# Climate Responsibility.

Climate Strategy of the University of Basel 2024 - 2030

## Preamble

In its Strategy 2022 - 2030, the University of Basel strives for social and ecological sustainability in its actions and thus aims to contribute to achieving important sustainable development goals. Important steps have already been taken in recent years, such as the "less for more" project initiated in 2020, which implemented a number of measures to reduce flight emissions. In addition, the implementation of the revised investment regulations in 2022 largely excluded fossil fuel investments from the university's long-term financial assets. Other successfully implemented measures on campus, such as the reduction of air transported goods in the catering facilities to below 0.2% or the installation of photovoltaic systems on the Center for Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Department of Sport, Exercise and Health building, underline the university's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to these operational projects, the Master's Degree in Sustainable Development, the only one of its kind in Switzerland, has been preparing students for the complex challenges of climate change since 2005. Furthermore, researchers in interdisciplinary projects are investigating how the transition to a net-zero society can be made possible. This climate strategy, which was adopted by the President's Board in February 2024, was developed on the basis of previous activities. Detailed information on the climate footprint and the development of reduction paths can be found in the background report.

## 1. Fields of action

Climate responsibility is an opportunity for the University of Basel to combine its role model function in operational aspects with its core competencies in teaching, research and dialog in line with the "*whole institution approach*". The climate strategy should be visible and tangible at the entire university. Based on the 2019 greenhouse gas balance, and taking account of social impacts, the University of Basel has identified five priority fields of action to reduce emissions and have the greatest possible impact on sustainability and climate protection. This strategy defines specific goals for each of the fields of action and key measures that will help to achieve the goals by 2030.

- Campus & Management: Energy demand, energy procurement and production / Gray energy buildings / Resilient campus / Catering / Recyclables/ Procurement / Financial assets
- Mobility
- Teaching
- Research & Dialog
- Engagement & Culture

The fields of action Campus & Management and Mobility result from their relevance for the climate footprint and the university's role model function. A resilient campus that is adapted to climate change also plays an important role in creating a pleasant and attractive study and work environment. Through Teaching, the university can empower its students to become change agents for a climate-friendly society by imparting knowledge and transformative design skills. Strong inter- and transdisciplinary Research on climate and sustainability-related topics provides an important basis for decision-making in politics and business, and it can foster

the transformation to a net-zero society. The dissemination of research results outside the academy and the development of a topic-specific underline dialog and associated public relations work improve the University's positioning as an important climate and sustainability player in Switzerland and the Upper Rhine region. The dialog also increases the University's attractiveness for new research contracts. The engagement of university members and a living culture of sustainability that is visible on campus are important catalysts for the planned measures. With good communication and incentives, a stronger anchoring in the organizational units can be achieved, which is essential for the successful implementation of the climate strategy.

## 2. Target year and reduction path

By implementing the defined measures, the University of Basel's greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by an average of 35% across all areas already quantified by 2030, starting from the base year 2019. The quantitative reduction targets are the result of extensive potential assessments based on specific, ambitious but realistic key measures. The climate strategy will be further developed beyond 2030 in order to achieve "net zero" in the long term and continue to make an important contribution to the cantonal and national targets. Whether the remaining emissions in 2030 can be offset using negative emissions technologies or compensation projects will be examined at a later date, taking into account the technologies and options available by 2030. The implementation of the strategy will require additional investment and is therefore subject to the university being able to generate the corresponding funds (e.g. by acquiring third-party funding) or its sponsors making them available. If these conditions are not met, only those measures that can be implemented within the framework of existing resources can be realized.

# 3. Goals 2030 and key measures

## 3.1. Campus & Management

| | Goals 2030 (in % tCO$_2$-eq) | Key measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Energy demand** (heating, cooling, electricity) | **- 43%** | Heating/cooling (- 45%) <br>• Energy-efficient renovations in key buildings with great savings potential<br>• Modernize office buildings (achievement of the SIA threshold)<br>• Switch to district heating or geothermal energy for buildings with oil and gas heating<br>• Optimize existing systems, improve controlling and maintenance, reduce heating temperatures<br>Electricity (- 25%)<br>• Regular operational optimization of appliances and building services in the relevant buildings<br>• Consistent consolidation of the IT infrastructure<br>• Introduction of a monitoring and smart metering system (digital measuring system) at faculty and department level |
| **Catering** | **- 40%** | • Increase the range of vegetarian and vegan options. Carry out awareness-raising campaigns. Annual definition of measures to achieve the interim target of -15% reduction in emissions by 2027<br>• Expand vegetarian/vegan offering as part of the new tender for catering establishments |
| **Waste** | **- 10%** | • Reduce packaging waste through bundled purchases and deliveries<br>• Optimize separation of waste streams to increase the recycling rate and reduce hazardous wastes<br>• Consider of the introduction of a furniture inventory and the implementation of re-use concepts for relocations |

| | Goals 2030 | Key measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Energy procurement and production** | • Significant increase in the share of in-house production of electricity | • Implement new photovoltaic systems on existing buildings and plan further systems for new buildings owned by the university<br>• Analyze the PV potential in buildings rented by the university. Coordinate action with building owners to install additional photovoltaic systems |
| **Gray Energy Buildings** | • Sustainable certification of all new buildings to mitigate the increase in gray emissions by 2040<br>• Increase space efficiency of office buildings | • Specify SGNI label "gold" or "platinum" for all new university buildings. Comply with the current SIA target value for greenhouse gas emissions per energy reference area<br>• Reduce office workspace requirement |
| **Resilient Campus** | • Ensure an attractive campus as a place to study and work for students and employees - even in the increasingly hot summer months<br>• Integrate the sponge city principle in campus planning | • Plan and implement new green spaces (including façade and roof greening), vegetation and bodies of water for new buildings and conversions<br>• Increase integration of integral rainwater management on campus (sponge city principle) |
| **Financial Investments** | • Consistent alignment of the investment portfolio with climate protection and sustainability goals (ESG) | • Develop methodologically comparable quantification of greenhouse gas emissions contained in the existing investment portfolios. Where possible, asset-managing institutions should reduce the investment's total emissions |
| **Procurement** | • Carbon footprint of the procurement area and formulate a reduction target<br>• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from procurement by 2030 | • Establish a greenhouse gas monitoring for procurement data by 2026<br>• Introduce optimized, more bundled governance with decentralized procurement coordinators<br>• Develop and implement procurement criteria that prioritizes climate-neutral and sustainable purchasing<br>• Prioritize integration of sustainability criteria in submissions |

## 3.2. Mobility

| Mobility | Goals 2030 | Key measures |
|---|---|---|
| | • Reduce flight-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 | • Further implement the "less for more" program in all organizational units, with the aim to reduce flight emissions by 30% compared to the 2017 - 2019 baseline. Realize communication measures and introduce incentive mechanisms<br>• Expand offer of rooms, equipment and support for online and hybrid events and meetings<br>• Continue to develop and improve data monitoring in the travel management system<br>• Review the reduction target for flight emissions from 2028 |

## 3.3. Teaching

| Teaching | Goals 2030 | Key measures |
|---|---|---|
| | • Expand and strengthen the range of courses on sustainability and climate related themes from Bachelor's to doctoral level<br>• Develop a continuing education program with focus on sustainability | • Consider the establishment of a cross-faculty Bachelor's degree course in Sustainable Development with a practice-oriented but scientifically sound introduction<br>• Consider the establishment of an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty PhD program as part of the Sustainable Future research network<br>• Stronger integration of climate and sustainability-related courses into the curriculum<br>• Consider the implementation of a sustainability-related CAS or MAS program |

## 3.4. Research & Dialog

| | Goals 2030 | Key measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Research** | • Strengthen inter- and transdisciplinary research to develop evidence-based solutions to mitigate climate change<br>• Use living lab research projects to achieve campus and management climate goals | • Expand inter- and transdisciplinary research on climate and sustainability issues at the interface between research and society<br>• Develop and implement a "living lab" for research and innovation projects on campus and in the region<br>• Establish a Green Lab program: development of carbon footprints for research units, support for decentralized working groups |
| **Dialog** | • Expand regular dialog with societal stakeholders on topics relevant to sustainability<br>• Integrate sustainability and climate issues as core aspects of external university communication | • Continued knowledge transfer and dialog with society<br>• Establish the "Climate Dialogues" series of public events with the relevant community stakeholders<br>• Emphasize topics of climate protection and sustainability in university communication and at public events<br>• Consider joining the "education race to zero" initiative (UN Environment Program) |

## 3.5. Engagement & Culture

| | Goals 2030 | Key measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Engagement & Culture** | • Anchor sustainability as a guiding principle in all organizational units, including through decentralized managers responsible for sustainability and climate protection<br>• Increase visibility and tangibility of the climate strategy in everyday study and work life<br>• Support employees and students to implement innovative ideas | • Develop and implement a concept for the introduction of decentralized "Sustainability Accelerators" that promote sustainability in the faculties and departments<br>• Introduce an "innovation and ideas incubator" for sustainability and climate protection (campus, teaching, living lab)<br>• Implement communication and information campaigns to increase visibility on campus and support sustainable behavioral change<br>• Integrate sustainability and climate protection into existing training courses, creation of new courses |