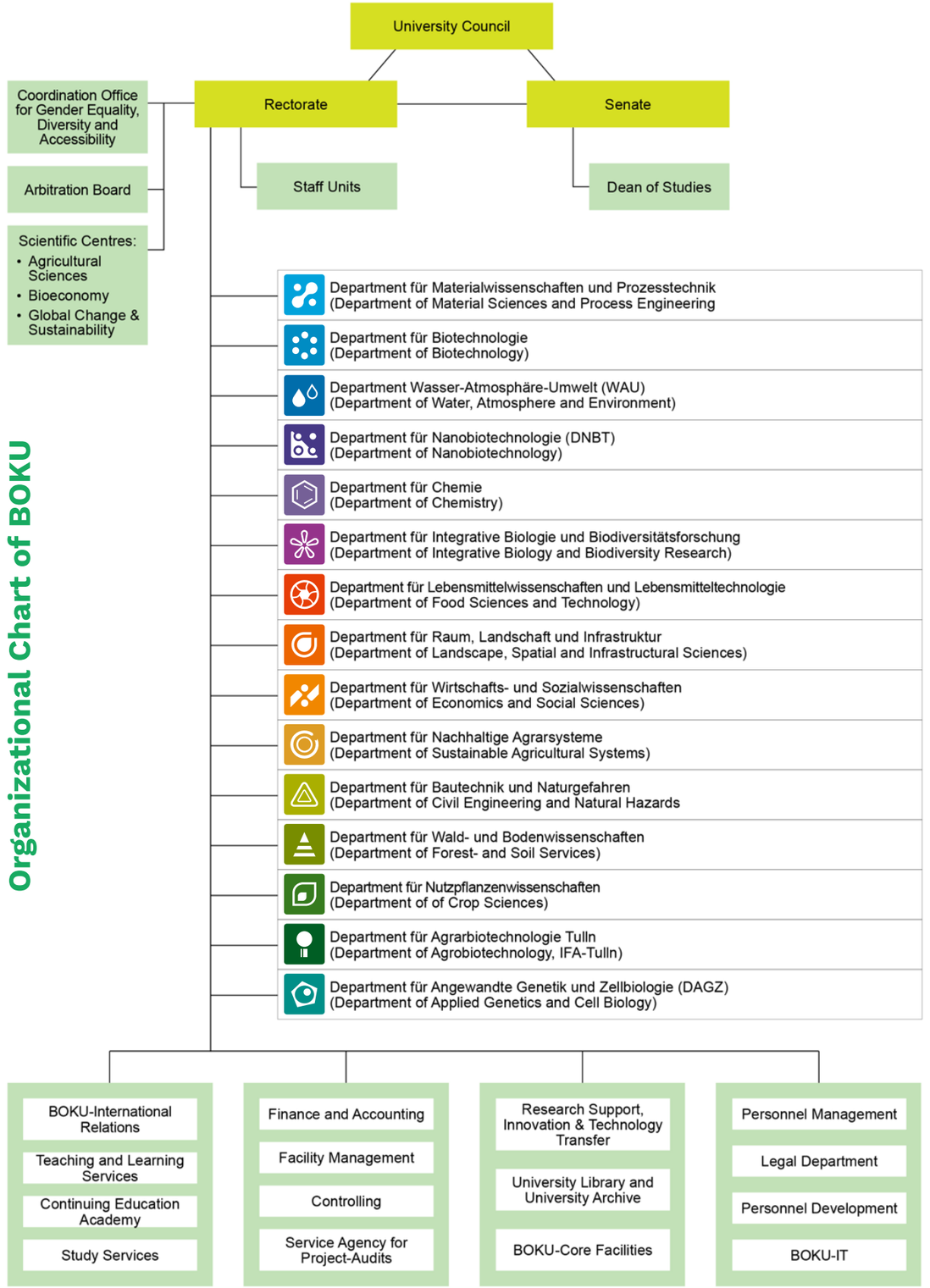


Figure 48: Organizational Chart of BOKU University in 2024.[154]

154 The BOKU organization changed significantly on January 1, 2025. In this report, we show the 2024 organizational chart which was valid in the reporting year.

Composition of the Highest Governing Bodies

Rectorate: The Rectorate manages the university and represents it externally. The Rectorate is composed of a Rector and four Vice-Rectors. The current Rectorate consists of

- Rector: Eva Schulev-Steindl
- Vice-Rector for Teaching, Continuing Education and Students: Doris Damyanovic
- Vice-Rector for Finances and Infrastructure: Nora Sikora-Wentenschuh
- Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation: Christian Obinger
- Vice-Rector for Human Resources, Organization, and Digitalization: Gerhard Mannsberger

According to the University Act, the composition of the Rectorate must ensure that it possesses appropriate expertise in science as well as management and administrative leadership (§ 22 para 3 UG). In cases of bias, the affected member must abstain from discussions and decisions, with their alternate taking over the task (§ 7 Business Regulations of the Rectorate).

The Rectorate governs the university in accordance with the University Act 2002, the university's statutes, and its business regulations. The distribution of responsibilities is outlined in the Business Regulations[155] Appendix.

Senate: The Senate of BOKU currently consists of 18 members (including chair & deputy members) and 16 substitute members. The Senate is composed of representatives of university professors (including heads of organizational units), general university staff, and students. Biased members are not allowed to participate in discussions and voting on issues. Reasons for bias are outlined in the Senate's business regulations (§ 9 Senate Business Regulations 2020[156]).

The key responsibilities of the Senate include approving the development plan drafted by the Rectorate, participating in habilitation and appointment procedures, providing feedback on guidelines for the structural design of curricula, and issuing as well as amending curricula.

University Council: University Council members hold prominent positions in society, particularly in science, culture, or business, and contribute significantly to achieving the university's objectives (§ 21 para 3 UG). The University Council comprises individuals from various sectors, ensuring diversity in knowledge and experience. University Council members may not be BOKU employees, members of another university body, or employees of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Research.

Key duties include the approval of the development plan, organizational plan, Performance Agreement draft, and the business regulations of the Rectorate. Additionally, target agreements are concluded with the Rector and the Rectorate[157]. The University Council also plays a decisive role in the selection of the Rector (§ 21 para 1 UG). All members of the University Council attended more than half of the meetings in 2024.

155 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/informationen-des-rektorats
156 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/senat/dokumente-und-rechtliches/geschaeftsordnung

Nomination Process of Highest Governing Bodies

GRI 2-10

The gender-equitable composition of collegial bodies must be ensured, with at least 50 % of the members being women (§ 20a).

Rector: The position is publicly advertised. The Rector is selected by the University Council from a shortlist prepared by the Senate for a term of four years. A second consecutive term is permissible (§ 23 para 3 UG). To be elected as Rector, candidates must have international experience and knowledge of the Austrian and European university systems as well as the ability to manage an academic and financial institution (§ 23 UG).

Vice-Rectors: The elected Rector assembles the Vice-Rector team. The number and employment extent of Vice-Rectors are determined by the Rector (§ 24 UG). Vice Rectors are appointed by the University Council upon the Rector's proposal and after consultation with the Senate.

Senate: Members are elected by their respective groups, while student representatives are appointed (§ 25 UG) for a term of three years. The current Senate was constituted on October 12, 2022 for the term from October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2025.

- Nine representatives of the professors (including heads of organizational units)
- Four representatives of the group of associate professors as well as the other scientific, artistic and teaching staff
- Four representatives of the students
- One representative of the non-academic university staff (§ 25 para 3 UG)

University Council: University Council members must not hold any function within BOKU or another university and must not be affiliated with the Ministry of Education (§ 21 UG). Members are selected based on their expertise in science, business, or culture for a term of five years.

- Two to four members are elected by the Senate
- Two to four members are appointed by the federal government
- One additional member is jointly appointed by the previously elected/appointed members (§ 21 UG)

157 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/universitaetsrat/geschaeftsordnung

Stakeholder Engagement

GRI 2-29

Science plays a crucial role in addressing real-world challenges in politics, business, administration, and NGOs. BOKU University regularly engages with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure that its strategic development and activities align with both practical societal needs and research priorities. To achieve meaningful engagement on an institutional level, BOKU University has established a Stakeholder Board and a Scientific Advisory Board.[158]

Stakeholder Board[159]

BOKU's Stakeholder Board was initiated by the Rectorate and the University Council and serves exclusively in an advisory capacity. It functions as an external advisory body for BOKU's management on all issues related to practical relevance and solution-oriented perspectives, aiming to incorporate the "outside view" into strategic considerations for BOKU's further development. It does not have a formal statute. The Board is established for an indefinite period. New members are only appointed in the event of a vacancy. It consists of 14 members from industry, politics, federal and state ministries, and civil society. The members are chosen based on their professional expertise and work experience. Nominations for membership were made partly by the Rectorate and partly by the University Council, with final decisions made jointly. It was launched in December 2022. Two meetings per year are scheduled, depending on participation. In 2024, two meetings took place. The main topics discussed were BOKU2025, BOKU Development Plan, Fundraising at Universities and the evaluation of agricultural sciences at BOKU.

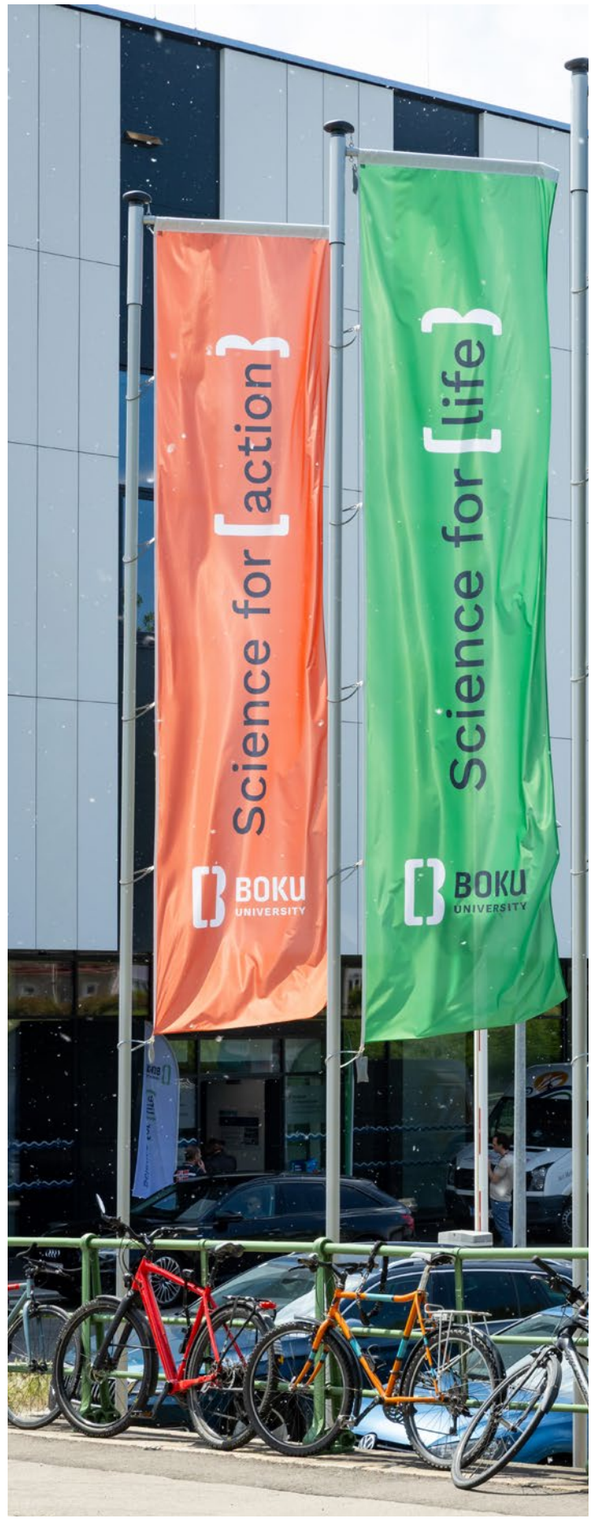
158 The stakeholders relevant for sustainability reporting are described on p. 12f.
159 https://boku.ac.at/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/stakeholder-board

Scientific Advisory Board[160]

BOKU's Scientific Advisory Board consists of a group of five international scientists. They are chosen based on their expertise along the university's areas of competences. Together with relevant professors along BOKU's competence areas, the Rectorate prepared a ranked list of qualified candidates. These were then contacted and invited to join the Scientific Advisory Board. They advise BOKU from an external perspective on all research-related issues and play a key role in strengthening the strategic positioning of BOKU, especially in the implementation of the current development plan and the fulfilment of the Performance Agreement. They also contribute to international benchmarking. Meetings are generally organized two times a year. The main topics discussed in 2024 were BOKU2025 and Teaching and Research objectives within the scope of the BOKU Development Plan 2030.

Stakeholder Dialogue at Department Level

Additionally, research projects usually entail stakeholder interactions that are tailored to the needs of individual projects and not systematically aggregated. This allows for flexibility but also presents challenges in capturing the full scope of stakeholder interactions across research activities.



160 https://boku.ac.at/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/scientific-advisory-board

Handling Potential Conflicts of Interest

GRI 2-15

Mandates in supervisory bodies of other companies that might cause conflicts of interest are disclosed in the Corporate Governance Report[161] (Tab. 22 and 23).

To avoid conflicts of interest between BOKU and private interests, secondary employment must be reported before taking up the position. Highest transparency is also required in the awarding of contracts and in personnel selection (Compliance Guideline[162], Section C). The Senate chair and vice-chair carry out their duties in addition to their primary positions within the university. They may also hold leading roles (e. g., as heads of institutes or departments). The chair of the Senate coordinates the democratically elected Senate body and the issues to be addressed. Decisions are made by resolution of the Senate. Conflicts of interest for the Senate chair are rare, but when they arise, the rules set out in the Senate's rules of procedure apply (p. 128). The Rector, on the other hand, cannot hold an additional (leading) position within the university.

Table 22: Organizations With BOKU University Participation (Mandate Based on the Shareholders' Agreement and Business Allocation) According to the Corporate Governance Report 2024.

Name	Organization	Role	Compensation
Schulev-Steindl Eva	Wasserbaulabor GmbH	Owner representative since February 1, 2022	None
Obinger Christian	ACIB GmbH	Supervisory Board / owner representative	None
Sikora-Wentenschuh Nora	FFOQSI GmbH	Supervisory Board / owner representative	None
Mannsberger Gerhard	Bioenergy 2020+ GmbH	Supervisory Board / owner representative	None
Mannsberger Gerhard	Wood K+ GmbH	Supervisory Board / owner representative	None
Mannsberger Gerhard	Wassercluster Lunz	Supervisory Board / owner representative	None

Table 23: Organizations Without BOKU University Participation (With Approval of the Rector and the University Council) According to the Corporate Governance Report 2024.

Name	Organization	Role	Compensation
Obinger Christian	FWF	Member of the Delegate Committee	None
Mannsberger Gerhard	Österr. Bundesforste AG	Chairman of the Supervisory Board	See ÖBf-AG Corp. Gov. Report
Mannsberger Gerhard	Osterreichischer Biomasseverband (ÖBMV)	Member of the Board	Noe

161 Corporate Governance Report 2024 online: https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H01000/mitteilungsblatt/MB_2024_25/MB29/CorporateGovernannceBericht_2024_signed.pdf
162 https://boku.ac.at/en/recht/compliance/download-area

Handling Critical Issues and Complaints

GRI 2-16, GRI 2-25, GRI 2-26

BOKU has several mechanisms for handling critical issues and complaints[163]:

Working Group on Equal Opportunities (AKGL)[164]: The AKGL (§ 42 UG) is involved in cases of suspected discrimination based on gender (including sexual harassment), ethnicity, religion or belief, age, or sexual orientation. Each case is handled individually, and any forwarding to leadership bodies is decided on a case-by-case basis. All cases are treated with absolute confidentiality.

Arbitration Board[165]: The Arbitration Board (§ 43 UG) mediates disputes between university members and decides on complaints or objections raised by the Working Group on Equal Opportunities. The board's deliberations are confidential, and an annual activity report is submitted to the Rectorate and the University Council.

Employee Councils for Scientific[166] **and Non-Academic**[167] **Staff:** The Works Councils serve as key advisory bodies in conflict situations and offer support to employees with concerns (§ 135 UG). Members and contact details are available online.

Austrian Student Union (ÖH) at BOKU[168]: ÖH BOKU provides advice and consultation on all aspects of student life. For example, for students facing discrimination, harassment, or bullying, the ÖH BOKU and its departments provide support and assistance (HSG 2014).

Ombudsman Office for Students and Faculty[169]: In cases of conflict related to teaching and studies that cannot be resolved through primary channels, the Ombuds Office provides advisory and mediation services. The office operates independently and confidentially, engaging with responsible parties to seek solutions (§ 31 HS-QSG).

Ombudsman Center for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice[170]: This office is available to all BOKU employees who wish to report potential scientific misconduct. The Ombudsperson provides confidential consultations and, in cases of justified suspicion, informs the Rectorate. An ad hoc investigation committee is established if necessary. Further details are available in the "Guidelines for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice at BOKU", accessible online in German and English.

163 The specific number of complaints received is not collected centrally and therefore cannot be reported at present. In 2024, one critical concern was referred to the Rectorate for internal review.
164 https://boku.ac.at/en/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/equal-opportunities-working-party
165 https://boku.ac.at/en/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/arbitration-board
166 https://short.boku.ac.at/k4g86o
167 https://short.boku.ac.at/w3memy
168 https://oehboku.at/service/beratung/
169 https://boku.ac.at/studienservices/ombudsstelle-fuer-studierende-lehrende
170 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/senat/themen/ombudsstelle

Web-Based Whistleblower System[171]: The web-based whistleblower system implemented in 2023, following legal requirements, allows for the reporting of misconduct and/or potential violations of legal and internal regulations through a confidential and anonymous communication channel. In 2024, six reports were made. The procedure for processing and forwarding information in connection with reports and violations is defined in the employment agreement on the implementation of a whistleblower system, Annex 2[172].

Additional Advisory and Complaints Bodies: Other available resources include the Coordination Office for Equality, Diversity, and Disability[173], the Disability Representative[174], an Anti-Mobbing Representative for University Staff[175], an Occupational Psychological Consulting[176] and a Trusted Advisor Program[177].

Processes to remediate negative impacts: As BOKU is currently reporting on a material topic level, comprehensive processes to remediate negative impacts are mostly planned for future implementation. This will be facilitated by a renewed Materiality Assessment that places greater emphasis on impact level reporting.
In relation to the material topic of GHG emissions, BOKU has established a climate neutrality pathway[178], which defines concrete steps to reduce its carbon footprint.

171 https://boku.ac.at/en/recht/compliance/reporting-system
172 https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17800/0_Compliance/BV_HGSch_final_26072023.pdf
173 https://boku.ac.at/en/besondere-organe-und-einrichtungen/coordination-office-for-gender-equality-diversity-and-accessibility
174 https://short.boku.ac.at/2wg6oy
175 https://short.boku.ac.at/k4p9wr
176 Chapter “Social” – “Occupational Health Management – Healthy BOKU”, p. 115; https://short.boku.ac.at/Occupational_Psychological_Consulting
177 Chapter “Social” – “Occupational Health Management – Healthy BOKU”, p. 115; https://boku.ac.at/gesunde-boku/trusted-advisor
178 For more information on BOKU’s climate neutrality pathway, please refer to p. 78

Remuneration Policy

GRI 2-20

At BOKU, the salary structure is based on the Collective Agreement for University Employees (2009)[179]. Within employment categories (e. g., academic or non-academic staff), there are different salary levels. Classification is based on qualifications and relevant previous work experience. Guidelines for the recognition of relevant previous experience are in place. Generally, the same pay-setting regulations apply to leadership personnel (collective agreement, Employee Act, Civil Servants Act, company agreements, etc.). A company agreement[180] covers the allocation of bonuses. Additionally, the Rectorate can make goal agreements and, if necessary, individual contracts with professors. A performance evaluation must take place at least every five years, only a positive result leads to an advancement to the next salary level. These serve BOKU’s strategic development plan.

Signing bonuses or payments as hiring incentives are not offered at BOKU. Severance payments are processed in accordance with the Austrian Employee Retirement Act (“Transition Assistance” p. 108). Any reimbursements and employee pension plans are also governed by Austrian legislation. As occupational pension scheme, BOKU University has concluded a pension fund contract[181] with Valida Pension AG for its employees. The university pays 10 % of the monthly gross salary for university professors, and 3 % for all other affected employees.

Remuneration of Leadership Bodies

GRI 2-19

Remuneration of the Rectorate
The total remuneration for the Rectorate’s activities in the fiscal year 2024 amounted to EUR 1,044,576.10 for non-performance-related remuneration without employer contributions and EUR 146,783.26 for performance-related remuneration without employer contributions[182]. No expense allowances were paid.

The remuneration policy for the highest governance bodies is not linked to the objectives and performance related to the achievement of sustainability goals explicitly, although it is connected to the achievement of Performance Agreement targets. The variable remuneration for the members of the Rectorate is regulated in the respective employment contract and is paid out depending on the degree of target achievement of the annual goal agreement made with the University Council. The targets are agreed annually

179 https://uniko.ac.at/organisation/dachverband/kollektivvertrag/
180 https://boku.ac.at/en/pers/themen/personalrecht/guidelines-and-employment-agreements
181 https://boku.ac.at/en/pers/themen/betriebliche-pensionskasse
182 For a detailed account of the Rectorate’s Remuneration, please refer to BOKU’s Corporate Governance Report 2024, p. 4: https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H01000/mitteilungsblatt/MB_2024_25/MB29/CorporateGovernannceBericht_2024_signed.pdf

between the respective member of the Rectorate and the University Council and are based on targets in the performance agreement.

Remuneration of the University Council

The upper limit of the compensation for University Council members is governed by the University Council Remuneration Ordinance. Approval from the individuals concerned was obtained for the disclosure of their remuneration.

The total compensation for the University Council's activities in the fiscal year 2024 was EUR 76,284.30, with EUR 2,364.30 allocated for expense allowances. No other payments are made for meetings[183].

Ratio of Total Annual Compensation

GRI 2-21

In 2024, the highest-paid individual in the organization earned 6.28 times the total annual compensation of the median employee, with their compensation increasing at a rate 1.19 times greater than the median employee's percentage increase[184, 185]. The title of the highest-paid person in 2024 is Rector.

The standardization of salary payments was based on the calculation of annual full-time equivalents. The following types of compensation were included: regular annual payments and non-regular annual payments, such as remuneration for teaching and examination activities, secondary duties, mandated overtime, on-call services, and one-time payments. All employees and employment categories were considered in the calculation, except for summer interns and guest professors.

183 For a detailed account of the University Council's Remuneration, please refer to BOKU's Corporate Governance Report 2024, p. 5: https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H01000/mitteilungsblatt/MB_2024_25/MB29/CorporateGovernannceBericht_2024_signed.pdf

184 The total annual remuneration for the highest-paid person in the organization divided by the median annual compensation for all employees of the organization, excluding the highest-paid person

185 The percentage increase in total annual compensation for the highest-paid person in the organization divided by the median percentage increase in total annual compensation for all employees of the organization, excluding the highest-paid person

Strategies, Policies, and Practices

GRI 2-23, GRI 2-24

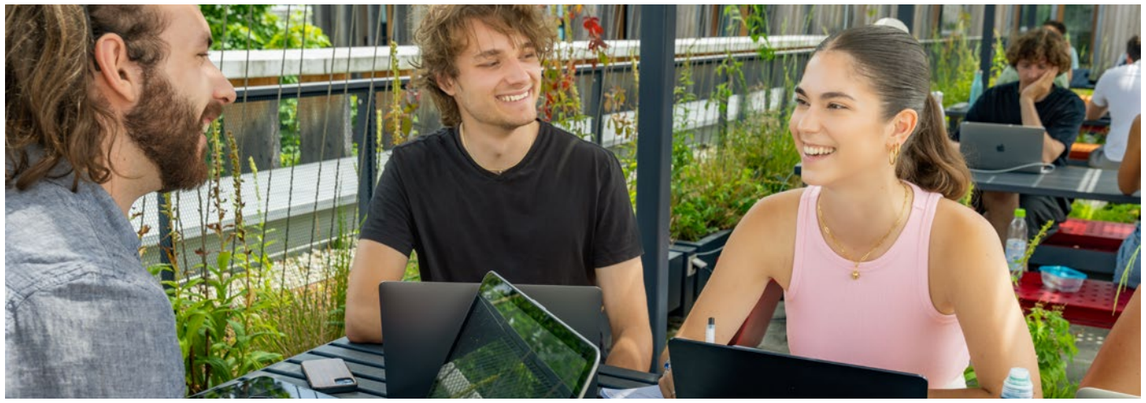
BOKU has a set of commitment declarations on principles and practices, guidelines, and standards. These declarations apply equally to all activities and business relationships of the organization. The documents are accessible online (Document Collection[186]). University staff is informed about any changes or new decrees through a bulletin ("Internal Communication and Transparency" p. 116). The knowledge of some fundamental documents must be confirmed through the BOKU Training Passport (e. g., house rules, compliance guidelines). New employees are also informed about the university's key principles and practices during the welcome event. Most documents are available in English and are being updated progressively for accessibility.

Although BOKU does not have a specific declaration on respect for human rights, it adheres to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and acts in accordance with this through compliance with Austrian legislation and its own guidelines (Tab. 24 p. 138). The **Ethics Charter**[187] specifically establishes "equal treatment [...] particularly to safeguard equal opportunities for disadvantaged societal groups" (p. 2) as one of the principles. BOKU also has an **equal opportunities and a women's advancement plan**[188] (reference to Articles 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The principles and commitment declarations of BOKU generally follow the **precautionary principle** to avoid or mitigate potential negative impacts.

186 https://boku.ac.at/en/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/stabsstellen/qm/themen/dokumentensammlung
187 https://boku.ac.at/en/universitaetsleitung/senate/ethikplattform/ethics-charter
188 https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/senat/dokumente-und-rechtliches/satzung

Table 24: Overview of Selected Important Guidelines and Regulations of BOKU[189].

Guidelines & Provisions on Principles and Conduct	Decision Making Level	Available Online at
University Leadership and Management		
Mission, Vision, and Values of BOKU	Rectorate (n.d.)	https://boku.ac.at/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/themen/mission-vision-und-werte
Compliance Guideline	Rectorate 2014	https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/stabsstellen/qm/themen/dokumentensammlung/universitaetsleitung-management
Anti-Corruption Guideline	Rectorate 2012	
House Rules	Rectorate and Senate 2014	
Budget Guideline	Rectorate & University Council 2023	
Equality		
Women's Advancement Plan	Rectorate and Senate 2010	https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/rektorat/stabsstellen/qm/themen/dokumentensammlung/gesellschaftliche-ziele
Equality Plan of BOKU	Rectorate and Senate 2021	
Information Letter – Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	Rectorate (n.d.)	
Guide to Language Usage (Short Version)	Recommendation of the Rectorate 2023	
Environmental and Sustainability Management		
Sustainability Understanding of BOKU	Rectorate (n.d.)	https://boku.ac.at/nachhaltigkeit/boku-nachhaltigkeitsverstaendnis
BOKU Environmental Guidelines	University Council, Rectorate, and Senate (n.d.)	https://boku.ac.at/umweltmanagement/umweltleitlinien
BOKU Sustainability Report	Confirmed annually by the Rectorate since 2020	https://short.boku.ac.at/NH-Bericht
BOKU Sustainability Strategy 2019–2024	Rectorate 2020	https://short.boku.ac.at/w34o92
Ethics Charter	Rectorate and Senate 2015	https://boku.ac.at/en/universitaetsleitung/senate/ethikplattform/ethics-charter
Other		
Guidelines for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice at BOKU University	2009	https://boku.ac.at/universitaetsleitung/senat/ombudsstelle-zur-sicherung-guter-wissenschaftlicher-praxis



189 Table 24 does not claim completeness.

Cooperation, Networks, and Partnerships

GRI 2-6-c, GRI 2-28

University-Wide Collaborations

Universities Austria[190] (Universitätenkonferenz, uniko) is the association of Austria's 22 public universities. It coordinates their joint interests, represents them nationally and internationally, and promotes science, research, and innovation. As a public university under the Universities Act (UG 2002), BOKU is a member of uniko.

One example of successful cooperation in the sustainability context is the **Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria**[191]. The Alliance is an informal association of 20 universities (as of December 2024) with the goal of strengthening sustainability in teaching, research, and management of universities. Founded in 2011, with significant involvement from BOKU, the Alliance has established itself as a major player in the exchange between universities and the Ministry of Science. BOKU plays a key role with its coordination office at the Center for Global Change and Sustainability, which is pivotal for the work and development of the Alliance.

The City of Vienna is a strategic partner of BOKU University. The **"City of Vienna Anniversary Fund for BOKU"**[192] supports projects related to sustainability with a focus on Vienna, in addition to awarding thesis prizes. In 2024, submissions were made across all fields at BOKU, including the BOKU Best Paper Awards, BOKU Talent Awards, and the City of Vienna BOKU Research Funding Program.

Moreover, BOKU maintains a close strategic cooperation with the **Environment Agency Vienna**[193] to jointly implement the SDGs. Over time, this partnership has expanded beyond core natural science topics to include social, economic, and socio-political issues. It also serves as a communication platform to address topics relevant to science, society, and the public, offering them in open-access formats to encourage public debate and engagement.

The **BOKU Alumni Association**[194] serves as the umbrella organization for all BOKU graduates, overseeing cross-disciplinary tasks and facilitating networking among specialized associations. This central organization connects graduates from all study disciplines.

190 https://uniko.ac.at/index.php?lang=EN
191 https://nachhaltigeuniversitaeten.at/
192 https://boku.ac.at/en/fos/themen/ausbildungs-und-graduiertenfoerderung/city-of-vienna-anniversary-fund-for-boku
193 https://boku.ac.at/fos/themen/strategische-kooperation-boku-umweltbundesamt
194 https://alumni.boku.wien/site/en/home

Educational Alliances

Since 2019, BOKU has been part of **EPICUR**[195] (European Partnership for an Innovative Campus Unifying Regions), a European university alliance comprising nine universities across various countries. EPICUR aims to institutionalize collaboration in education, research, and societal engagement. Key focus areas include online courses and summer schools on sustainability transformation, European values, artificial intelligence, and global health, as well as cross-cutting topics such as entrepreneurship and diversity, and developing an alliance-wide Sustainability Strategy.

Several **study programs** at BOKU are based on close cooperation with national and international partner universities, enabling students to benefit from shared expertise and diverse academic environments. Cases in point are the Master's program in Green Chemistry offered jointly with TU Wien and the University of Vienna, and the Master's program in Environmental Sciences in collaboration with universities in Germany (University of Hohenheim), Sweden (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), and Denmark (University of Copenhagen).

Research Networks

The **Climate Change Center Austria**[196] (CCCA) serves as the primary contact point climate research coordination in Austria, linking science, politics, media, and the public.

The **Disaster Competence Network Austria**[197] (DCNA), founded by BOKU and 19 other institutions, fosters collaboration in natural hazards and disaster risk research.

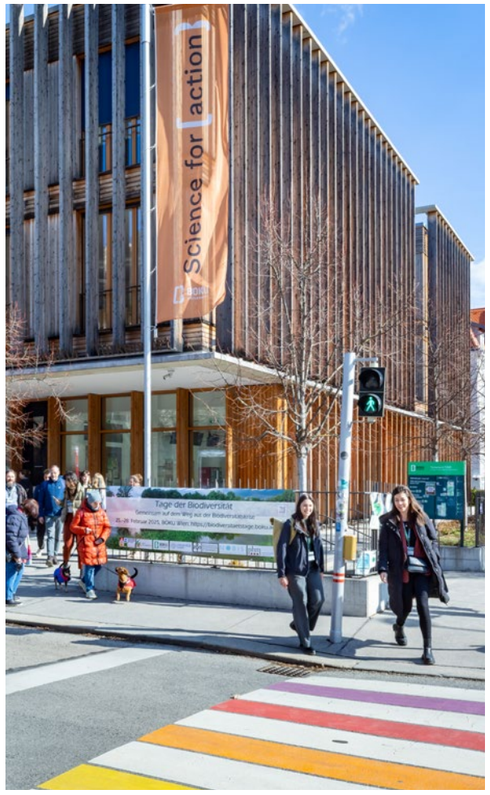
BOKU remains active in the board of the **European Association of Life Science Universities Network**[198] (ICA) in 2024. The ICA network deals with circular bioeconomy, sustainable use of natural resources, environmental protection and rural development in research and teaching. From 2022 to 2024, BOKU assumed the presidency of the international **European Bioeconomy University**[199] (EBU).

195 https://boku.ac.at/epicur
196 More on the CCCA on p. 62; https://ccca.ac.at/en/homepage
197 More on the DCN on p. 62; https://dcna.at/index.php/en/home.html
198 https://www.ica-europe.info/
199 https://www.european-bioeconomy-university.eu/

International Engagement[200]

The **Austrian-African Research Network Africa-UniNet**[201] was established at BOKU in 2020 to strengthen collaboration between 26 Austrian and 51 African universities, colleges, and research institutions from 20 different countries. The initiative, which was started by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research (BMBWF), the Austrian Exchange Service (OeAD-GmbH), and BOKU, aims to foster new contacts and deepen scientific collaborations sustainably. In 2023, the third general assembly was held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW). BOKU currently serves as the president of the network.

At the European level, BOKU is active in the **COPERNICUS Alliance**[202] – a network of universities and colleges committed to transformative learning and changes for sustainable development.



The activities within the specialized networks (such as ICA Task Force for Bio-Economy, IROICA, AGRINATURA, ISE-KI-Food-Netzwerk, Magna Charta Universitatum, Oenoviti, IUFRO, EPSO, etc.) continued. BOKU is also a member of the Global Challenges University Alliance GCUA 2030[203], an alliance that focuses on advancing the SDGs through networking, knowledge-sharing, and interdisciplinary competencies for a sustainable future. Networks in BOKU's geographical focal regions (such as ASEA Uninet and EURASIA Pacific Uninet, Himalayan University Consortium, Danube Rectors' Conference) were actively maintained or expanded.

200 https://boku.ac.at/international/themen/internationale-kooperationen/netzwerke
201 https://africa-uninet.at/en/members/member-institutions
202 https://www.copernicus-alliance.org/
203 https://www.slu.se/en/collaboration/international-collaboration/slu-global/gcua-2030/

About this Report

GRI 2-2, GRI 2-3, GRI 2-5, GRI 2-27

Publication: 30. September 2025

Reporting period: January 1 through December 31, 2024

This report was prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards 2021. Since the reporting year 2019, a BOKU Sustainability Report has been published annually in accordance with the currently applicable GRI Standards.

The present report considers the three BOKU locations as well as the external sites of BOKU (fourth location), with the exception of the external site “Lunz am See”.[204]

All locations at a glance: https://boku.ac.at/fm/themen/orientierung-und-lageplaene

The present report is subjected to an external audit by Forvis Mazars Audit GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft in their function as an independent third party. The respective Vice Rectors and implementation managers (e. g., heads and staff of the service units) provide information about their areas of responsibility in connection with the contents depicted in the report during this audit. EMAS-relevant topics (see the Operations & Campus Management section) are also audited internally and externally as part of the annual EMAS validation. All BOKU capital participations are not consolidated (i.e., BOKU holds a share of less than 50 %). Therefore, the capital participations are not considered in the Sustainability Report or the Financial Statements.

BOKU Financial Statements 2024 (the reporting period of the Financial Statements coincides with the reporting period of the Sustainability Report):
https://boku.ac.at/mitteilungsblatt/eroeffnungsbilanz-rechnungsabschluss

During the reporting period of 2024, there were no significant violations of laws and regulations, and no fines were paid.

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T +43 1 47654-99115

204 The Lunz am See branch (WasserCluster Lunz – Biologische Station GmbH) is an independent limited company in which BOKU holds a minority share of 33.3 %. It is therefore not included in this report.

GRI Index

GRI-Standard	GRI Disclosure	Location	Omissions and Comments
GRI 1: Foundation 2021 **GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021**			
The organization and its reporting practices			
	2-1 Organizational details	p. 6	Universities are bodies governed by public law (§ 4 UG Rechtsform, Universitätsgesetz 2002).
	2-2 Entities included in the organization’s Sustainability Reporting	p. 142 p. 9	BOKU capital participations are not considered as BOKU holds a share of less than 50 %).
	2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	p. 142	BOKU Financial Statements 2024 relate to the financial year 2024. The reporting period of the Financial Statements coincides with the reporting period of the Sustainability Report.
	2-4 Restatements of information	p. 66 p. 69 p. 86	In our 2023 Sustainability Report, training programs and participants were misstated due to a misunderstanding of which trainings to include and a calculation error. The corrected numbers are 11 training sessions and 142 attendees, replacing the previously reported 9 courses and 176 attendees. In the 2023 Sustainability Report, media clippings that were initially excluded due to quality control were mistakenly included, resulting in higher figures than what was reported in the 2023 Intellectual Capital Report. The data for 2023 was therefore retroactively adjusted for consistency. In the 2023 Sustainability Report, the FTE was reported instead of the annual FTE, which represents one person employed full-time over the entire year.
	2-5 External assurance	p. 142, p. 14	Limited assurance
Activities & Workers			
	2-6 Activities, value chain and other business relationships	p. 6 p. 139	no significant changes in comparison to the previous year
	2-7 Employees	p. 104	
	2-8 Workers who are not employees	p. 104	
Governance			
	2-9 Governance structure and composition	p. 126	(c) vi. under-represented social groups: not relevant for BOKU
	2-10 Nomination and selection of the highest governance body	p. 129	
	2-11 Chair of the highest governance body	p. 126	
	2-12 Role of the highest governance body in overseeing the management of impacts	p. 11	
	2-13 Delegation of responsibility for managing impacts	p. 11	

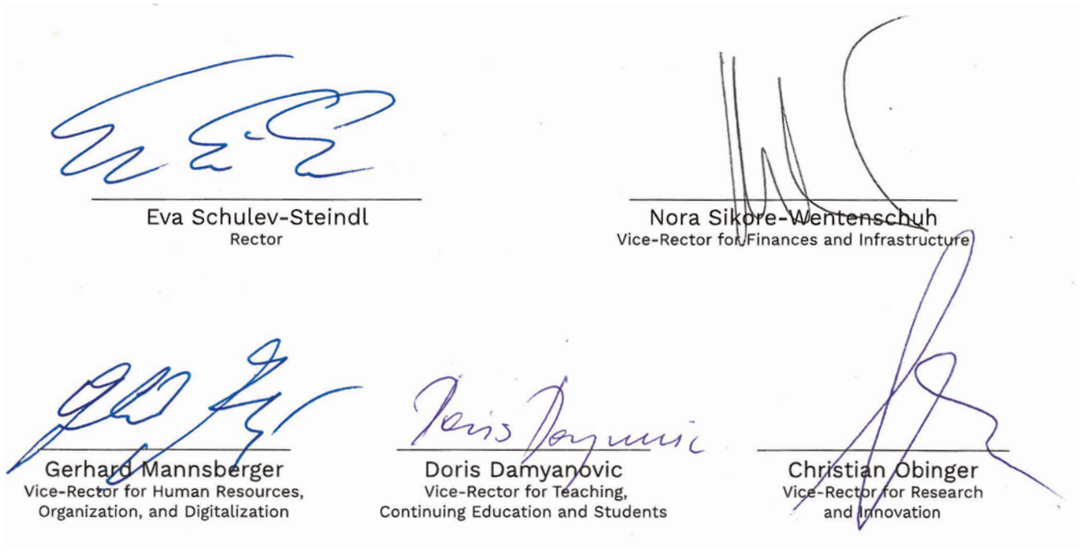
GRI-Standard	GRI Disclosure		Location	Omissions and Comments
	2-14	Role of the highest governance body in Sustainability Reporting	p. 11 p. 21	
	2-15	Conflicts of interest	p. 126, p. 132	
	2-16	Communication of critical concerns	p. 133	
	2-17	Collective knowledge of the highest governance body	p. 21	
	2-18	Evaluation of the performance of the highest governance body	p. 11	
	2-19	Remuneration policies	p. 135	
	2-20	Process to determince remuneration	p. 135	
	2-21	Annual total compensation ratio	p. 136	
Strategy, policies and practices				
	2-22	2-22 Statement on sustainability development strategy	p. 2	
	2-23	Policy commitments	p. 137	
	2-24	Embedding policy commitments	p. 137	
	2-25	Processes to remediate negative impacts	p. 133	
	2-26	Mechanisms for seeking advice and raising concerns	p. 133	
	2-27	Compliance with laws and regulations	p. 142	No material violations in the reporting period
	2-28	Membership association	p. 139	
Stakeholder Engagement				
	2-29	Approach to stakeholder engagement	p. 12 p. 130	
	2-30	Collective bargaining agreements	p. 104	

Material Topics

GRI Standard	GRI Disclosure		Location	Omissions and Comments
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-1	Process to determine material topics	p. 12	
	3-2	List of material topics	p. 14	
Material Topics				
Curriculum & Learning				**Chapter**
Education for Sustainable Development				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 27	
Research				**Chapter**
Research for Sustainable Development				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 42	
Societal Impact				**Chapter**
Societal Engagement				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 61	
Science Communication with a Sustainability Focus				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 66	
Environment				**Chapter**
Greenhouse Gas Emissions				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 76	
GRI 305: Emissions 2016	305-1	Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	p. 87	
	305-2	Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	p. 87	
	305-3	Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	p. 87	
	305-4	GHG emissions intensity	p. 86	
	305-5	Reduction of GHG emissions	p. 76	
GRI 302: Energy 2016	302-1	Energy consumption within the organization	p. 91	
	302-3	Energy intensity	p. 91	
	302-4	Reduction of energy consumption	p. 91	
Social				**Chapter**
Employment Conditions & Work Climate				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 103	
GRI 401:	401-1	Fluctuation	p. 104	Staff turnover at BOKU cannot be meaningfully represented. A combined calculation of turnover (global budget + third-party funding) does not yield useful results, and even a separate analysis of the two funding areas produces constant values with limited significance. For these reasons, staff turnover is not considered a suitable index for the Sustainability Report.

GRI Standard	GRI Disclosure		Location	Omissions and Comments
GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2018	403-1	Occupational health and safety management system	p. 114	ISO 45001 certification
GRI 404: Training and Education 2016	404-1	Average hours of training per year per employee	p. 110	The GRI 404-1 indicator cannot be meaningfully assessed because the total number of employees includes a high proportion of marginally and temporarily employed groups who are not part of the university's core staff. These groups are not the primary target audience for internal training but are not excluded from participation either. The data is presented as course attendance, number of people, and training days.
	404-2	Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs	p. 108 p. 110 p. 113	
	404-3	Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews	p. 114	The employee appraisals include a review of the previous working year and a plan for the future working year, but no "performance evaluation" in the literal sense. At the level of professorships, however, individual evaluations are mandatory every six years.
GRI 405: Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	405-1	Diversity of governance bodies and employees	p. 121	
Internal Communication & Transparency				Material Topic
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-3	Management of material topics	p. 116	

30. September 2025
Rectorate BOKU University Vienna



SDG Highlights

Table 25: Overview of BOKU SDG Highlights.

	BOKU Initiative with SDG Relevance	Focus SDGs	Contribution to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Curriculum & Learning	Sustainicum Collection (p. 33)		• Knowledge exchange on Education for Sustainable Development • Support for acquiring knowledge and qualifications to promote sustainable development • Contribution to the formation of effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships
	ESD Working Group at BOKU (p. 34)		• Knowledge exchange on Education for Sustainable Development • Support for acquiring knowledge and qualifications to promote sustainable development • Contribution to the formation of effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships
Research	Working Group Sustainability Research (p. 45)		• Alignment of research with the sustainability strategy goals • Promotion of sustainability research at BOKU • Broadening of assessment criteria for research
	Ethics Platform (p. 45)		• Clarification of questions regarding the university's orientation in terms of the thriving development of society and the environment • Development of ethical principles for research and teaching at BOKU • Strengthening the culture of discussion on ethically relevant issues (focusing on "focus SDG" topics) • Promotion of ethical awareness and action
Societal Impact	UniNEtZ (p. 64)		• Development of a catalog of options for the concrete implementation of SDGs in Austria • Work on all SDGs • Capacity building on sustainable development and SDGs in the Austrian context and creation of an expert pool • Inter- and transdisciplinary networking within universities and external stakeholders
	Climate Change Center Austria (CCCA) (p. 62)		• BOKU hosts head office network of Austrian climate research • Key communication platform for scientists on climate change and impacts
	Competence Center for Climate Neutrality (p. 63)		• Climate protection and mitigation of climate change impacts • Building a knowledge network on climate neutrality and emission reduction • Encouraging and supporting companies and other organizations in developing strategies for permanent emission reductions • Contribution to the formation of effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships

BOKU Initiative with SDG Relevance		Focus SDGs	Contribution to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Environment	Emission Reduction Path (p. 79)		• Climate protection and mitigation of climate change impacts
	BOKU Bikes (p. 97)		• Promoting climate friendly mobility and health of BOKU members • Discounted prices for BOKU members
Social	Healthy BOKU (p. 115)		• Health promotion, maintenance, and restoration at BOKU • Contribution to positive work climate and good working conditions • Contribution to general health care and access to quality basic health services
	Coordination Office for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Accessibility (p. 120)		• Sustainable Diversity: BOKU's diversity strategy contributes to diversity, inclusion and social sustainability • Six core objectives, equality and anti-discrimination, accessibility and inclusion, social inclusion, reconciliation of study, work and other areas of life, intergenerational equity, ethnic diversity and criticism of racism, are taken into account with regard to the SDGs • The focus is on raising awareness, building skills, acquiring knowledge and the opportunity for (self-) reflection and advice
Governance	Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria (p. 139)		• Cross-university exchange & cooperation • Knowledge exchange on sustainable universities • Contribution to the formation of effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships • Contribution to building efficient, accountable, and transparent institutions
	Africa-UniNet (p. 141)		• Contribution to the exchange of knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs • Strengthening scientific cooperation and exchange between universities and research institutions in Austria and African countries • Promotion of innovative cooperation projects • Contribution to building efficient, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels • Establishing contacts with local government institutions and NGOs • Thematic focuses of the projects include food, water management, gender equality, land ecosystems, health, and climate change

forvis mazars

To the Members of the Rectorate,
the Senate and the University Council of

Universität für Bodenkultur Wien
Gregor-Mendel-Straße 33
1180 Vienna

We have performed a limited assurance engagement on the sustainability report of Universität für Bodenkultur Wien in line with the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (version effective from 1 January 2023) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Limited assurance conclusion

Based on the procedures performed and the evidence obtained, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the sustainability report is not, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of the GRI Standards, including

- compliance with the requirements laid out in GRI 3: Material Topics 2021 on how to perform the materiality assessment,
- compliance with the nine accordance requirements detailed in GRI 1: Foundation 2021

Basis for conclusion

We conducted our limited assurance engagement in accordance with the legal provisions and the Austrian professional principles on other audits and assurance engagements and the International Standard on Sustainability Assurance (ISSA 5000) applicable to such engagements. In a limited assurance engagement, the procedures performed are less in extent than for a reasonable assurance engagement and therefore the level of assurance obtained is substantially lower than it would have been in a reasonable assurance engagement.

We are independent of Universität für Bodenkultur Wien in accordance with Austrian legal and professional requirements and Art. 22 ff. of Directive 2006/43/EC, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Our audit organization is subject to the provisions of KSW-PRL 2022, which is substantially equivalent to the requirements under ISQM 1, and applies a comprehensive quality management system, including documented policies and procedures to comply with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained up to the date of the assurance report is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our conclusion.

The audit as of 31 December 2023 was performed by another auditor.

Emphasis of matter

Comparative information from previous years was not examined as part of this audit.

Other information

The legal representatives are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises all information included in the annual financial statements and in the Corporate Governance Report but does not include the sustainability reporting and our assurance report.

Our conclusion on the sustainability report does not cover this other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our assurance engagement on the sustainability report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the sustainability reporting or our knowledge obtained in the limited assurance engagement or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this context.

The annual financial statements of Universität für Bodenkultur for the financial year ending 31 December 2023 were audited by another auditor who issued an unmodified audit opinion on these financial statements on 23 October 2023.

Responsibilities of the legal representatives and the University Council

The legal representatives are responsible for the preparation of the sustainability report including the development and implementation of the materiality assessment process in accordance with the applicable requirements and standards. This responsibility includes

- the identification and materiality assessment of actual and potential impacts, risks and opportunities related to sustainability topics in line with GRI requirements,
- the preparation of the sustainability report in accordance with the requirements of GRI 1: Foundation,
- the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls that the legal representatives consider relevant to enable the preparation of a sustainability report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and the performance of the materiality analysis process in accordance with the GRI requirements.

This responsibility further includes the selection and application of appropriate methods for sustainability reporting and the use of assumptions and estimates for individual sustainability disclosures that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Inherent limitations in the preparation of sustainability reporting

When reporting on forward-looking information, Universität für Bodenkultur Wien is required to prepare this forward-looking information based on disclosed assumptions about events that could occur in the future and possible future measures of the University. Deviations are likely to occur, as expected events often do not materialize as assumed.

Responsibilities of the auditor of the sustainability report

Our objectives are to plan and perform the assurance engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the sustainability report, including the materiality assessment procedure, is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a report that includes our conclusion. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence decisions of users taken based on the Sustainability Report.

Throughout the limited assurance engagement, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism.

Our responsibilities include

- Performing risk-related audit procedures, including obtaining an understanding of internal control relevant to the engagement, to identify disclosures that are likely to be materially misstated, whether due to fraud or error, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the University's internal control; and
- designing and performing audit procedures on sustainability disclosures that are likely to be materially misstated. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Summary of the work performed

A limited assurance engagement involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the sustainability report. The nature, timing and extent of assurance procedures selected depend on professional judgement, including the identification of disclosures in the sustainability reporting that may be subject to material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In performing our limited assurance engagement on the sustainability report, we have applied the following procedures:

- Obtained an understanding of the University’s procedures relevant to the preparation of the Sustainability Report.
- Assessed whether all relevant information identified in the materiality assessment process has been included in the sustainability reporting.
- Assessed whether the structure and presentation of the sustainability report is in accordance with GRI standards.
- Made inquiries of relevant personnel and analytical procedures on selected disclosures in the sustainability report.
- Performed procedures on a sample basis on selected disclosures in the sustainability report.
- Reconciled selected disclosures in the sustainability report with the corresponding disclosures in the annual financial statements and the other sections of the Corporate Governance Report.
- Obtained evidence about the methods used to develop estimates and forward-looking information.

Limitation of Liability and Publication

This limited assurance engagement on the sustainability report is a voluntary assurance engagement. We issue this assurance report based on the audit contract concluded with the client, which is also based on the General Conditions of Contract for the Public Accountants Professions (AAB 2018) with effect vis-à-vis third parties. These can be viewed online on the website of the Austrian Chamber of Tax Advisors and Certified Public Accountants (KSW).

Regarding our responsibility and liability arising from the contractual relationship, point 7 of the AAB 2018 applies.

The assurance report on the audit may only be made available to third parties together with the sustainability report and only in complete and unabridged form.

As this engagement is not a statutory audit, any contributory negligence on the part of the audited University, its legal representatives and vicarious agents must be taken into account in the event of liability. This leads to a division of damages and therefore reduces any claim for compensation against us accordingly.

Auditor responsible for the engagement

The Austrian Certified Public Auditor responsible for the assurance engagement on the Sustainability Report is Michael Dessulemoustier-Boveckerke.

Vienna, 01.10.2025

Forvis Mazars Audit GmbH
Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft

forvis mazars
01.10.2025
Michael Dessulemoustier-Bovekercke
qualified electronic signature

.....
Michael Dessulemoustier-Boveckerke
Austrian Certified Public Accountant
Austrian Certified Sustainability Auditor

List of Abbreviations

AAR2	Second Austrian Assessment Report on Climate Change
ACRP	Austrian Climate Research Program
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AGRINATURA	Association of European Universities and Research Centers
AKGL	Equal Opportunities Working Party
APCC	Austrian Panel on Climate Change
BGF	Corporate Health Management
BioToP	BOKU Doctoral School Biomolecular Technology of Proteins
BMBWF	Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research
CCCA	Climate Change Center Austria
CDG	Christian Doppler Research Association
COARA	Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
CS	Citizen Science
DCNA	Disaster Competence Network Austria
DIE	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
EBU	European Bioeconomy University
EFs	Emission Factors
EHS	Environment, Health & Safety
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
eMIT	Electrically Powered Motorized Individual Transport
EPICUR	European Partnership for an Innovative Campus Unifying Regions
EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
FFG	Austrian Research Promotion Agency
FH	University of Applied Sciences
FIS	BOKU Research Information System
FOS	Research Support, Innovation & Technology Transfer Unit
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FWF	Austrian Science Fund
GCUA	Global Challenges University Alliance
GEMIS	Global Emissions Model of Integrated Systems
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HR	Human Resources
ICA	European Association of Life Science Universities Network
IFA Tulln	Department of Agricultural Sciences at the BOKU Location Tulln
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IROICA	European network of international Relations Officers
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
LCOY	Local Conference of Youth
MIT	Motorized Individual Transport
NEKP	National Energy and Climate Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUM	Environmental Management Group
ÖAW	Austrian Academy of Sciences
OeAD	Austrian Agency of Education and Internationalization
ÖH BOKU	Austrian National Union of Students at BOKU
OHM	Occupational Health Management
OeNB	Austrian National Bank
PCGK	Federal Public Corporate Governance Code
PH Linz	Private University of Education, Diocese of Linz
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PV systems	Photovoltaic systems
R&D	Research and Development
SCI	Science Citation Index
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPEEC	Sustainable Production of Eco-Friendly Energy Efficient Cookstoves
STEOP	Introductory and Orientation Phase as required by Austrian university regulations
UFT Tulln	University and Research Center Tulln
UG	University Act
UN	United Nations
UniNEtZ	Universities and Sustainable Development Goals
UZ 46	Eco-label 46 (Green Electricity)
VR	Vice-Rector
WIA	Whole Institution Approach
WWTF	Vienna Science and Technology Fund

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Imprint

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Publisher and responsible for the content:
BOKU University
Universität für Bodenkultur Wien
Gregor-Mendel-Straße 33, 1180 Vienna, AUSTRIA
www.boku.ac.at

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Date of publication:
30. September 2025

Graphics:
janetschek kreativ | Melanie Klaffl

Print:
Druckerei Janetschek GmbH, 3860 Heidenreichstein, AUSTRIA

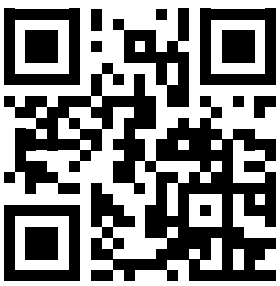
Editing:
Connect Translations Austria GmbH, 1140 Vienna, AUSTRIA

202324007
PRINTED IN AUSTRIA

produced according to guideline Uz24
Austrian Ecolabel,
Druckerei Janetschek GmbH,
UW No. 637

Produced with:
W.E.B grünstrom

FSC www.fsc.org RECYCLED Paper made from recycled material FSC® C001924



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