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Media Release of the Canton of Bern and the Wyss Academy for Nature – February 21, 2025

Wyss Academy for Nature to Receive Continued Funding

In its first five years, the Wyss Academy for Nature has successfully implemented projects worldwide. An external interim assessment conducted in 2024 yielded positive results. The Wyss Foundation, the Canton of Bern, and the University of Bern have jointly decided to continue to fund the Wyss Academy for Nature until 2030.

The results of an external evaluation (conducted according to SEVAL and OECD standards) indicate that the Wyss Academy for Nature has successfully established effective project structures on four continents over the past five years, launched 60 projects, and achieved initial impact in the field. For example, in collaboration with local partners, it has developed solutions to improve water resources and biodiversity at various sites. Today, approximately 100 employees are working on these projects worldwide. Five professorships with research teams ensure the scientific transfer of insights into practice. The regional Hubs in Bern, Southeast Asia (Laos), East Africa (Kenya and Madagascar), and South America (Peru) collaborate with numerous partner organizations, local communities, and authorities on-site—often in highly challenging conditions and contexts.

Closer Exchange Between Hubs

The interim evaluation includes recommendations for optimization and further development. These include fostering closer exchange between the different Hubs in preparation for the next phase, as well as improving impact measurement and expanding successful projects. These recommendations have been well received by both management and the Board. As a result, the Board has decided to grant the Wyss Academy for Nature an additional year in 2025 to implement these recommendations and adjust its business strategy until 2030.

The Executive Council of the Canton of Bern took note of the evaluation results at its meeting on February 19, 2025, and endorses the Board's decision. It extended the validity of the framework credit granted by the Canton until the end of 2030, maintaining the same funding level. The cantonal Department of Economic Affairs, Energy, and Environment, together with the Department of Education and Culture, has been tasked with submitting a report and recommendations on further steps at the beginning of 2026.

Implementation Program in the Canton of Bern on Track

Founded in 2020 at the University of Bern, the Wyss Academy for Nature aims to connect research, business, and policy to develop innovative solutions for a sustainable future. From 2020 to 2030, the

Wyss Foundation is contributing CHF 100 million to this effort, with the Canton of Bern and the University of Bern each providing CHF 50 million.

According to a resolution by the Grand Council of the Canton of Bern, CHF 30 million of the Canton's total CHF 50 million contribution will be allocated to the cantonal implementation program, while CHF 20 million will be designated as a purpose-tied state contribution to the University of Bern, including funding for office space rental costs.

The implementation of 15 projects across the Canton is proceeding as planned, with some projects already completed. For example, a reference map has been created to indicate areas surrounding protected moors that may be relevant for their water balance. This map allows construction stakeholders and authorities to assess whether a proposed building project could impact the hydrology of these moors.

[Overview of Projects in the Canton of Bern](#)

New Head of Hub Bern

As of January 1, 2025, Daniel Bärtschi has taken over as the new Head of Hub Bern at the Wyss Academy for Nature. He succeeds Olivier Jacquat, who led the Hub from 2021 to the end of September 2024. Bärtschi, who grew up in Lützelflüh in the Emmental region, brings extensive and varied experience in agronomy, development cooperation, sustainability, coaching, leadership, and organizational development.

Note to Editors

For further information, please contact:

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