

# Traveling sustainably

Guidelines, recommendations and useful tips for business trips at the University of Bern

**Traffic-related environmental pollution caused by business travel are a key issue of everyday life at the university. Staff and students can play their part in reducing this pollution. Below, we have compiled recommendations and tips that will enable you to take sustainability into account on your business trips. The framed text sections also contain information on business travel guidelines.**

## Take the train instead of flying

Use the train instead of the plane for your business trips whenever possible to avoid climate-damaging emissions.

When planning your journey, take into account that traveling to and from the airport and checking in etc. also take time. When considering these factors, a train journey for some destinations is only one or two hours longer than a journey by plane (e.g. to Brussels, Rome, Hamburg, Cambridge, London) or sometimes even shorter than this (e.g. Paris, Bologna, Frankfurt, Munich)<sup>1</sup>.

Another advantage of train journeys, in addition to climate friendliness, is that the travel time by train can be used for a variety of purposes (for individual work or meetings if you are making a journey as a team).

Using night trains can also be a very attractive alternative to air travel. It is often also an advantage in financial terms because it saves the costs of an overnight stay in a hotel. Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna,

---

<sup>1</sup> The information about flight durations, including transfers, is based on data provided by [www.routerank.com/en/](http://www.routerank.com/en/)

Graz and Prague, for example, can be reached by night train in a comfortable and climate-friendly way (for further destinations see SBB / Nightjet <sup>2</sup>).

- **Please note:** The University of Bern has guidelines specifying which destinations within Europe should be traveled to by train or plane. The relevant specifications can be found in the “**Traffic light system for University business trips**”.

## Direct flights

Planes emit more CO<sub>2</sub> during takeoff and landing than during the flight. By avoiding flights with stopovers, you can reduce the carbon footprint of your journeys.

## Economy

Business and First-Class flights produce more CO<sub>2</sub> than flights in Economy Class because of the space required. You can reduce your journey’s carbon footprint by booking Economy Class flights.

- **Please note:** The following is specified in the “Regulations on expenses and representation costs” (Art. 17, para. 2) concerning the class of flight: *“In the case of air travel, the costs of economy class are reimbursed from basic funding and third-party grants of the service providers in accordance with the agreement of objectives. Economy plus flights are permitted on intercontinental routes. In the case of external funding, the specifications of the donors (SNF, EU, NIH, etc.) also apply. Business flights are permitted on intercontinental routes (but not within Europe) via free external funding.”*

## Video conferences

Business travel can be easily reduced by opting for a video conference or webinar as a cheap alternative to travel. For example, take part in a conference as a guest speaker via video or plan the next conference that you’re hosting yourself to be partly or completely based on virtual platforms. Even meetings can be held by video. The University of Bern offers a number of different options and courses along these lines:

- **Webinars:** With several software applications you can hold online seminars, lectures or web meetings. Alternatively, external lecturers can host a seminar or a lecture remotely. [More...](#)

---

<sup>2</sup> See SBB (<https://www.sbb.ch/en/leisure-holidays/travel-europe/nightjet.html>) and Nightjet (<https://www.nightjet.com/en>).

- **Videokonferenzen:** Members of the University of Bern have the opportunity to communicate by video in their own workspace or in specially designated rooms. Mobile video equipment is also available. [More...](#)
- **Advice and training:** You can find support and training options [here...](#)
- **Guidelines for virtual conferences:** Based on the experience gained during the “*Copernicus Alliance 2019*” online conference, the Copernicus Alliance and CDE scientists have developed a guide for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of online conferences. [More...](#)

## Energy efficiency

Compare different routes and modes of transport when planning your journey, taking travel time, costs and energy efficiency/environmental sustainability into consideration. The following tools are very helpful for this:

- [www.routerank.com/en/](http://www.routerank.com/en/)
- [www.ecopassenger.org](http://www.ecopassenger.org)

## Planning business trips

You can take sustainability into account when planning your business trips by asking the following questions during your planning process:

- Is it possible to take part in a conference virtually (video conference, webinar)?
- Which delegation sizes make the most sense?
- Can several meetings abroad be combined into one?
- What environmentally friendly modes of transport are available?
- How much of the journey can be spent working?

## Planning conferences

When planning a conference or inviting guest speakers to Bern, you can take sustainability into account, as regards how participants and speakers will travel here, by asking the following questions during the planning process:

- Is it possible to use video conferences and/or webinars at the conference?
- Are you able to plan the event so that it is possible for participants and speakers to use environmentally friendly modes of transport?

Point out to the participants or guests invited to your conferences that the University of Bern is within close proximity to Bern train station and that Bern has excellent transport links by train. You can find information from the Welcome Center about public transport in Bern [here](#).

*You can find more information on questions concerning sustainability at the University of Bern at: [www.sustainability.unibe.ch](http://www.sustainability.unibe.ch)*