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Media release of the Executive Council and the University of Bern

Executive Council applies for a credit for innovative research and implementation center

A world-leading research and implementation center is to be established in the field of nature and humanity at the University of Bern. The application-oriented center aims to improve nature conservation and environmental protection in line with the needs of economic and social development. The University of Bern, with the involvement of the Canton of Bern, will prepare a funding application worth CHF 100 million for the attention of the Hansjörg Wyss Foundation by April 2019. If successful, the university and the canton would each contribute CHF 50 million to this center over a period of ten years. The Executive Council will request a credit from the Grand Council in the 2019 spring session.

The Wyss Foundation has been working with the University of Bern on a one-year pilot project since this summer in the context of its global campaign for nature conservation. In addition to various research projects, the aim of this pilot project is to prepare a feasibility study for a university center (Wyss Centre Bern) and provide evidence of possible co-financing by the canton and the university. The Canton of Bern led by the Department for Economic Affairs and three leading international research institutions at the University of Bern are involved in the ongoing work: The Interdisciplinary Centre for Development and the Environment (CDE), the Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR) and the Institute of Plant Sciences (IPS).

The planned center would enable innovative approaches and strategies for biodiversity and environmental protection and their compatibility with economic and social progress to be researched and made available internationally in the Canton of Bern and in three other regions of the world together with public authorities, business, civil society organizations and the local population.

If the center comes into being, the Canton of Bern would gain a unique opportunity to deliver pioneering services in the areas of the environment and sustainability. CHF 30 million from the canton's contribution would be used for various innovative projects with research support in the fields of climate change, biodiversity and land use in the canton of Bern. Another CHF 20 million would flow into the new center based in Bern in the form of research funds and leased premises.

Note to the editors

Further information:

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