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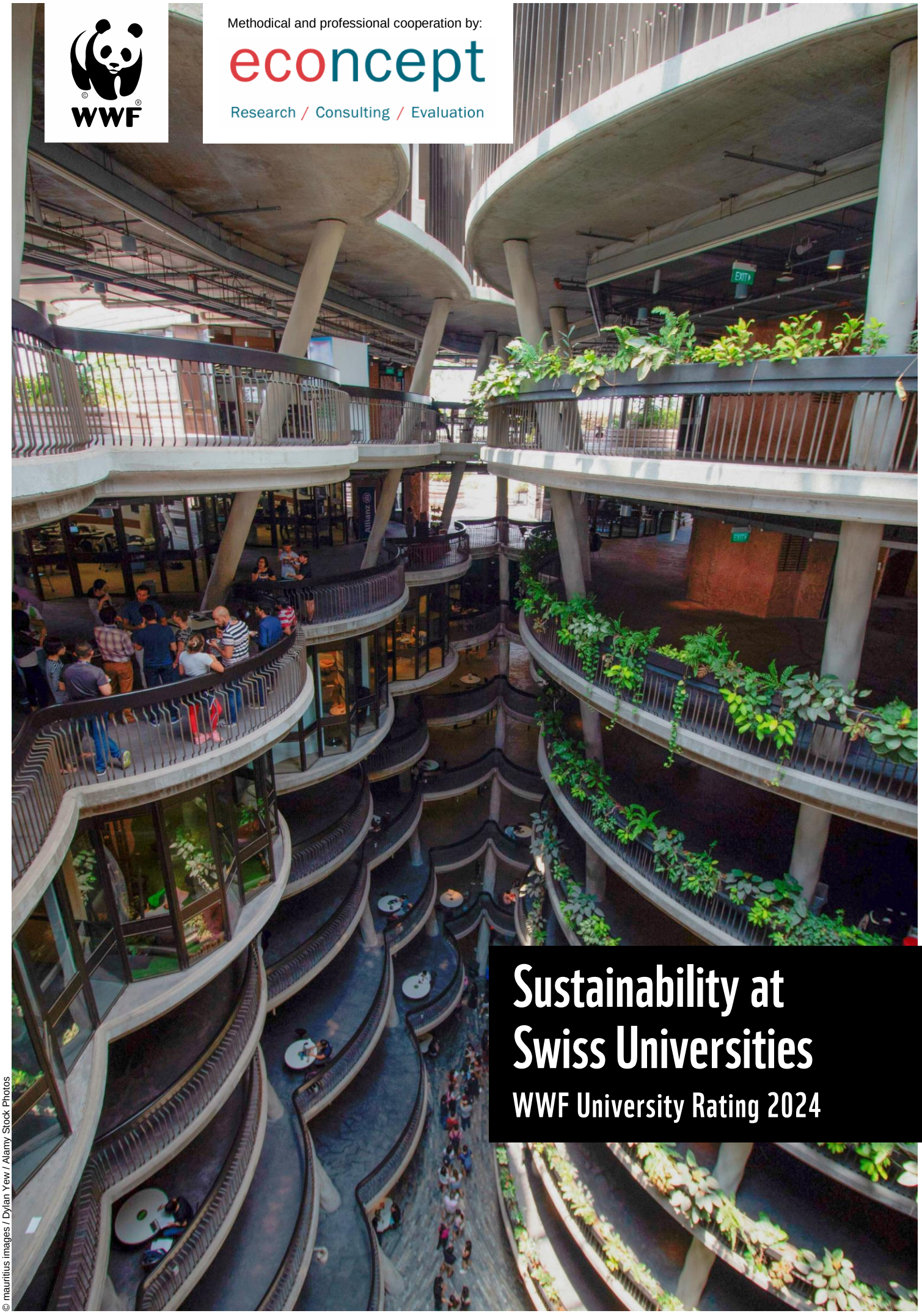

Sustainability at Swiss Universities

WWF University Rating 2024

Acknowledgments

WWF Switzerland and econcept AG would like to thank all 29 participating universities for the time and effort they have devoted to this study. We are grateful for their significant contributions. Participation in this study reflects a genuine commitment to sustainability. Thanks to the quality of their contributions, a thorough processing of the information was possible. We hope this study will support universities, as well as their stakeholders and funding bodies, such as cantonal authorities and the federal government, on their ongoing journey towards sustainability.
The necessity for society and the economy to respect planetary boundaries is more important than ever, and universities can and must play a central role in this transition. We thank you warmly for your commitment to sustainability and look forward to a continued dialogue and to collaborating in the future.
A big thank to the Sounding Board for its informed input and critical eye. The Sounding Board included members of the management and staff of both WWF Switzerland (Elgin Brunner, Franziska Zoller, Simon Zysset) and econcept AG (Nicole Kaiser, Ethan Gertel) as well as Dr. Dr.h.c. Barbara Haering.

Imprint

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Foreword

The United Nations 2030 Agenda sets a globally binding framework for sustainability. Working towards the 17 SDG concerns us all. Thereby, we recognize the extent to which we will need the support of science and universities to achieve these goals. The regular rating studies of the WWF show that universities in Switzerland are aware of their responsibility. Initiatives of front runners are increasingly followed by comprehensive strategies addressing the whole institution and their missions. A structural anchoring of sustainability strengthens implementation.
Based on successes achieved, it is now a matter of maintaining commitment and resources to strengthen the impact of sustainability in teaching, research, and transfer. I look forward to seeing increasingly concrete effects on the ground. Let us remember that sustainability means both a value system as well as a principle of action for the use of natural, economic, and social resources. Sustainability will therefore benefit us all.

Barbara Haering, Research and Consulting

Together with econcept AG we are pleased to present the 2024 edition of the WWF University Rating on sustainability. This rating is a key tool for tracking how Swiss universities are embedding sustainability into their structures and practices. Over the past few years, many institutions have made significant strides—setting ambitious goals, setting up new structures, appointing responsible leadership, reporting and adjusting their quality assurance processes to include meaningful sustainability measures. But as important as these achievements are, they are not the end goal, but represent milestones on a much longer journey.
For universities to become true leaders in the sustainability transition, much more is required. Teaching and societal engagement hold immense untapped potential. The future of sustainability depends on graduates leaving universities equipped with the skills, mindsets, and interdisciplinary knowledge needed to drive sustainable change. This means embedding sustainability principles across all curricula, regardless of discipline. Sustainability is no longer an isolated topic; it is a lens through which the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators must view their work.
Furthermore, today's complex global challenges require interdisciplinary solutions. Universities should foster environments where students and faculty alike engage with these challenges from multiple perspectives, blending expertise from different fields. This kind of interdisciplinary learning equips students to address real-world problems with a deeper, more holistic understanding, making them better prepared to create impactful, scalable solutions.
At the heart of this transformation lies the need for collaboration. Universities must engage not just within their walls but with external stakeholders—businesses, policymakers, civil society, and local communities. By working together, they can co-create solutions that are not just innovative but practical and readily implemented. This "third mission" of universities—beyond teaching and research—has the power to turn universities into hubs for positive societal change.
The 2024 WWF University Rating highlights both achievements and areas that need further attention. The journey toward sustainability is one of the greatest opportunities we have today—one that requires us to act decisively and collaboratively. Let us seize this moment together.

Thomas Vellacott, WWF Switzerland

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Management Summary

Purpose and Scope of the Rating

WWF Switzerland has been conducting a sustainability rating of Swiss higher education institutions already in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The purpose is to identify how universities are integrating sustainability into their operations, structures and core missions and to serve as a compass for continuous improvement.

This rating study shall:

- Provide the **public** with a clear overview of the degree of institutional integration of sustainability at Swiss universities.
- Encourage **universities** to aim for a ***visionary model*** of higher education supporting sustainable development.
- Offer **university management** a benchmarking tool to align their strategic goals with sustainability and to accelerate progress.
- Equip **academic staff** with insights and best practices for sustainability education and research, fostering collaboration.
- Empower **students** by increasing transparency about their university's sustainability efforts.
- Inform **public authorities and policymakers**, guiding support for the integration of sustainability in higher education.

The sustainability rating evaluates to what extent and how deeply sustainability is integrated across the five main university areas **(teaching, research, transfer, governance, campus/operations)** and through five key dimensions, providing qualitative indications such as level of ambition, degree of involvement, dedicated resources. This multi-dimensional approach allows for a nuanced evaluation, capturing both the intentions as well as tangible effects of sustainability initiatives.

The five dimensions assessed are:

- **Strategy:** assesses how sustainability is integrated into the institution's vision, mission, and long-term strategy.
- **Process:** looks at the mechanisms and procedures in place to implement sustainability.
- **Function:** focuses on how sustainability is reflected in daily activities and practices.
- **Stakeholders:** evaluates the involvement and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders regarding sustainability efforts.
- **Output:** measures the actual results and effects of sustainability initiatives, ensuring that the institution's efforts are not only aspirational but lead to tangible outcomes.

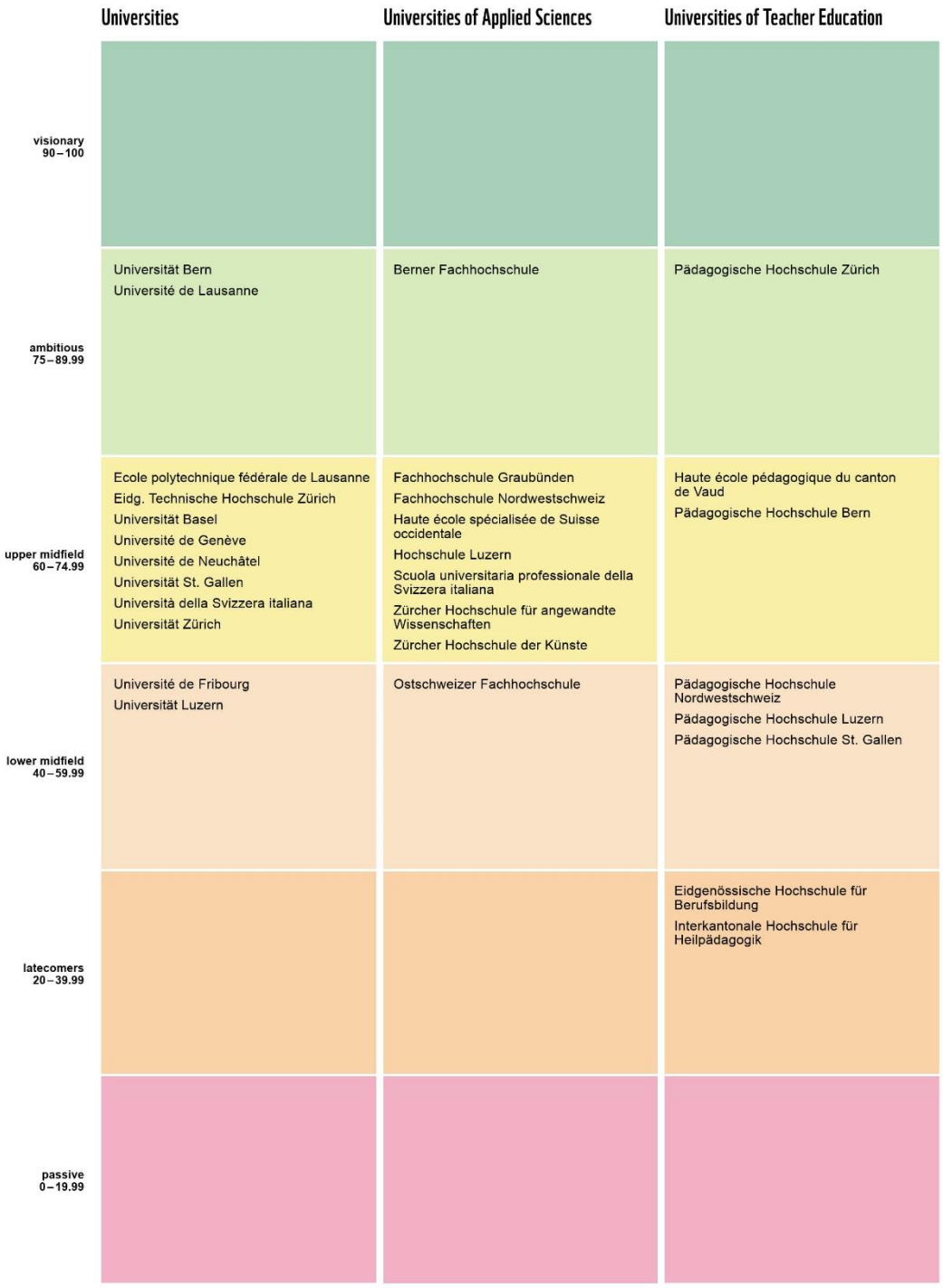
Universities were evaluated based on their specific type and their unique characteristics

Direct comparisons across different types of institutions are not entirely possible. Universities were given the opportunity to decide for themselves which criteria or indicators did not apply to their situation. Certain criteria or indicators that were deemed irrelevant due to the university type or characteristics were therefore not included in the evaluation. Similarly, each university's contributions to sustainability were considered in light of its particular focus and limitations, leading to differences in how sustainability is approached. The most notable distinction lies with the universities of teacher education (UTE), which primarily contribute through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), taking a naturally more didactic approach. These nuances are crucial in understanding how each institution integrates sustainability in line with its core mission and structure.

We therefore recommend assessing the rating not as a direct comparison of universities, but rather as a benchmarking with an ideal of a sustainable university in mind, ***as defined by WWF***. It is crucial for universities to recognize where they stand on the path to sustainability and to engage in dialogue with institutions encountering similar challenges and to learn from best practice.

Overall Rating results

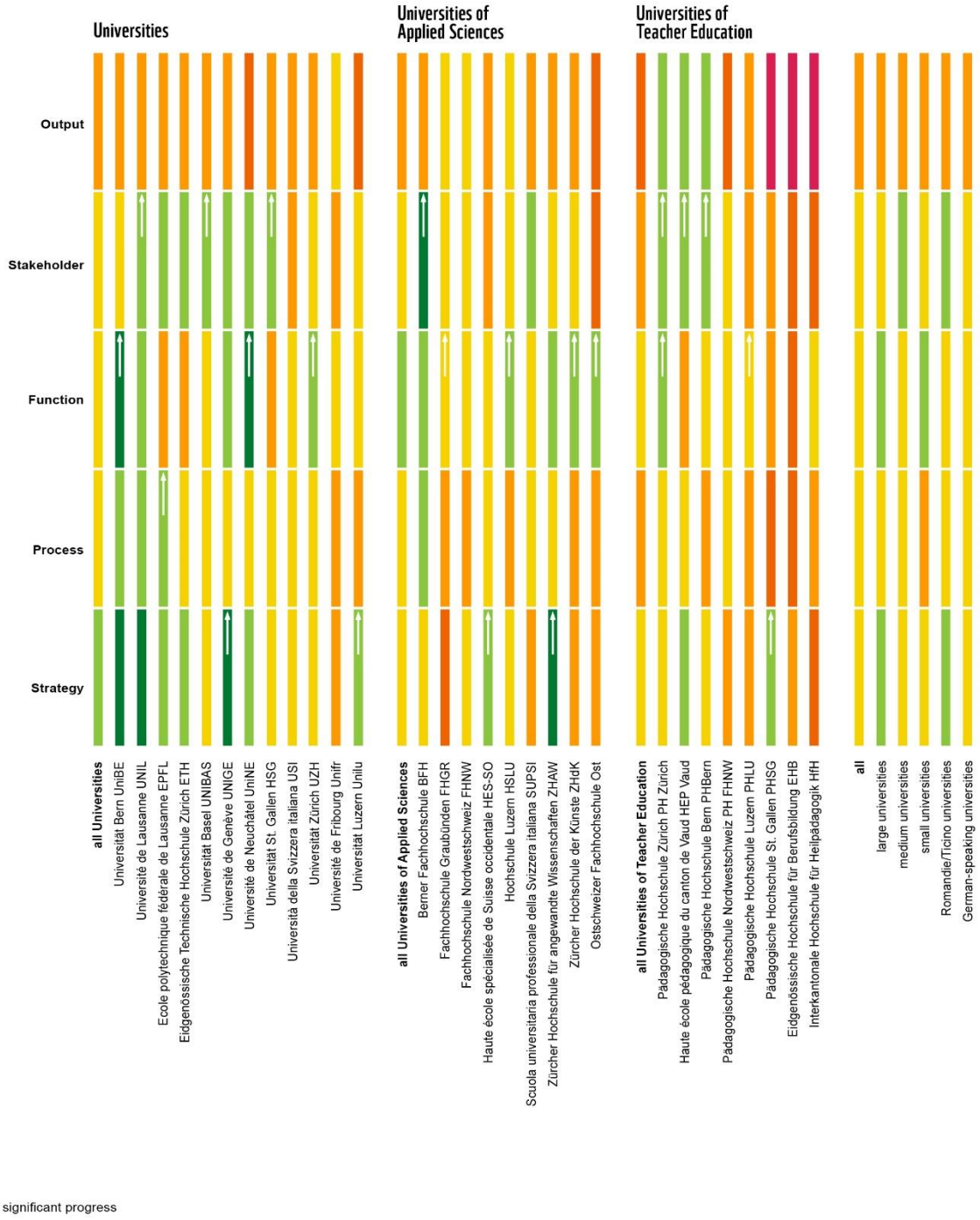
Except for institutions with fewer than 1000 students, all Swiss universities were invited to participate in the study and submit information. All universities contacted have provided information - with one exception (Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences). The following illustration gives an overview of where Swiss universities stand in 2024 on the path to a visionary sustainable university:



Universities were assessed against WWF's vision for a sustainable university (see Appendix A). The progression consists of 5 stages, from 'passive' to 'visionary'. Within each category, universities are listed in alphabetical order, not by score. Due to the wide range in size and type of university, we recommend not evaluating one university against another, as the criteria or indicators taken into account may vary slightly.

Results for assessed dimensions

The following table showcases the results in the dimensions for each type of university:



Universities were assessed in five dimensions. The colour code is the same as in the overall rating overview: Red: passive, 0-19.99%, dark orange: latecomers, 20-29.99%, orange: lower midfield, 40-59.99%, yellow: upper midfield, 60-74.99%, green: ambitious, 75-89.99%, dark green: visionary, 90-100%. An arrow indicates when significant progress has been made in an area since the last rating of 2021.

Main findings

All 29 universities

have embarked on the road to sustainability, regardless of their type. Not a single university scores in the 'passive' lower category.

17 out of 29

universities perform in the upper midfield, which clearly shows that a critical mass of universities is well on the way to sustainability integration.

There are still no visionary universities.

Although some universities perform particularly well in specific dimensions and criteria, none of them is yet entering the top category of 'visionary'.

Sustainability is generally well integrated in strategies and governance, but still has catching up to do in terms of implementation.

The most important challenge

is currently to be identified in teaching.

Sustainability is integrated to a medium extent into the Swiss higher education landscape, meeting approximately

64% of expectations according to indicators, criteria, and dimensions set for a visionary sustainable university by WWF.

The strongest integration of sustainability

occurs through organizational structures, such as the establishment of sustainability offices and commissions.

At traditional universities, sustainability is most effectively integrated in strategic planning and stakeholder engagement.

Scores for the new output-related criteria are relatively low, suggesting that the implementation of sustainability in teaching does not yet meet the expectations set by WWF.

Positive trends since the previous assessments

Looking at the data from all four studies (2017, 2019, 2021 and 2024) allows us to identify underlying trends that have become stronger over the years. These include:

Shift from Operations to Teaching and Transfer
Universities are increasingly focusing on integrating sustainability into teaching and knowledge transfer, recognizing the importance of educating future leaders. Education and transfer support sustainable mindsets and skills across industries, governments, and communities.

Whole Institution Approach
A whole-institution approach is gaining traction, ensuring better coordination across faculties and management. This strategy integrates sustainability into governance, teaching, research, and operations, embedding it throughout university functions and responsibilities.

Broader Involvement of University Players, Especially Students
Student involvement has increased, with students, faculty, and staff collaborating on sustainability projects and decision-making. Thus, ensuring that all parts of the university contribute to sustainability goals.

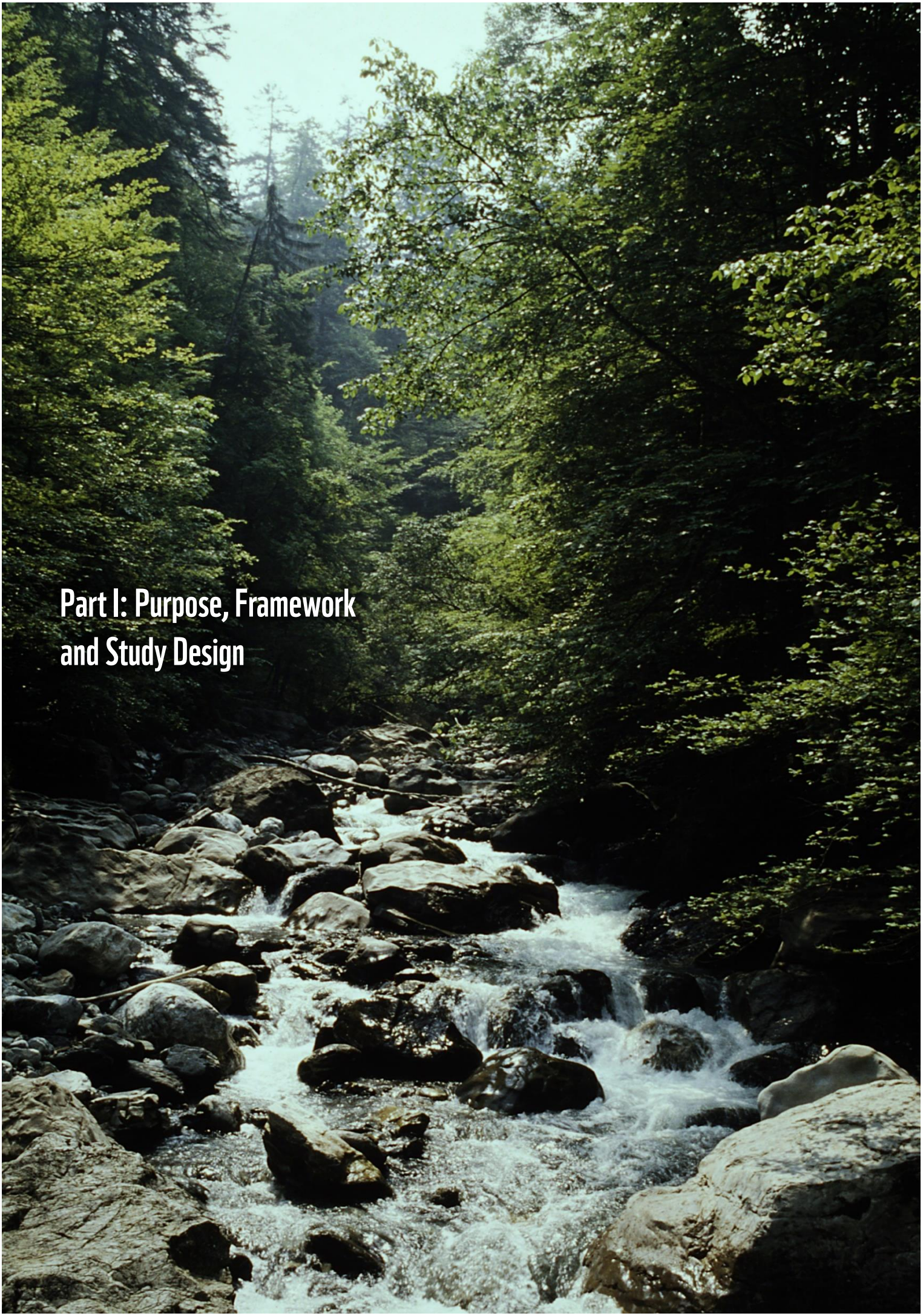
New Collaborations with Non-Academic Actors
Universities are also launching impact-oriented collaborations with non-academic partners like private enterprises and NGOs, using new methods like living labs and social innovation to tackle real-world sustainability challenges.

WWF Recommendations

WWF Switzerland recognizes the progress universities have made in advancing sustainability – and at the same time calls for more ambitious objectives and actions. To ensure impactful and lasting change, universities should:

- **Align strategic goals and policies with sustainability**: Integrate sustainability into key institutional policies and quality assurance frameworks to maintain focus and to drive continuous progress.
- **Engage all stakeholders, especially students**: Actively involve students, faculty, and staff in sustainability initiatives, empowering them to co-design solutions and participate in decision-making processes.
- **Promote strategic external collaborations**: Forge partnerships with the corporate world, NGOs, and governments to address real-world challenges, using innovative tools such as living labs and social innovation projects.
- **Strengthen interdisciplinary approaches**: Adopt interdisciplinary methods that connect different areas of knowledge and that empower students to address complex sustainability challenges through hands-on learning and critical problem-solving.
- **Transition to sustainable operational practices**, including shifting away from fossil fuels, fostering long-term planning, embracing integrated and up-to-date teaching, and strengthening research with strong societal relevance.
- **Strengthen teaching for sustainability**: Integrate sustainability holistically into curricula across all disciplines. By making sustainability integral, universities will equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle complex global issues.
- **Strengthen transfer to society**: Scale up sustainability solutions through partnerships, social innovation, and policy engagement, ensuring universities contribute actively to societal transformation.

More insights into WWF's recommendations can be found in ***chapter 5*** of this report.



Part I: Purpose, Framework and Study Design

1. Purpose of the University Rating

WWF Switzerland has already been conducting a sustainability rating of all Swiss higher education institutions in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The goal was and still is to measure how these institutions are integrating sustainability into their operations, structure and core missions, thus contributing to the broader transition toward a sustainable society and economy. Due to the increasing strategic importance of sustainability in shaping the Swiss higher education landscape over the past three years, WWF Switzerland has decided to again conduct an assessment. The objective of this rating is to thoroughly examine and evaluate sustainability, with a particular focus on governance, collective processes, and tangible measures and outcomes, especially in teaching.
Repeating the rating in 2024 is particularly important, since Swiss universities have made significant strides in integrating sustainability in recent years. Sustainability is a long-term challenge, and progress needs to be continuously monitored, not just in terms of intentions and projected goals, but also regarding concrete outputs and outcomes. Setting objectives or outlining future actions is no longer sufficient. Thus, it is about holding institutions accountable also for implementation und results. Learning from both successes and shortcomings can pave the way for future success.

Regarding the current rating edition, emphasis has been placed on the domain of teaching, thus underlining the importance of education in shaping future leaders, professionals, and citizens who will drive sustainable change. By ensuring that sustainability is integrated across all disciplines as well as in pedagogical approaches, universities can equip students with the critical skills and knowledge needed to tackle real-world environmental and social challenges. This emphasis aligns with the urgent need for interdisciplinary, systemic thinking that is crucial for addressing the complexity of sustainability issues.

The aims of the rating study are to:

- Serve as a **compass** for continuous improvement, encouraging all universities to reflect on their progress and aspire towards a visionary model of sustainable higher education that meets both current and future societal and environmental challenges.
- Provide **the public** with a clear and comprehensive overview of the Swiss university landscape, particularly in terms of how sustainability is institutionally integrated across the entire university.
- Offer university **management** a benchmarking tool highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, enabling them to align strategic goals with sustainability priorities and accelerate their institution's progress on the sustainability journey. In that sense the rating aims to create transparency and accountability, encouraging institutions to reflect on their sustainability practices.
- Equip **academic staff** with insights into best practices in sustainability education and research, encouraging cross-institutional learning and fostering greater collaboration on innovative sustainability initiatives.
- Empower **students** by increasing transparency about the sustainability efforts of their institutions, helping them to make informed choices and actively engage in sustainability efforts within and beyond the university.
- Inform **public authorities** and policymakers of areas where specific support would help a stronger integration of sustainability into higher education, providing them with a valuable resource for shaping policies that further support the integration of sustainability in education, research, and societal engagement across the sector.

2. Normative framework for Sustainability in Swiss higher education

2.1 Policy framework for Sustainability

Based on the UN's framework of goals, the Swiss government has adopted a strategy and an action plan to promote sustainable development. This is also reflected in the *Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HedA / LEHE / HFKG)* the *Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA / FIFG / LERI)* as well as in the *Education, Research and Innovation Dispatch (ERI-Dispatch / BFI-Botschaft / message FRI)*.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

At an international level, the United Nations 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is fundamental. Universities can make an important contribution to each of the 17 goals, particularly through research and knowledge transfer. Education is both a goal (SDG 4, access to quality education) and a measure to support the other goals – through education for sustainable development (ESD). This goal applies to all levels of education and therefore also for universities. SDG 4.7 reads:

«By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. »

2030 Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

The Federal Council's 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) reaffirms the responsibility of the ERI sector and universities for sustainability. This is described in section 5.4 as follows:

«Switzerland's tertiary institutions are making a substantial contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular by training future scientists and decision-makers and by laying the scientific groundwork for sustainability innovations. Science and research are critical to understanding not just the current state and evolution of natural resources and our environment in general, but also to comprehending the new risks and benefits arising from technological, societal and economic developments. They furnish data and analyses on which society and decision-makers can rely. Moreover, the higher education institutions and academies of arts and sciences maintain dialogue with society, making scientific findings accessible to the general public in an understandable manner. International cooperation is paramount for education, research and innovation, as many of the issues that are addressed in the framework of sustainable development have an international connection. Scientific research can also be instrumental in pinpointing the causes of poverty and inequality, devising solutions and thereby mitigating the global risks to economy, environment and society. Cooperation with developing and transition countries can also play a role in this connection. » (S. 49f).

However, the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy sets only few specific goals for universities: These address social sustainability and gender equality (Goal 4.3: Improve the gender balance among university teachers), as well as the international cooperation in education.
The 2030 SDS is accompanied by an action plan that complements the Confederation's existing instruments with new measures aiming at areas where gaps still exist or where greater coordination between policy areas is required. The 2024-2027 Action Plan adopted by the Federal Council on 24 January 2024 contains 22 measures in the priority areas of the 2030 SDS. Measure 20 of the federal government's 2024-2027 action plan for sustainable development takes up the corresponding measure 17 of the previous action plan 21-24, namely *"anchoring education, research and innovation as drivers for the transversal topic of sustainable development in the ERI Dispatch 2025-2028"*.

Sustainability in the Federal Education, Research and Innovation Policy (ERI-Dispatch) 2021-2024

In the ERI-Dispatch 2021-2024, sustainability is regarded as one of the three cross-sectional areas of promotion.

*«*The same applies to the new funding period: (...) ERI policy contributes to sustainable development and equal opportunities in all areas. In this way, it also contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy and thus supports the development of the 2030 Agenda für Sustainable Development. *»*

2.2 Legal Framework for Sustainability in Higher Education

Higher Education Act (HEdA) and Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation, RIPA

Based on the Higher Education Act (HEdA), the Federal Government coordinates joint federal and cantonal activities in the higher education sector. Universities are autonomous regarding the implementation of objectives and enjoy full freedom of teaching and research. Still, they work according to performance mandates from their respective cantons (in the case of ETH by the Federal Council and the ETH board) as their main funding body. Universities are committed to the principles of sustainability. Article 30, paragraph 1, letter a, number 6 of the Higher Education Act (HEdA / LEHE / HFKG) addresses the accreditation procedure for higher education institutions. It stipulates that an institution can only be institutionally accredited if it meets defined quality criteria, particularly in terms of governance, resources, teaching and research, including integrating sustainability.

The Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA / FIFG / LERI) obligates research institutions to consider sustainable development goals regarding society, economy and environment when fulfilling their tasks (Art. 6 para. 3 let. a RIPA; Art. 60 RIPA).

Accreditation of Swiss Higher Education Institutions

Institutional accreditation is a legal obligation arising from the Federal Act on the Promotion of Higher Education Institutions and Coordination in the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA), which came into force on 1 January 2015. Institutional accreditation is a process that is carried out every seven years to check whether Swiss universities have the instruments, structures and processes to assure quality requirements for teaching, research and services and thus to be able to implement their own strategic goals.

Institutional accreditation is a prerequisite for institutions to bear the title of university/ university of applied science / university of teacher education and is also a condition for federal subsidies. The accreditation process, which lasts around 15 months, checks whether the quality management system of the universities fulfils the 18 quality standards listed in the HEdA Accreditation Ordinance. These include quality standard 2.4 on sustainability: "The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall give consideration to an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development in the completion of its tasks. The quality assurance system shall ensure that the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector sets objectives in this area and also implements them.".

Performance agreement with the funding bodies of universities

In addition to complying with the legal bases at federal and cantonal level, universities must generally conclude performance agreements or performance mandates with their sponsors, i.e. either with the federal government for the ETH-Domain their specific canton with an intermediate sponsor (such as the ETH Board or the inter-cantonal boards for some universities of applied science[3]). These agreements are usually concluded for a period of four years and define a series of objectives. Thus, these performance agreements or performance mandates are therefore also part of the legal framework to which the universities must adhere and are of great importance in the context of sustainability at universities. These mandates assure the strategic guidelines of the cantons and provide funding to promote specific topics, while respecting academic freedom. These mandates can also empower university leadership to request additional support for the development of specific areas needed to further integrate sustainability.

2.3 Sustainability in the Development of University Governance

The overall development of the Swiss higher education landscape is essentially steered by the responsible political and strategic bodies, which have a coordinating and promoting function. Their awareness regarding the importance of sustainability has become stronger and they therefore fulfil their responsibilities more actively. A comprehensive ***overview of sustainability-oriented activities in the ERI sector*** dating from February 2024 has been produced by SEFRI and provides a wealth of detailed information.

Conference of Swiss Higher Education Institutions (SHK, CSHE, CSSU)

The Conference of Swiss Higher Education Institutions is the top political body regarding the coordination of Swiss universities and is responsible for university development at a strategic level. Its role is crucial in promoting sustainability in the strategic development of universities. As sustainability is a central theme in the ERI-Dispatch 21-24, the Conference must ensure that sustainability is included as a focus in the institutional development strategies of all Swiss universities. However, despite this important mandate, it has not shown any great initiative to strengthen sustainability on a larger scale and has merely validated 3 programs submitted to it by swissuniversities. These include:

- **U-Change 2**, a program aimed at supporting student initiatives related to sustainability, but on a small scale.
- **SUDAC (P6)**, which fosters academic collaboration between Swiss institutions and partners from the Global South.
- **Diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities in university development (P7)**,

Encouragingly, at the end of 2022, the Conference submitted a proposal for cooperative projects addressing cross-cutting strategic priorities in the Swiss education, research, and innovation landscape. These priorities include not only **equal opportunities** but also a specific **sustainability promotion program**. If the proposal is approved, this would significantly boost the promotion of sustainability at Swiss universities and could mark a turning point in the Conference's role in advancing sustainability across the higher education sector. The final decision is subject to parliamentary approval by the end of 2024.

swissuniversities

Swissuniversities, the umbrella organisation of all Swiss universities, states in its 2021-2024 strategic plan that universities are aware of their responsibility to actively promote sustainability. In September 2020, swissuniversities founded the **Sustainability Network**, a network of sustainability officers from universities throughout Switzerland to strengthen the exchange between universities in the field of sustainability. Since 2017, the Working Group on Education for Sustainable Development (**AG BNE der PH Kammer**) at the Chamber of Universities of Teacher Education (PH Chamber) of swissuniversities has been promoting sustainability in teacher education, with a particular focus on SDG 4.7. This working group aims to foster collaboration among member and guest institutions, creating a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange on integrating sustainability principles into teacher training.

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3. Study Design and Methodology

3.1 Orientation towards the concept of a visionary sustainable university

The methodology behind this rating, including the choice of criteria, indicators, and level of requirements, is grounded in WWF Switzerland's vision of a "visionary sustainable university". This concept defines an institution that fully integrates sustainability into all aspects of its operations, teaching, research, and societal engagement, setting a high bar for transformative change in the higher education sector. This also means that sustainability performance is assessed against this vision and not against the performance of other universities.

The visionary sustainable university is a pioneering institution, embodying cutting-edge approaches to sustainability across its five key areas. It is not merely a place for learning but a living system where sustainability principles are woven into every action, decision, and interaction. Here's how this university manifests its vision across its five areas:

Teaching
Teaching is grounded in the concept of **transformative learning**, where students are not only educated but challenged and accompanied to rethink their assumptions and values about the world. Sustainability is integrated across every discipline, from engineering to the arts, creating a deeply interdisciplinary environment. Students learn systems thinking and are encouraged to approach complex global challenges through a holistic lens. Active, participatory teaching methods dominate, with a strong focus on project-based learning and experimentation. Courses often revolve around **real-world projects** in partnership with local communities, businesses, or NGOs, blending theory with practice. The curriculum is not static but dynamic, evolving with the needs of society, and students are empowered to co-create learning pathways through **social innovation** labs, where they design solutions to contemporary sustainability issues.

Research
Alongside fundamental research, the university leads the way also in **mission-oriented research**, targeting global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality. Research is heavily collaborative and driven by the **impact it can have on society**, rather than just academic advancement. Multidisciplinary research hubs focus on bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and its application, drawing from both the natural and social sciences, as well as the arts. Partnerships with governments, private industry, and civil society are integral, ensuring that findings directly influence policy and practice. Research results would be disseminated widely, not only through academic publications, but also via open platforms accessible to all. **Open and citizen science** would be encouraged, enabling society to participate actively in the co-creation of sustainable knowledge, aligning with the broader goals of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

Services and Transfer to Society
One of the core missions of the university is **impact through transfer to society and the economy**, where the knowledge, innovations, and solutions developed within the institution actively contribute to societal transformation. This is achieved through a robust **knowledge transfer ecosystem**, which includes start-up incubators for sustainability-focused businesses, community workshops, and ongoing education for professionals. The university serves as a convener for dialogue on sustainability, hosting global and local forums that bring together diverse stakeholders to collaborate on solutions. In this model, the university is both a hub for innovation and a facilitator of change, continually adapting its services to the evolving needs of the community and wider society.

Governance
The governance of the visionary university is based on **participatory democracy**. Decision-making is inclusive, with students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders actively involved in shaping the university's strategic direction. The university adopts **experimental structures akin to "citizen councils"**, ensuring that decision-making processes include voices beyond those in formal leadership positions. This participative culture is deeply aligned with **theories of governance for the common good**, ensuring that every voice is heard and that all actions are in harmony with long-term ecological and social well-being. The organizational structure is fluid, allowing for agility and rapid adaptation to emerging sustainability challenges. Leaders within the university see themselves as **stewards**, responsible not just for the institution's success, but for its role as a driver of systemic change. To encourage **bottom-up engagement**, especially on matters where academic freedom is critical, the university sets up **commissions or collaborative bodies** where all stakeholders can co-develop projects and influence decisions, ensuring that diverse perspectives are integrated, and that innovation and academic autonomy thrive together.

Operations and campus
The campus itself is a regenerative space, following the principles of Kate Raworth's **Doughnut Economics**. This means that the university operates within the planet's **ecological boundaries**, with zero carbon emissions and a closed-loop system for energy, water, and waste. The campus is a showcase of **circular economy** in action, where all materials used are either reused, repurposed, or composted. Solar panels, geothermal energy, and green roofs are omnipresent, while the biodiversity on campus is

actively fostered with native plant species, urban farms, and permaculture gardens that feed both the community and contribute to local ecosystems. The campus is also a **living lab**, where students and researchers continuously test and implement new sustainability innovations. By prioritizing **sustainable procurement**, the university ensures that all goods and services sourced have minimal environmental impact, support ethical labor practices, and contribute to a circular economy. To increase its positive impact beyond its direct sphere, the university uses its investments as leverage to maximize its sustainable impact, adopting **impact investing** practices that direct funds towards projects and companies that contribute to environmental and social goals. In addition, strict control of **third-party funds** is in place to ensure that all capital managed or associated with the university complies with strict sustainability criteria, reinforcing its role as a leader in responsible finance and the sustainable economy. In terms of **sustainable mobility,** the university promotes car-free zones, bike-sharing, and charging stations on campus, while encouraging public transport and carpooling off-campus. Implementing a CO_2 budget limits air travel, pushing for more virtual meetings and local collaborations to cut emissions from flights. In terms of **sustainable catering**, it actively promotes plant-based meals and sources local, seasonal and organic produce, which significantly reduces emissions. It incorporates composting and food waste tracking systems to reduce waste, while eliminating single-use plastics in favor of biodegradable materials, thus minimizing its overall environmental impact. In the **digital** realm, the university actively reduces its ecological footprint, recognizing the reliance on rare resources often extracted under unsustainable and unethical conditions. It optimizes data storage, utilizes energy-efficient servers, and promotes responsible device use and recycling, addressing both environmental and social challenges tied to digital infrastructure.

3.2 Focus of the Study and Evaluation Dimensions

The rating focuses on the comprehensive integration of sustainability at universities, ensuring tangible, long-term impacts across all areas. To assess this, the report examines various criteria and indicators, gathered in five dimensions, against the concept of a visionary university as outlined above.

Compared to previous ratings, also output-related criteria were introduced in this rating, initially intended to cover both teaching and transfer outputs. However, given challenges regarding reliability and comparability, outputs-related criteria in the area of transfer, were not included in the rating data. Instead, notable transfer initiatives will be highlighted in ***Part III*** of this report (Individual Results). The teaching output dimension, on the other hand, covers different aspects of sustainability integration into teaching.

Each dimension is composed of one to three criteria, resulting in a total of eleven criteria (see figure 1 below). Selection of criteria and indicators is largely based on existing evaluation methodologies (GRI, SDG, STARS) adapted to the Swiss context and regularly refined since the 1st edition in 2017. To best assess the contribution of universities to sustainability, emphasis has been placed on university missions, as well as on institutional processes and mechanisms enabling the implementation of policies and measures throughout the institution (following a whole institution approach).

The five dimensions assessed are:

- **Strategy:** assesses how sustainability is integrated into the institution's vision, mission, and long-term planning.
- **Process:** looks at the mechanisms and procedures in place to implement sustainability.
- **Function:** focuses on how sustainability is reflected in daily activities and practices.
- **Stakeholders:** evaluates the involvement and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders in sustainability efforts.
- **Output:** measures results of sustainability initiatives.

Figure 1: Each dimension is composed of one to three criteria, resulting in a total of eleven criteria.

3.3 Methodological Approach

Indicators and sub-indicators were operationalized in an online questionnaire. Where possible, the indicators, sub-indicators and corresponding questions from the 2021 survey were used in to enable longitudinal observations. A comparative overview of the 2021 and 2024 study criteria can be viewed in the ***appendix.***
The questionnaire mostly consisted of closed questions with predetermined answer categories; for some open questions, the universities were provided with free text fields for answers. In addition, they were asked to upload documents and indicate weblinks which supported their answers.

The combination of closed and open questions was of great importance to receive comparable information from universities and at the same time to leave room for specific information from the universities. As not all the criteria surveyed had to or could be fulfilled by all universities to the same extent (e.g. due to their performance mandate or size), the option "not applicable" was introduced.
The questionnaire was in English and the universities were asked to provide their answers in English as well. A glossary explained the most important concepts and terms. The ***questionnaire*** and the ***glossary*** are available in the Appendix.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire was sent out to all ten cantonal universities and the two federal institutes of technology (hereafter UNI), to all universities of applied sciences (UAS) and to the largest universities of teacher education (UTE) in March 2024. Only universities with a minimum size of 1,000 students were included to ensure the institutions have enough resources and capacity to be meaningfully assessed regarding sustainability across all dimensions and criteria selected. More information about the universities' participation in the study can be found in the ***appendix***.

All twelve UNI, nine UAS and eight UTE completed the questionnaire by mid-June 2024.
They were invited to describe their situation regarding sustainability as it stood in May 2024, meaning that decisions taken by the university management by the end of May 2024 were taken into account, as well as measures whose implementation had at least begun by the end of May 2024. For all other questions, the status of implementation at the end of May 2024 was decisive. Universities were given the opportunity to mention where measures were not yet implemented but were planned, so that this could be taken into account in the data analysis.
The questionnaire was implemented with a tool (Cognito Forms) allowing to temporarily save and forward the document, thus making collaborative answering was possible. This ensured that the universities' answers could be discussed and validated internally by the university before being submitted, which increased the quality and accuracy of the answers. In addition, each question asked for the source of the information provided.

3.5 Data Analysis and Rating

This study provides an overview regarding the integration of sustainability at Swiss higher education institutions. The results are presented as a rating. The rating concept was defined prior to analysing the data and information provided by the higher education institutions. The methodology used to evaluate universities involved a detailed scoring system for each indicator and sub-indicator. This section provides an overview of how the scoring was developed, how it was normalized and weighted, and the various approaches used for aggregation.

1. Scoring System and Normalization

- **Scale Definition**: Each indicator and sub-indicator was evaluated on a defined scale (e.g., 1 to 5), with specific criteria that needed to be met to achieve a given value.
- **Value Attribution**: Values were assigned based on responses from a questionnaire.
- **Normalization**: The attributed values were normalized on a scale of 0 to 1 to allow comparability across all indicators.

2. Weighting System

- **Differentiated Weighting**: Each dimension and criterion was assigned a specific weight according to their relative importance, to ensure accurate reflection of their impact. Weights are displayed below in figure 2.
- **Stakeholder Consultation**: The weighting approach was discussed with the sounding board before the data analysis began to ensure alignment and validity.

3. Aggregation Process

- **Weighted Aggregation**: The values attributed to each university were weighted and aggregated across different levels—indicators, criteria, and dimensions.
- **Non-Benchmarking Approach**: Instead of using benchmarks, universities were rated against predefined expectations tailored to their specific context. This prevented direct comparisons and ensured fairness.

4. Treatment of Inapplicable Indicators

- **Substitution for Non-Relevant Indicators**: If a specific indicator or sub-indicator was not relevant to a particular type of university, the value was replaced with the average value of all sub-indicators within the same indicator.
- **Neutralization Approach**: If an entire indicator was inapplicable, the value was replaced with the average of all indicators within the same criterion. This approach ensured no institution was unfairly penalized or advantaged.

5. Aggregation Types and Differentiation

- **Different Aggregation Types**: Three types of aggregations were performed to analyze the data:
    - **By Type of Higher Education Institution**: Distinguishing between Universities (UNI), Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS), and Universities of Teacher Education (UTE).
    - **By Language Region**: Differentiating between institutions in the French/Italian parts and the German part of Switzerland.
    - **By Institution Size**:
        - **Small Institutions** (less than 5,000 students): FHGR, ZHdK, OST, UNINE, USI, UNILU.

- **Medium Institutions** (5,000 to 10,000 students): BFH, SUPSI, HSLU, FHNW, UNIBAS, EPFL, HSG, Unifr.
- **Large Institutions** (more than 10,000 students): ZHAW, HES-SO, UNIL, UNIBE, UNIGE, UZH, ETHZ.
- **Exclusion of UTEs**: Since all Universities of Teacher Education (UTEs) fall under the "small institution" category, they were excluded from this size-based aggregation.

Dimension		Criteria		Indicators	
Strategy-related criteria	0.2	Performance mandate	0.3	Sustainability objectives	0.5
				Scope and ambition of sustainability objectives	0.5
		Strategic priniciples	0.7	Definition of sustainability	0.33
				Scope and ambition of sustainability goals	0.33
				Stakeholder's involvement in the dev. of strat. principles	0.33
Process-related criteria	0.2	Verifiable goals and measures	0.8	Teaching	0.2
				Research and Development	0.2
				Services & Transfer	0.2
				Governance	0.2
				Campus & Operations	0.2
		Reporting and monitoring	0.2	Reporting	0.5
				Internal Quality Assurance	0.5
Function-related criteria	0.2	Sustainability office/Team	0.4	Existence and integration level	0.33
				Responsibility accross the university	0.33
				Staff resources	0.33
		Sustainability Commission/Committee	0.4	Existence and frequency of meetings	0.25
				Faculties/departments/schools represented	0.25
				Stakeholders represented	0.25
				Competences	0.25
		Leadership engagement	0.2	Responsibility within the leadership	0.33
				Carbon neutrality	0.33
				Participation in networks and initiatives	0.33
Stakeholder-related criteria	0.2	Student engagement	0.4	Curriculum Change	0.25
				Co-curricular activities	0.25
				Student sustainability initiative support	0.25
				Students-Management Dialogue	0.25
		Staff engagement	0.4	Academic Staff Development and Training in ESD	0.33
				Non-academic Staff Development and Training	0.33
				Consultation with regard to sustainability issues	0.33
		Extra-academic stakeholders	0.2	Permanent structures for collaborations	0.5
				Non permanent structures for collaborations	0.5
Output-related criteria	0.2	Output Teaching	1	Introductory module on sustainability/ESD	0.17
				Undergraduate programme	0.17
				Graduate programme	0.17
				Continuing education programme	0.17
				Sustainability Literacy Assessment	0.17
				Living Labs	0.17

Figure 2: Dimensions, criteria and indicators and their corresponding weight within the dimension or criterion.

Part II: Overall Results

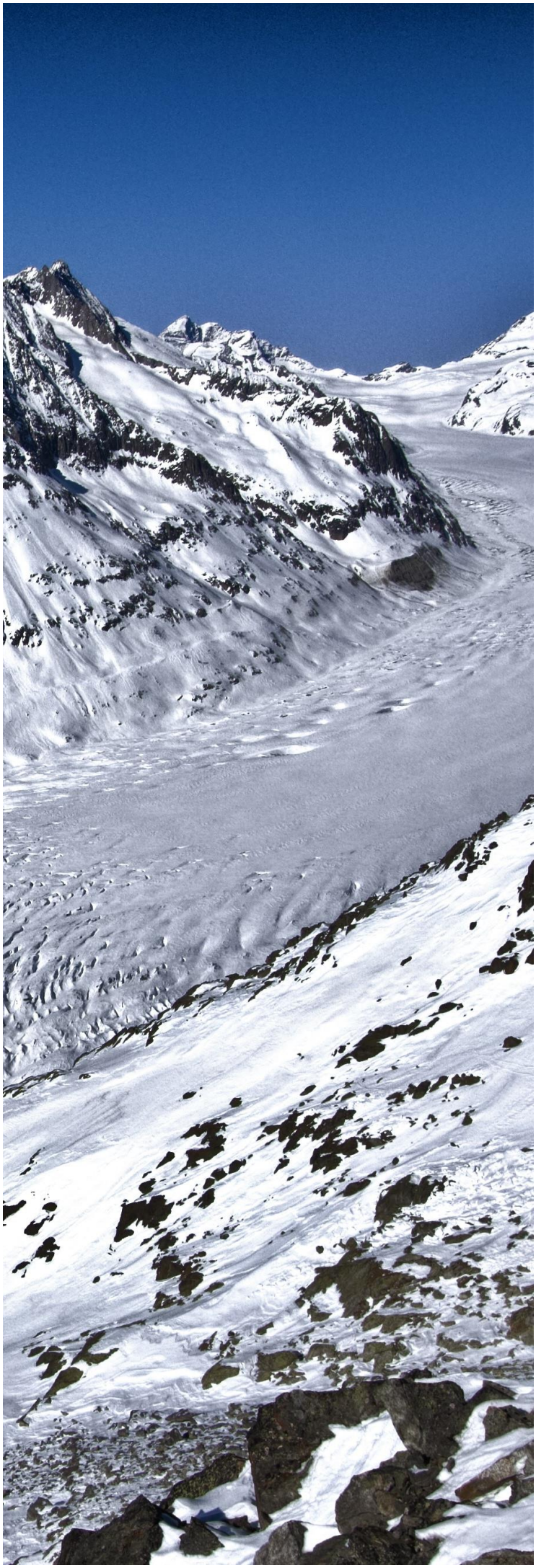
4. Results across the Swiss University Landscape

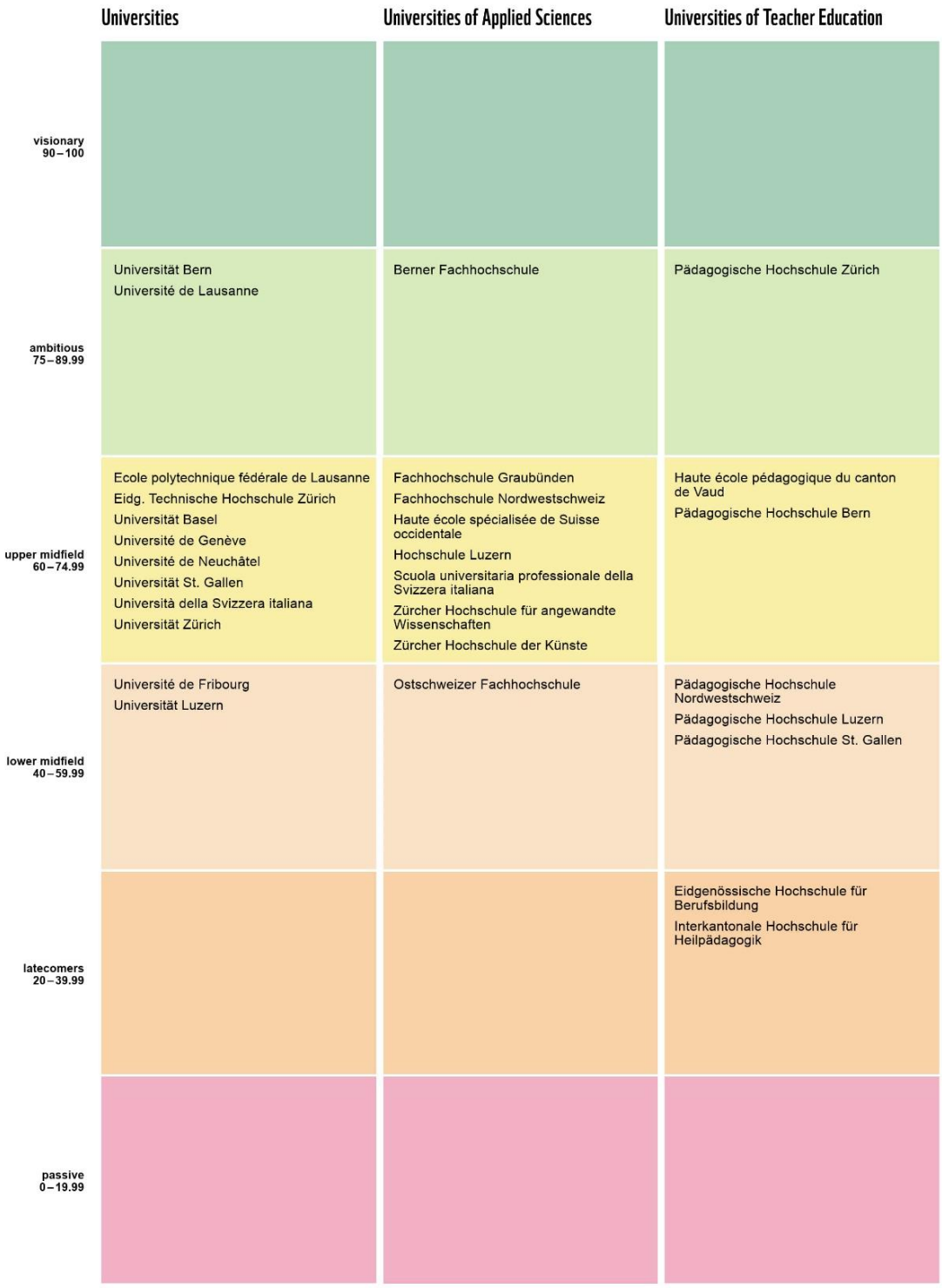
4.1 Overview of overall performance of Swiss Universities

The overall rating results reveal that all 29 universities assessed have made significant strides toward sustainability, with none of them falling into the ‘passive’ category. This highlights a general commitment, regardless of the type of institution. 17 universities perform in the upper middle range, showing that a substantial number of universities are progressing well in integrating sustainability. However, no university has reached yet the 'visionary' level, despite strong performances in specific areas. While sustainability is well integrated in strategies and governance structures, implementation remains uneven, with teaching being the area where most universities are currently lagging expectations.

4.2 Overview of the universities’ performance in the dimensions

While the aggregated rating results give a broad overview regarding the overall integration of sustainability in Swiss higher education institutions, a more detailed look reveals specific differences. Following the same classification scheme as the overall rating, figure 4 shows each higher education institution’s performance in the five dimensions examined.





Overview of overall performance of Swiss Universities

Figure 3: Universities were assessed against WWF's vision for a sustainable university. The progression consists of 5 stages, from 'passive' to 'visionary'. Within each category, universities are listed in alphabetical order, not by score. Due to the wide range in size and type of university, we recommend not evaluating one university against another, as the criteria or indicators taken into account may vary.

Overview of the universities' performance in the five dimensions

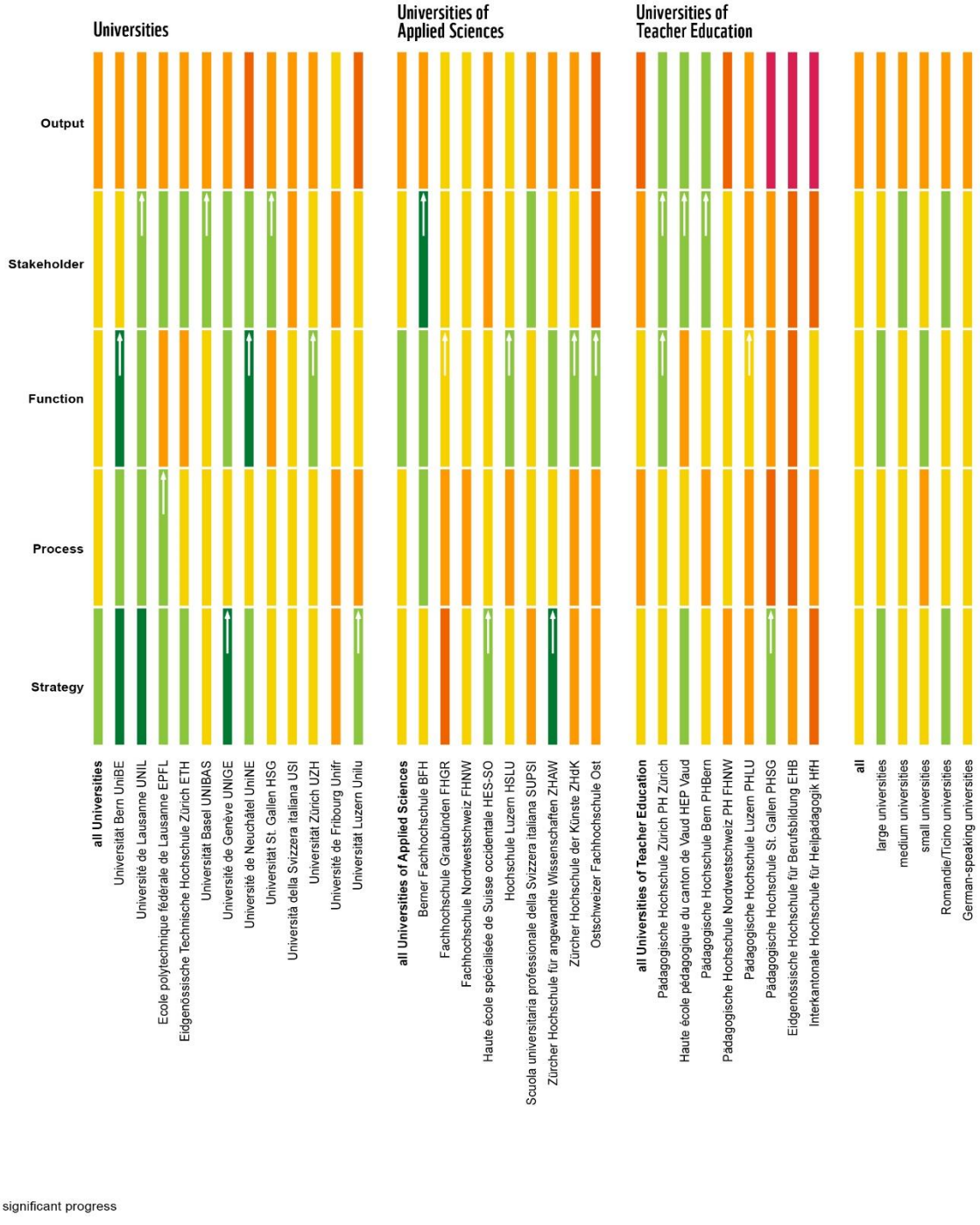


Figure 4: Results at the level of the five dimensions, aggregating criteria and indicators. The colour code is the same as in the overall rating overview: Red: passive, 0-19.99%, dark orange: latecomers, 20-29.99%, orange: lower midfield, 40-59.99%, yellow: upper midfield, 60-74.99%, green: ambitious, 75-89.99%, dark green: visionary, 90-100%.

Overview of Aggregated Findings
When viewed by type, size, or region, Swiss higher education institutions generally show no extreme classifications across dimensions and criteria. However, a closer look at individual institutions reveals notable variation. In three key dimensions — strategy, function, and stakeholder engagement — and in various criteria, at least one institution meets over 90% of expectations. Differences within institutions range from moderate to strong; in some cases, an institution demonstrates a "passive" approach in certain areas while being "visionary" in others.

General Degree of Integration
On average, Swiss higher education institutions integrate sustainability to a degree of about 64% when assessed against defined indicators, criteria, and dimensions. Sustainability is integrated most strongly through organizational structures (function-related criteria), such as the existence of sustainability offices and commissions, especially in UAS and UTE. At UNI, embedding is strongest when it comes to strategy and the engagement of stakeholders.
The lowest degree of integration is found in the newly introduced dimension of output-related criteria, indicating that the translation of sustainability into teaching does not (yet) fully align with expectations
It is also in this new dimension that variation between higher education institutions is strongest, especially at UTE. At UNI, scores vary between 29% and 67%, at UAS they range from 31% to 71%. Among UTE, there are three institutions with no embedding at all, thus a score of 0, while the strongest embedding of sustainability in teaching is also found in this type of institutions, with 83%.

Variation by type, size and region: Overall, the highest variation within a type of higher education institution is found among UTE: In the overall rating, the scores of UTE vary between 26% and 77%, whereas this range is 52% to 76% for UAS and 58% to 83% for UNI. The size of an institution seems to have a certain but limited influence on capacities to integrate sustainability. While there are three institutions with more than 15'000 students among the ten institutions with overall scores of 70% and higher there are also four institutions with less than 5'000 students at the same top level, three of them being universities of teacher education. On the other side, however, among the nine institutions with scores lower than 60% only one hosts more than 5'000 students. A look at the five dimensions reveals that large higher education institutions have clearly higher scores when it comes to strategy (on average 87% vs 68% of medium institutions and 62% of small institutions), whereas when it comes to process and function differences are much smaller. Regarding stakeholder and output, the average score is highest among medium-sized higher education institutions.
The region of the institutions might also be interesting to look at. Indeed, while the lowest score among all institutions (excluding UTE) located exclusively in the French and Italian speaking part of Switzerland is as high as 60% and the highest at 83%, institutions from the German speaking part of Switzerland cover a range from 51% to 77%. Regarding the five dimensions, institutions from the French and Italian speaking part of Switzerland clearly show the highest score regarding strategy (81% vs. 66% in the German speaking institutions), whereas in the other dimensions differences are much smaller.

4.3 Overall results per criterion

In this section, each evaluation dimension is analysed again at various aggregation levels, looking also at the criteria composing the dimension. Figure 5 gives an overview of the results at the level of criteria.

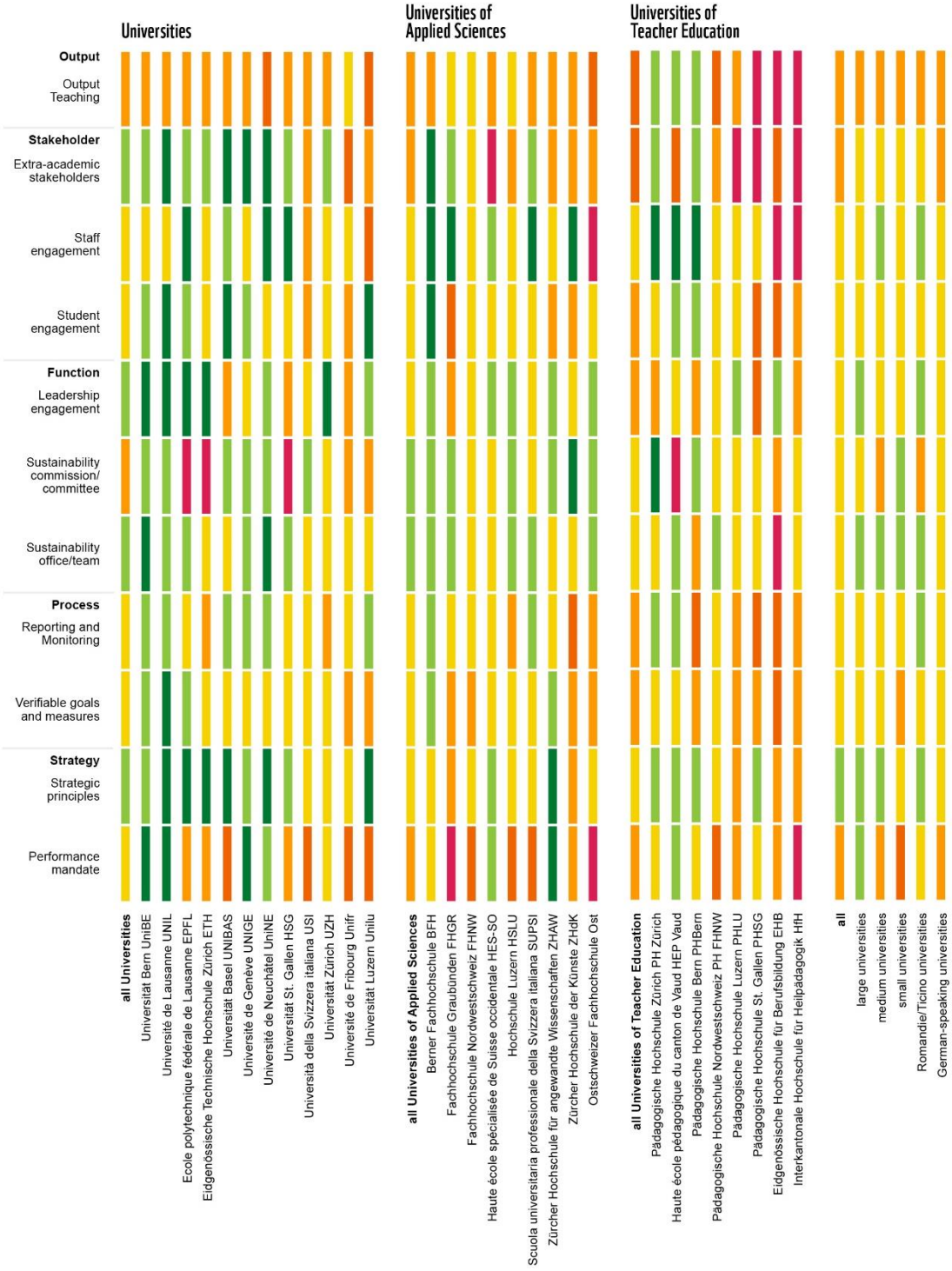


Figure 5: Results at the level of criteria, aggregating indicators and sub-indicators. The colour code is the same as in the overall rating overview.

4.3.1. Strategy dimension

This dimension looks at the embedding of sustainability at the strategic level, in the institution's vision, mission and long-term planning. It asks whether and to what extent sustainability is integrated in the higher education institutions' performance mandates (if applicable) and strategic principles.

Overview of Aggregated Findings

Overall, we observe an average achievement in this dimension of nearly 70% compared to expectations set, with higher values for the integration of sustainability in the higher education institutions' strategic principles than in the performance mandates. Regarding performance mandates, the differences are more important than regarding strategic principles of the institutions themselves. This might indicate that while higher education institutions clearly integrate sustainability at their internal strategic level (average score of 75%, minimum score of 41%), integration of sustainability at the level of the negotiations with the responsible funding bodies is not yet established everywhere (overall score of 55%, minimum score of 0%, excluding institutions without a performance mandate).

Variation by type, size and region

There is stronger integration of sustainability at strategic level for UNI than for UAS and UTE. The two UNI under federal supervision – ETHZ and EPFL – are a particular case: While integration at the performance mandate level is for both these institutions at 50%, integration at the strategic level is at nearly 100%.

Regarding this dimension, size seems to matter: While large institutions on average would be classified as ambitious regarding strategy-related criteria, medium and smaller institutions are on average in the upper midfield.

Figures 6 to 8 show the averages for the three types of higher education institutions in the strategy dimension, including also the corresponding two criteria (performance mandate and strategic principles) and five indicators. The overall patterns seem repeated for the three types of higher education institutions: sustainability is more strongly integrated in the institutions' own strategic principles than in their performance mandates.

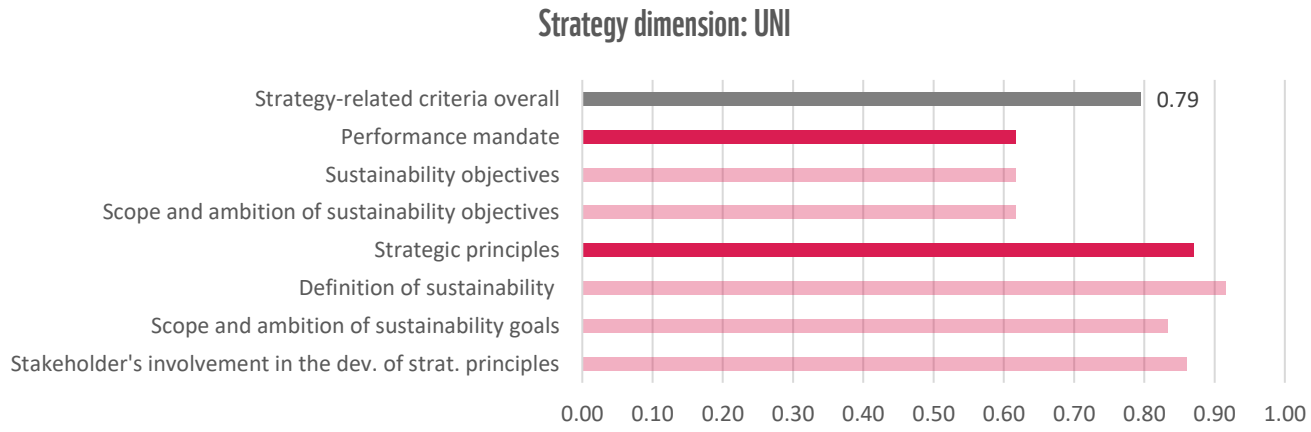


Figure 6: Performance overview for Universities (UNI) in the strategy dimension.

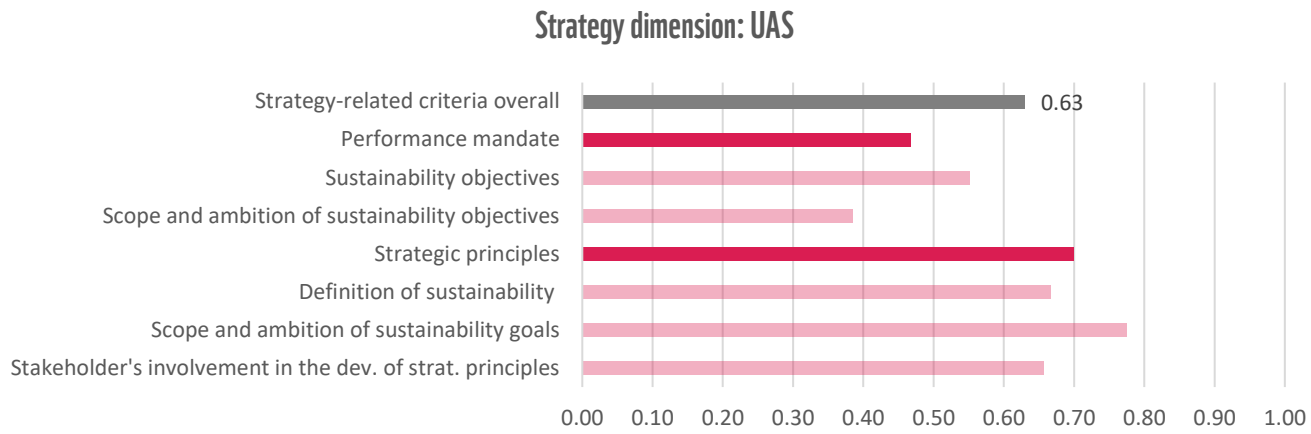


Figure 7: Performance overview for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the strategy dimension.

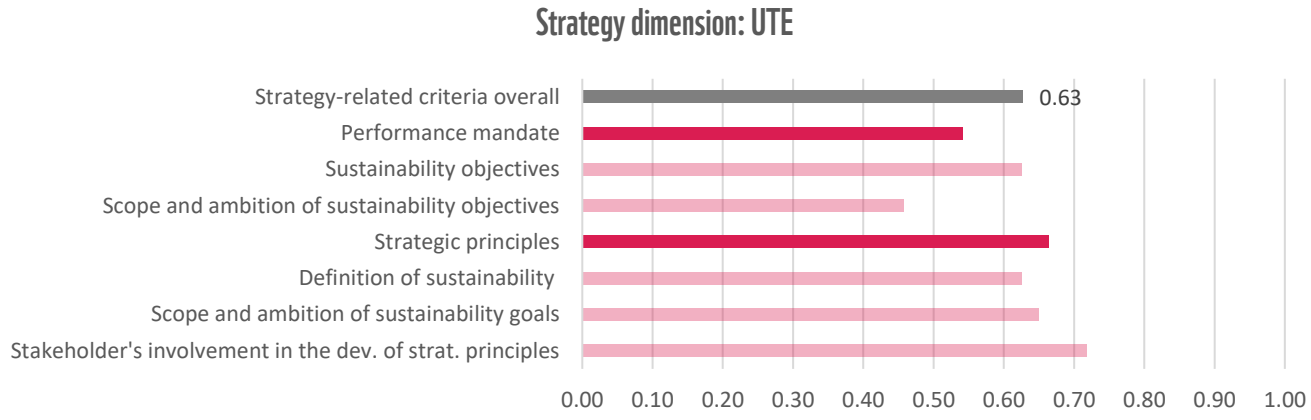


Figure 8: Performance overview for Universities of Teacher Education (UTE) in the strategy dimension.

4.3.2 Process dimension

Process-related criteria focus on the systems, procedures and measures the university has in place to implement, monitor, and continuously improve its sustainability efforts. These criteria can help assess whether sustainability is consistently and systemically integrated into all areas of the institution, in a continuum between strategic-level decisions and adapted central processes and concrete measures implemented.

Overview of Aggregated Findings
In this dimension, an average fulfilment of the indicators of 63% can be observed, equally distributed among the two criteria «verifiable goals and measures » and « reporting and monitoring ». Variations between higher education institutions are rather low, indicating that overall, most higher education institutions engage in the integration of sustainability in their processes and day-to-day activities. The criterion where on average the higher education institutions score highest is “governance”, including public reporting, policies and the implementation of support measures. Lowest scores are found in the criterion “campus & operations”, including for example measures to reduce energy consumption, initiatives for sustainable and local food system and policies for water footprint reduction or sustainable procurement. Overall, the strongest variation among higher education institutions is found when it comes to the integration of sustainability into the internal quality assurance system.

Variation by type, size and region
While variation among UNI and UAS is rather low, stronger variation is again found among UTE, leading to a lower average score for this type of higher education institutions. In both criteria of this dimension, universities score on average higher than UAS and UTE.

Again, size matters: Large and medium institutions are on average classified as upper midfield, while smaller institutions score in the range of the lower midfield.

Figures 9 to 11 show the averages for the three types of higher education institutions in the process dimension, including the two criteria (verifiable goals and measures and reporting and monitoring) and seven indicators. While UNI and UAS score highest regarding governance, UTE show their strongest engagement when it comes to promoting the embedding of sustainability in teaching.

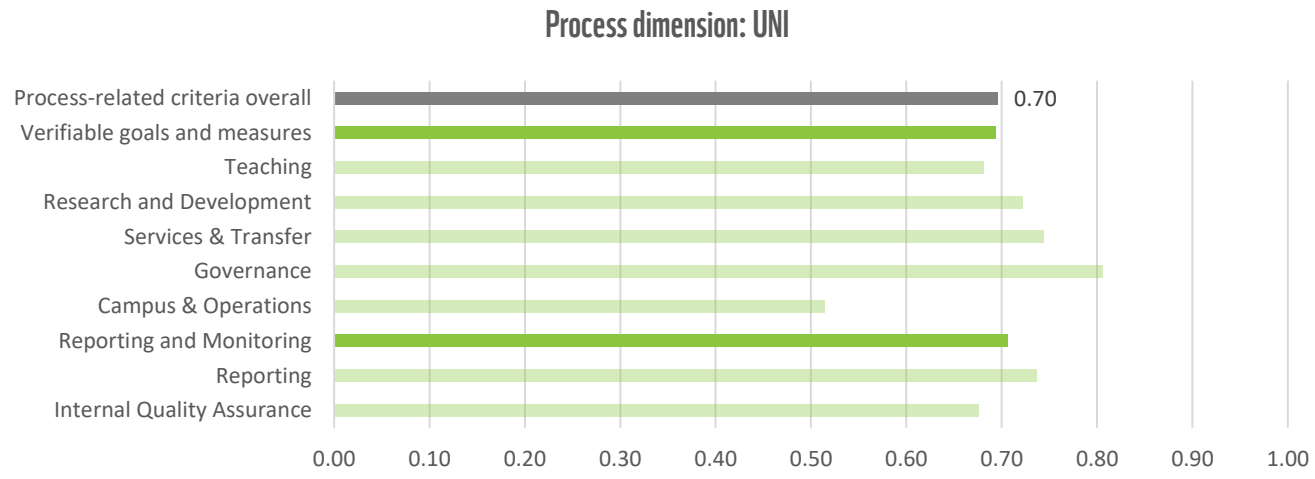


Figure 9: Performance overview for Universities (UNI) in the process dimension.

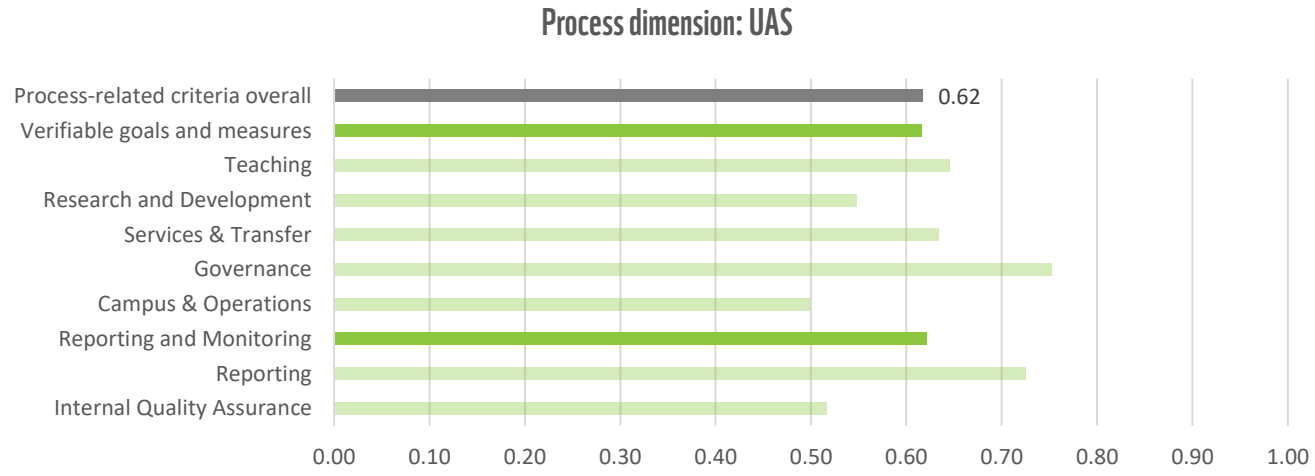


Figure 10: Performance overview for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the process dimension.

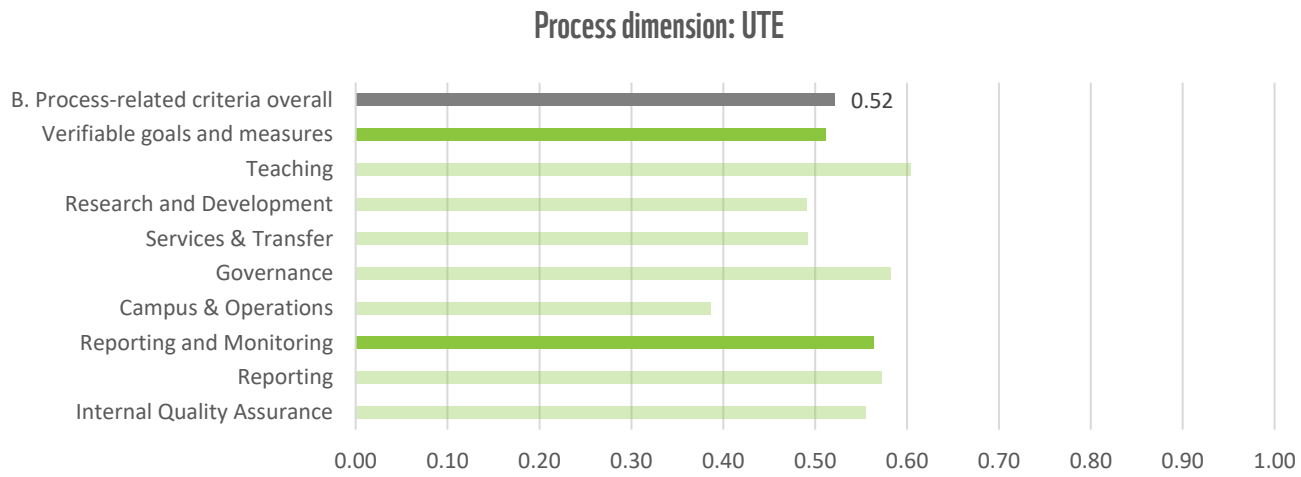


Figure 11: Performance overview for Universities of Teacher Education (UTE) in the process dimension.

4.3.3 Function dimension

Function-related criteria look at the integration of sustainability at the organisational level of the higher education institutions: They ask about the existence, composition, integration and resources of sustainability offices and commissions and about the institutions' leadership's engagement in sustainability.

Overview of Aggregated Findings
On average, higher education institutions fulfil the expectations in this dimension to 70%, rather equally distributed among the three criteria, but with a strong variability among the indicators. In most institutions, responsibility for sustainability is integrated in the institution's leadership, meaning that a member of the executive board is responsible for sustainability (score of 90%). While nearly all institutions dispose of a well-integrated sustainability office or team (average score of 95%), these offices or teams do not always have sufficient resources (score of 48%). While institutions usually have sustainability commissions, with regular meetings and covering all faculties/schools/departments, the decision competence of these commissions is rather low.

Variation by type, size and region
In this dimension, UAS score highest, on average in the "ambitious" category, while UNI and UTE are classified as "upper midfield". Also, variations between UAS are clearly lower than in the other two types. The criterion that seems to make a difference between the types of institutions is the sustainability commission / committee: In this criterion, the UAS show very high scores, especially when it comes to the organization and composition of the commission / committee.

Regarding function-related criteria, size has a lesser influence: the performance of small and large institutions is similar, both being classified as ambitious, while medium institutions score at the upper midfield on average. Regarding sustainability offices, size does not matter at all, while smaller institutions clearly perform best regarding sustainability commissions. Leadership engagement is strongest among large institutions.

Figures 12 to 14 show the averages for the three types of higher education institutions regarding the function dimension, including its three criteria (sustainability office/team, sustainability commission/committee and leadership engagement) and ten indicators. In this dimension, variations between indicators are strong for all types of higher education institutions.

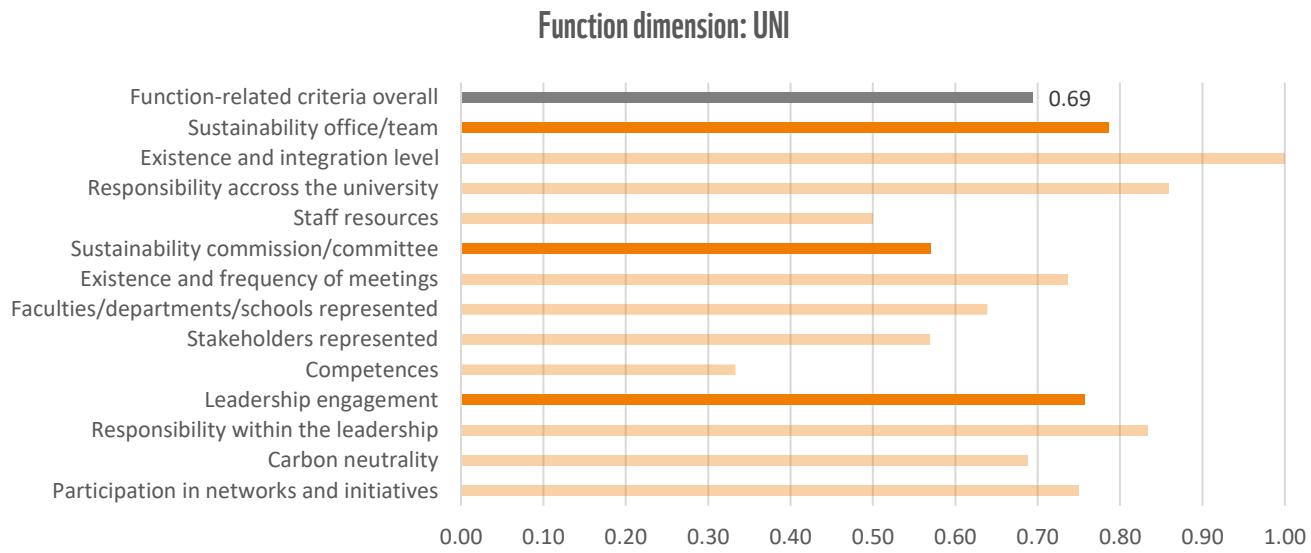


Figure 12: Performance overview for Universities (UNI) in the function dimension.

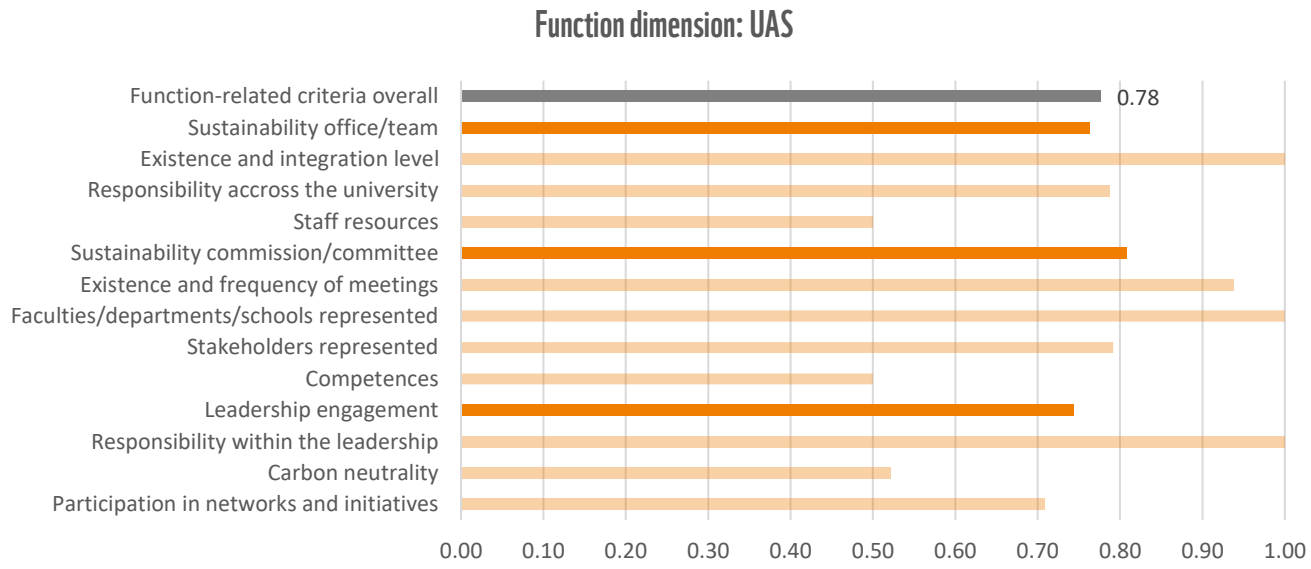


Figure 13: Performance overview for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the function dimension.

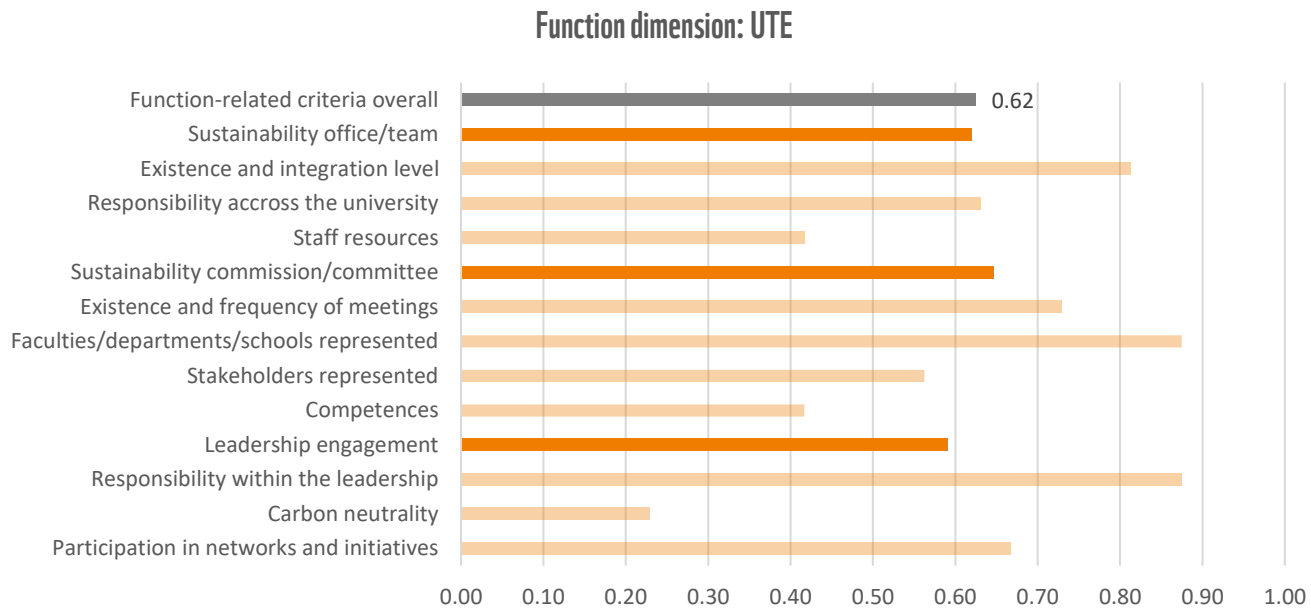


Figure 14: Performance overview for Universities of Teacher Education (UTE) in the function dimension.

4.3.4 Stakeholder dimension

This dimension looks at the higher education institutions' engagement in including their internal and external stakeholders – students, staff and extra-academic stakeholders – in their organisation, especially when it comes to sustainability.

Overview of Aggregated Findings
Overall, institutions are classified in the upper midfield (66%), but with a rather important variation, especially regarding the embedding of extra-academic stakeholders. Staff is most strongly integrated, especially when it comes to consulting employees regarding work-related sustainability issues. Support of student initiatives is rather common, with an average score of 80%., while the inclusion of students in curriculum changes is less frequent (on average 52%).

Variation by type, size and region
For all three types of higher education institutions, the strongest stakeholder engagement occurs regarding their staff. While UNI engage with all their stakeholder groups at a similar level, UAS and UTE have lower scores for student engagement and especially for extra-academic stakeholder engagement. UTE are particularly strong in developing and training their academic staff in ESD.

In this dimension, size matters less than the type of institution. Overall, engagement is highest at medium-sized institutions; large institutions score highest only regarding extra-academic stakeholder involvement.

Figures 15 to 17 show the averages for the three types of higher education institutions in the stakeholder dimension, including its three criteria (student engagement, staff engagement, extra-academic stakeholders) and nine indicators. Especially UTE show important variations between the indicators.

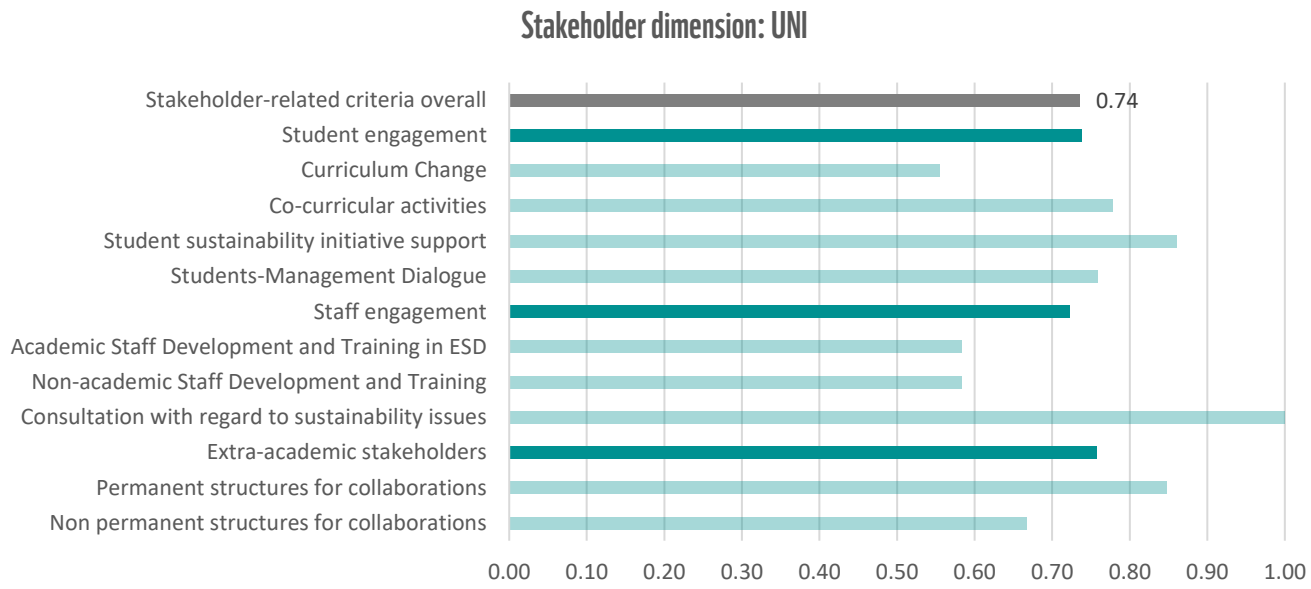


Figure 15: Performance overview for Universities (UNI) in the stakeholder dimension.

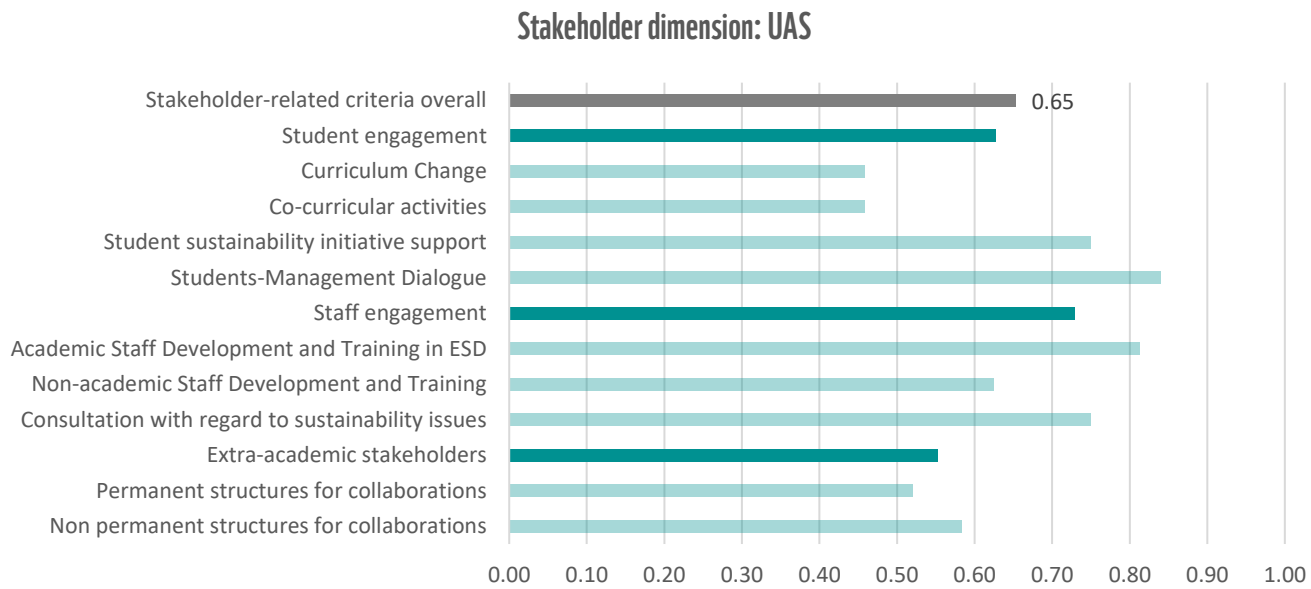


Figure 16: Performance overview for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the stakeholder dimension.

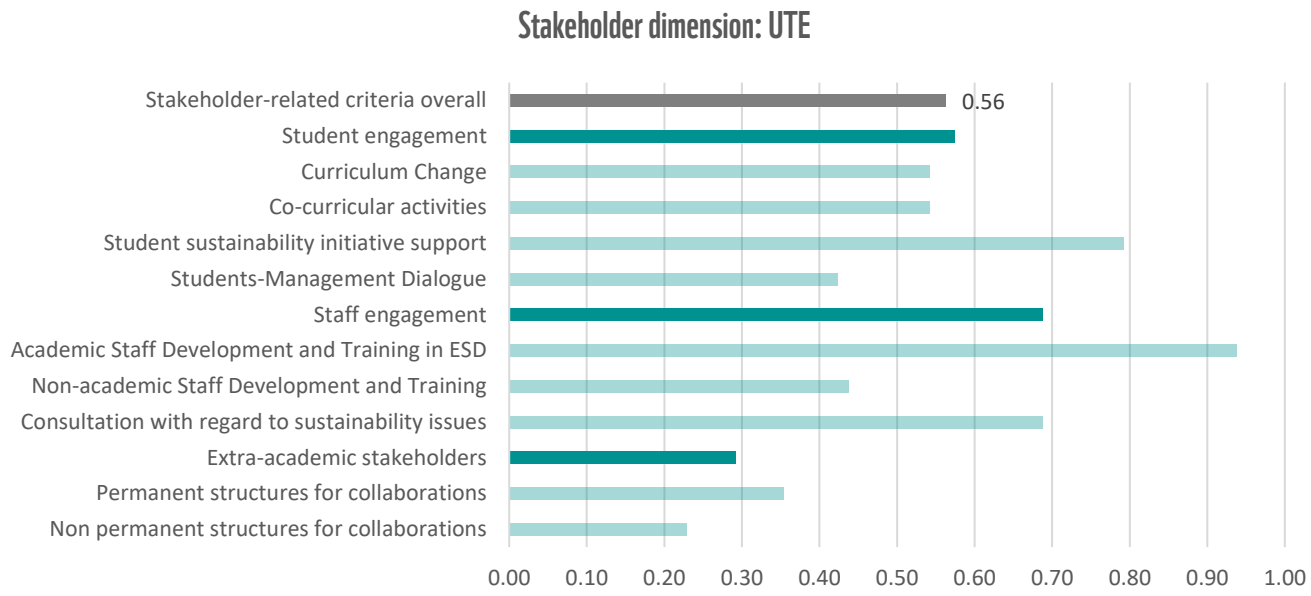


Figure 17: Performance overview for Universities of Teacher Education (UTE) in the stakeholder dimension.

4.3.5 Output dimension

Due to methodological and conceptual challenges, the output dimension is limited to the output in teaching. The criteria look at the existence, design and implementation of an introductory module on sustainability as well as on programmes focusing on sustainability.

Overview of Aggregated Findings
Overall, this dimension shows the lowest scores (on average 48%) and also the strongest variations, especially when it comes to the existence of programmes focusing on sustainability. Most importantly, there is hardly any standardised assessment of the students' sustainability literacy (14%).

Variation by type, size and region
In this dimension, there is relatively little variation in scores between the different types of universities. While they perform rather well as a whole in this dimension, UNI however don't use sustainability literacy assessment, which is striking. UAS demonstrate a good integration particularly in their continuing education programs. Given their inherent focus on ESD, UTE show good integration of sustainability in their study programs; however, significant disparities among the six evaluated UTEs could explain lower overall values for this university type.

Size does not seem to have an influence: Medium-sized institutions perform slightly better than large or small ones, but all are classified on average as lower midfield.

Figures 18 to 20 show the averages for the three types of higher education institutions in the function dimension, with only one criterion (output teaching) and six indicators. The lowest scores are found for sustainability literacy assessment, which is still far from being established widely, while programs focusing on sustainability are more widespread among all types of universities.

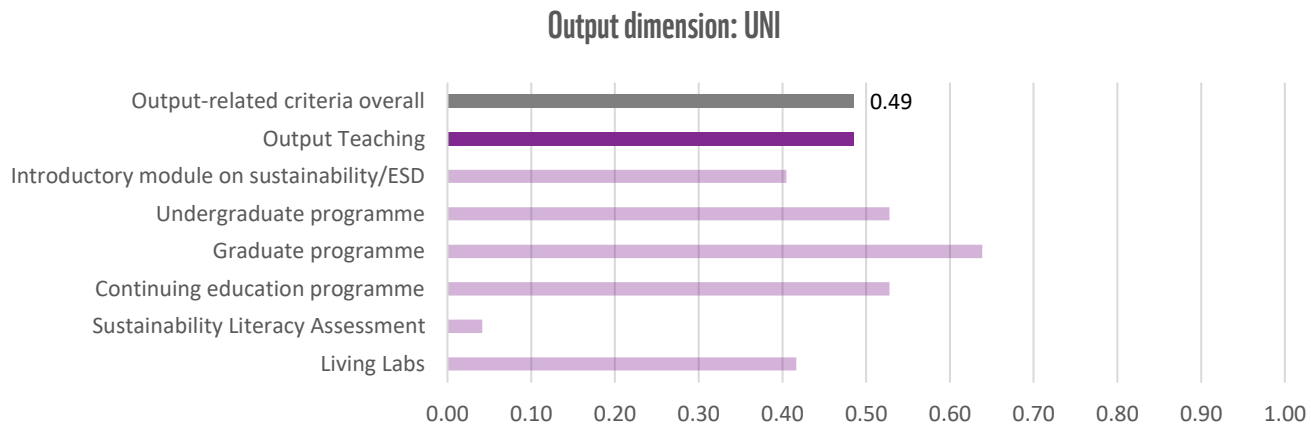


Figure 18: Performance overview for Universities (UNI) in the output dimension.

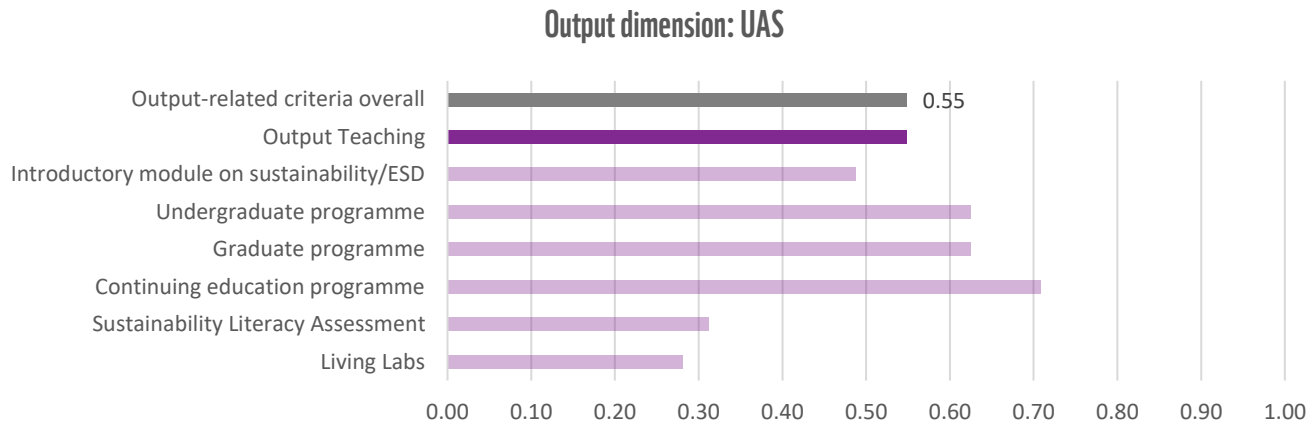


Figure 19: Performance overview for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the output dimension.

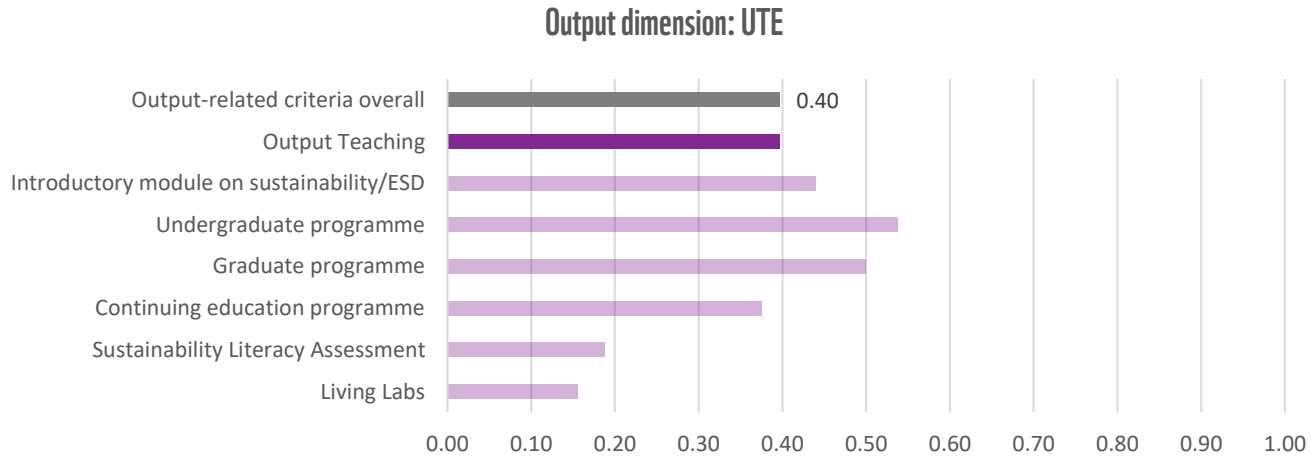


Figure 20: Performance overview for Universities of Teacher Education (UTE) in the output dimension.

4.4 Major Developments since 2021 and positive trends

Since 2021, the rating methodology has evolved significantly, expanding both in scope and in the level of detail of the data collected and analysed. Thus, direct comparisons with past ratings are not entirely feasible. While sustainability is now widely integrated at the strategic and policy and strategy levels, substantial progress is still needed regarding implementation. This is highlighted by the newly introduced "output" dimension.

In part due to this new dimension, some institutions are ranked lower than in 2021. This does not imply a lack of progress or regression but rather reflects the higher expectations placed on higher education institutions today, particularly in terms of concrete actions regarding sustainability within their core missions. It may also suggest that, despite the focus on sustainability over the past decade, attention to this area may be waning as other priorities emerge, or due to the growing budget constraints in challenging times.

Looking back over the last three years, the following positive trends can be identified:

Shift from Operations to Teaching and Transfer
Universities are increasingly moving beyond sustainability in operations (e.g., energy efficiency, waste management) towards integrating sustainability into teaching and the transfer of knowledge to society. The focus has now shifted towards teaching, recognizing that the greatest impact of universities is by educating future generations to be sustainability leaders. This shift empowers students and faculty to drive meaningful contributions toward societal, economic, and technological sustainability, fostering a broader impact that aligns with long-term sustainability goals. It also recognizes that while sustainable campus operations are important, the multiplying effect of teaching can spread sustainable mindsets and skills far beyond the institution, impacting industries, governments, and communities globally

Whole Institution Approach
A more comprehensive, whole institution approach has emerged, leading to better coordination of efforts across faculties, departments, and administration. This holistic strategy supports the integration of sustainability in governance, teaching, research, and operations, ensuring that sustainability goals are addressed consistently throughout the university.

Broader Involvement of University Players, Especially Students
There has been a remarkable increase in the involvement of students in sustainability initiatives, including participation in strategic decision-making processes. Faculty, administrative staff, and students now play more active roles in designing and implementing sustainability projects, ensuring that all parts of the university contribute to sustainability goals.

New Collaborations with Non-Academic Actors
Universities are forging new collaborations beyond their boundaries, working with non-academic partners such as businesses, NGOs, and government bodies. These partnerships are increasingly impact-oriented and employ innovative processes and methods, such as living labs, challenge-based learning, and social innovation projects, to solve real-world sustainability challenges.

5. WWF Recommendations

Building on the positive progress achieved in recent years, WWF Switzerland encourages university stakeholders to further enhance the integration of sustainability by focusing on the following recommendations across all areas of institutional life:

Teaching

- **Integrate sustainability holistically**: Universities are encouraged to embed sustainability into all fields of study, using interdisciplinary approaches and real-world problem solving. Moving beyond isolated courses, sustainability should be an integral part of the learning experience across disciplines
- **Continuously adapt curricula**: Teaching content should be dynamic and reflective of current sustainability challenges. By keeping curricula updated with recent examples and innovative approaches, universities can equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to tackle pressing sustainability issues.

Research

- **Focus on real-world impact**: Universities should strengthen research that addresses urgent and practical sustainability challenges. By aligning research initiatives with real-world needs and collaborating with external partners, universities can amplify the relevance and impact of their work.
- **Redefine research success**: Success in research should be measured by practical outcomes and societal impact, not just academic metrics. Encouraging research that contributes to real-world sustainability solutions helps universities foster meaningful change beyond publication outputs.

Governance

- **Integrate sustainability into strategic goals and institutional priorities**: Universities should place sustainability at the core of their strategic decisions, ensuring that it is treated as a fundamental, cross-cutting goal. By linking sustainability to central institutional policies and embedding it in core planning and evaluation frameworks, universities ensure that sustainability becomes a consistent and enduring focus, driving continuous progress across all areas of university life.
- **Foster broader involvement of all university stakeholders, especially students**: Universities should actively engage all members of the academic community—including faculty, administrative staff, and especially students—in sustainability efforts. This includes enabling students to participate in **strategic decision-making processes** and empowering them to lead or co-design sustainability initiatives. Broader involvement ensures that sustainability goals are integrated into every facet of the institution, creating a culture of shared responsibility and collaboration.
- **Adequately support sustainability programs**: Universities should ensure that sustainability offices and programs receive the funding and staffing they need to thrive. By recognizing the importance of these initiatives, universities can empower them to drive meaningful change throughout the institution.

Operations

- **Prioritize sustainable practices**: Universities should transition to energy systems and procurement that align with sustainability, adopting renewable energy sources and collaborating with suppliers who meet strict environmental standards. This also involves integrating sustainability criteria into purchasing, investing, waste management, and building design to create truly responsible and sustainable operations.
- **Embrace long-term planning**: Universities should focus on long-term, sustainability-oriented strategies when making decisions about infrastructure or campus development. By prioritizing future impacts over short-term cost savings, they can foster efficiency and make lasting, systemic changes.

Transfer

- **Strengthen external partnerships**: Universities should actively seek partnerships with corporate entities, NGOs, and public institutions to bring academic knowledge into real-world applications. These partnerships are crucial for facilitating sustainable transformation beyond the confines of the academic setting, enabling universities to effectively transfer research and innovations into societal applications.
- **Forge partnerships beyond the academic sphere**, collaborating with corporate world, NGOs, government bodies, and other societal actors, while preserving autonomy, ethics and academic freedom. These partnerships should focus on **impact-oriented outcomes** and leverage **innovative methods** such as living labs, challenge-based learning, and community engagement initiatives to address real-world sustainability challenges. Such collaborations can increase the relevance and effectiveness of university-led sustainability initiatives by aligning them with practical needs and broader societal objectives.

WWF Switzerland recommends harnessing the immense potential of teaching & transfer to society: two areas with high sustainability impact.

Teaching for Sustainability: Equipping Future Generation

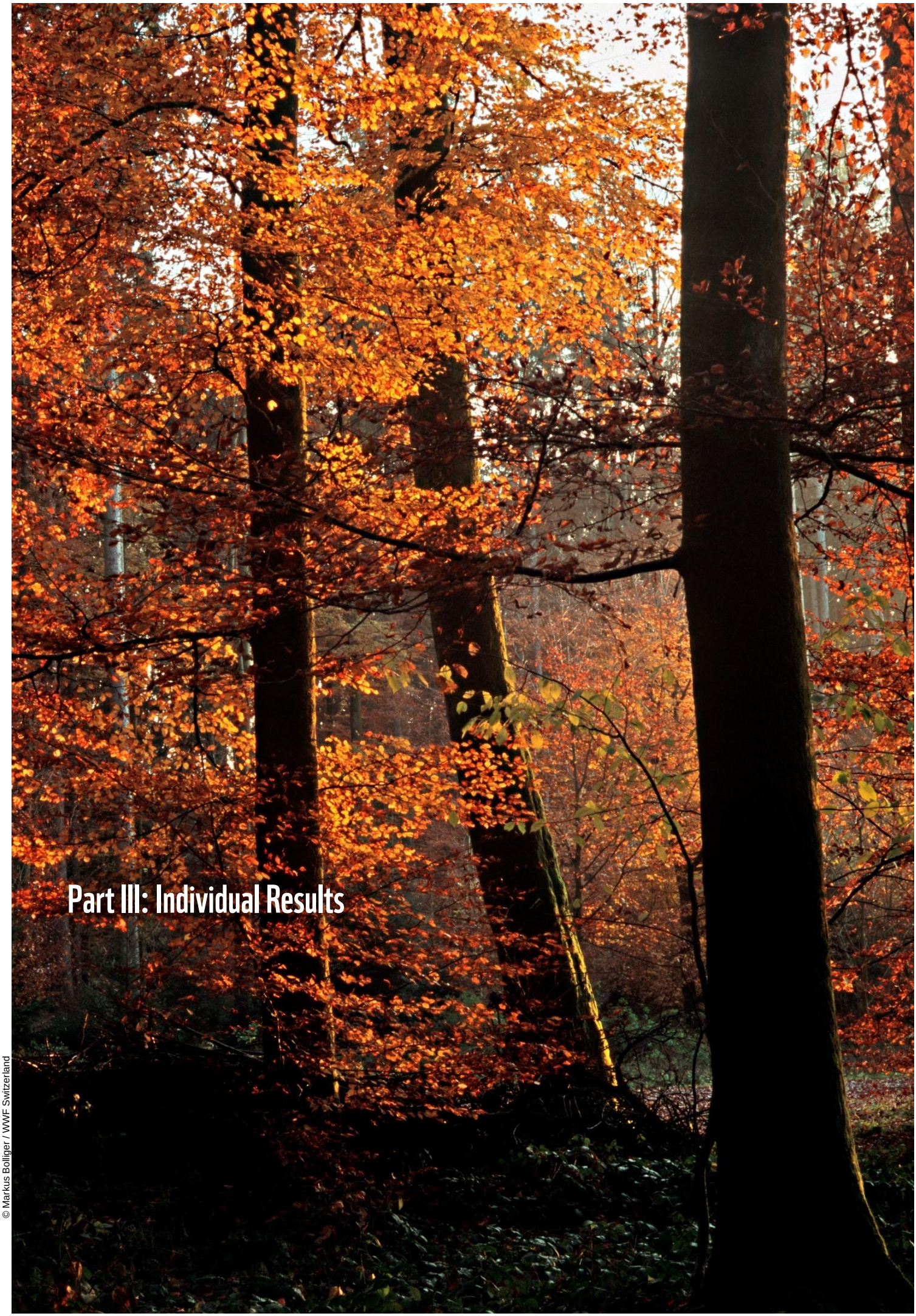
Teaching offers a more long-term and scalable approach to sustainability transformation:

- Empowering students: Embedding sustainability into curricula across disciplines means that graduates leave with the knowledge and skills to incorporate sustainability in their future careers, regardless of their field.
- Interdisciplinary learning: Modern sustainability challenges require solutions that bridge multiple disciplines—environmental science, economics, social justice. By transforming teaching, universities equip students to tackle complex, real-world problems.
- Creating change-makers: Students are not only prepared to work within existing systems but also to innovate and create new solutions, whether through research, entrepreneurship, or activism.

Transfer to Society: Scaling Sustainability Solutions

WWF encourages universities to strengthen their transfer-to-society endeavors, where they can scale up sustainability solutions beyond the academic environment. This shift towards transfer involves:

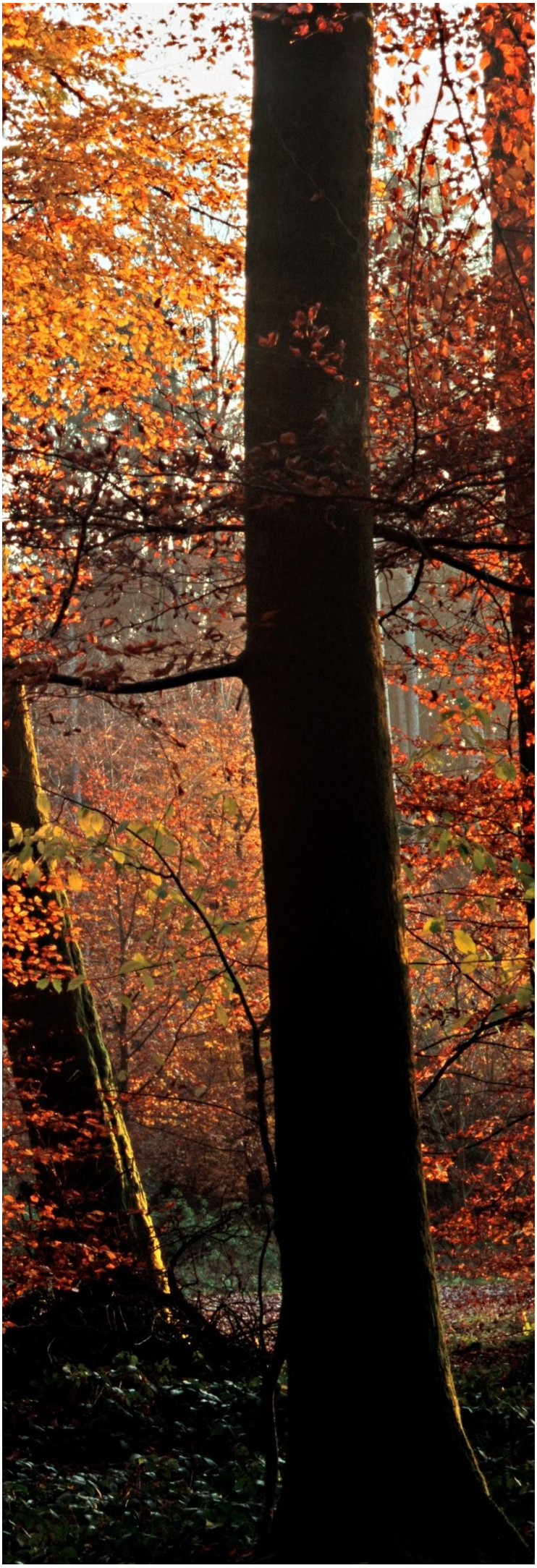
- Collaborative research: Working with communities, governments, and industries to co-create sustainability solutions that are applied outside the university. For instance, developing sustainable agriculture practices with local farmers or renewable energy projects with municipalities.
- Social innovation and entrepreneurship: Supporting students and faculty in turning sustainability ideas into social enterprises or startups that address environmental and social issues. This transfer leverages university innovation and makes it available for broader societal impact.
- Policy engagement: Universities increasingly work with policymakers to influence and inform public policy on sustainability—extending the reach of academic research to shape laws and regulations on climate, energy, and resources.



Part III: Individual Results

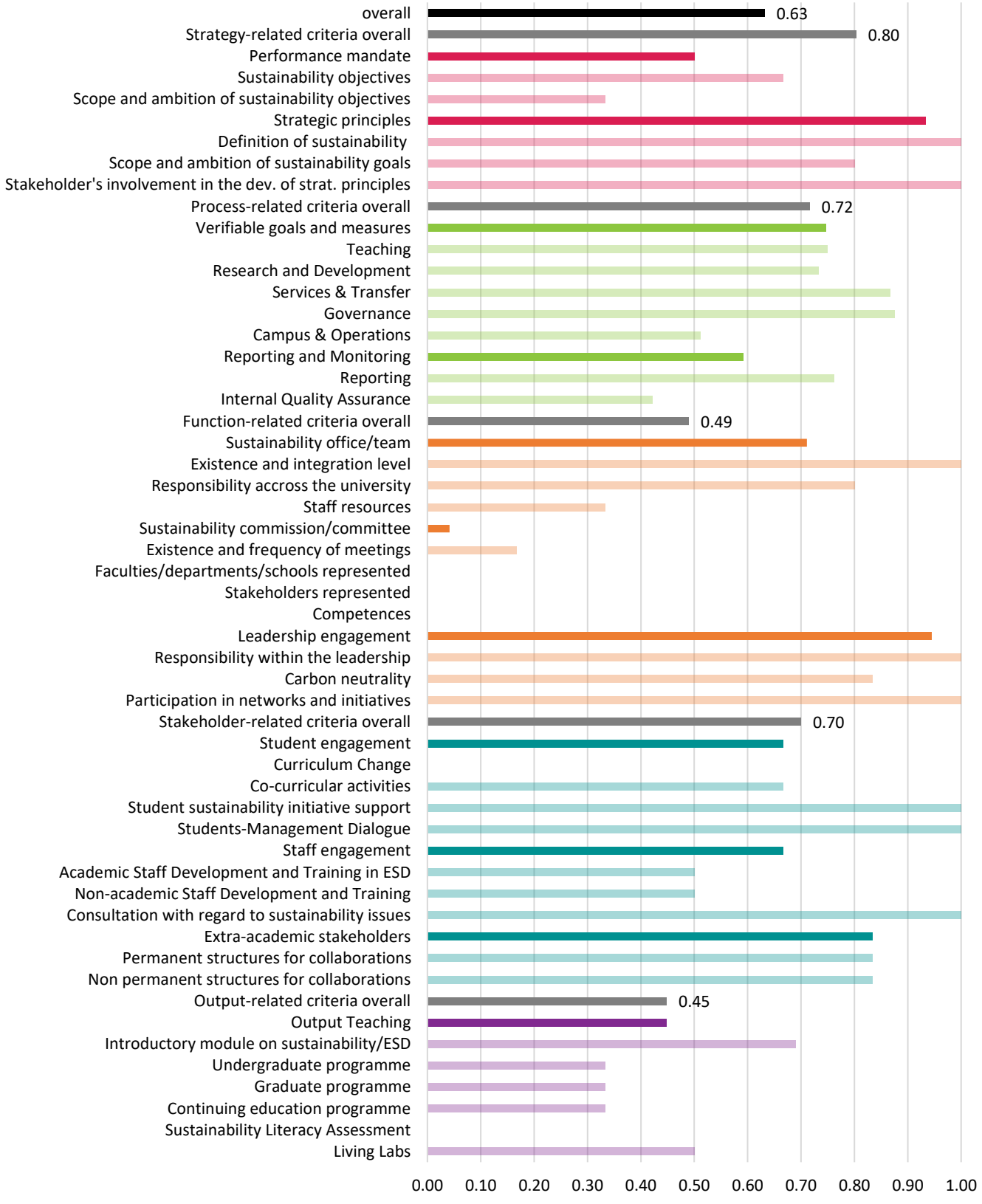
6. Detailed University Results

This chapter presents the results of individual universities, featuring a detailed graphic including results for all dimensions, criteria and indicators. For each university, an explanatory text focussing on notable developments since 2021 and mentions of initiatives and engagements in the five dimensions is added. Strengths are highlighted, and areas for improvement from WWF's perspective are outlined, with notable examples of transfer projects also presented. This analysis is based on the information provided by the universities during data collection and helps to understand what other universities across the country have been doing. It also enables identification of institutions facing similar challenges or employing comparable approaches, fostering opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.



6.1 Universities (UNI)

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETHZ)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ) has continued to progress in the field of sustainability. **ETH Sustainability**, responsible for coordinating sustainability activities, was reorganized to enhance integration across the university and now leads the **university-wide "Net Zero" program**. The Net Zero strategy also includes behavioural changes to reduce emissions through initiatives such as the **Roundtable of Sustainable Academic Travel** and **Sustainable Gastronomy**, aiming to create awareness and influence institutional culture towards more sustainable behaviours. The **"ETH Week"** and **"ETH Sustainability Summer School"** initiatives were restructured to align with other sustainability-focused programs, such as **ETH for Development (ETH4D)**. These initiatives provide interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students, focusing on solving real-world sustainability challenges. In Spring 2020, the **SDG Public Lecture Series** was organized for the first time by ETH Sustainability, ETH for Development (ETH4D), and the Department of Environmental Systems Science (D-USYS) to engage both the campus community and the general public on global sustainability topics, including water management, climate policy, and food systems. Thanks to its quality reporting, based on the **Global Reporting Initiative** (GRI) standards, ETHZ has been able to make significant progress in sustainability, particularly in its operations and governance.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: ETH Zurich's sustainability efforts are embedded in its **Strategic Plan 2021-2024** and the **Net Zero 2030 Program**. Sustainability is defined as a core principle that integrates ecological, social, and economic dimensions. Specific goals include reducing emissions and promoting sustainability across all facets of university life, from research and teaching to campus operations.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: ETH Zurich offers a **Sustainability Course Catalogue** that includes over 800 courses related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In continuing education, the **School for Continuing Education** offers a range of sustainability-related programs, including the **CAS ETH in Climate Innovation** and **MAS ETH in Mediation in Peace Processes**. Mandatory introductory courses on sustainability are included in several study programs, reaching around 42% of the students. Booster workshops and Innovedum grants are used for incentivising faculty members to integrate sustainability into their lectures, courses and lab tutorials.
- **Research and Development**: ETH Zurich maintains an inventory of sustainability-related research projects and supports sustainability research through initiatives like **ETH4Development (ETH4D)**. Awards such as the planned **ETH Sustainability Award** shall incentivize outstanding contributions in sustainability research. ETH has interdisciplinary centers promoting sustainability, including the **Energy Science Center** and **World Food System Center**.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Sustainability Office**, from 2008 to 2024 in the President's Domain and as of 2025 under the leadership of the Vice President for Infrastructure and Sustainability, oversees all sustainability initiatives and manages activities related to teaching, operations, and services.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: ETH Zurich aims to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 for Scopes 1, 2, and business travel, while comprehensive carbon neutrality for Scope 3 emissions is expected by 2040. Measures include reducing energy consumption, promoting renewable energy generation on-site, and encouraging sustainable transportation.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: ETH Zurich actively involves students through initiatives like the **Student Sustainability Committee (SSC)**, **Hack4Good**, and the **Sustainability Summit**. Regular exchanges between students and management, such as meetings with the rectorate and infrastructure vice president, ensure student voices are heard in sustainability decisions.
- **Community Engagement**: ETH engages with the local community through both permanent and non-permanent structures like **Net Zero Living Labs** and **Campus Community Relations**. ETH also collaborates with external partners from the private and public sectors on projects like **Speed2Zero**, aimed at reducing emissions and building resilient systems.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability is integrated into the curriculum across faculties. Courses are offered for both students and staff, and some programs provide ECTS credits for sustainability topics. A standardized assessment for sustainability literacy has not been implemented.

Strengths

- **Strategic principles**: As the performance mandate with the ETH Board lacked ambitious targets, both in scope and in time, it is noteworthy that ETHZ has gone further and set itself solid, clearly defined strategic objectives, in consultation with its stakeholders, from students to non-academic staff.
- **Climate Neutrality Target (2030)**: ETH Zurich has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% from 2006 levels by 2030. This goal is more ambitious than the federal target of 2050 and Zurich Canton's goal of 2040, underlining ETHZ's ambitions in climate action.
- **Sustainable Investments**: Through the ETH Foundation, the institution aims to positively impact society via sustainable investments, working with **Global Custodian** ESG assessment to ensure responsible financial management.

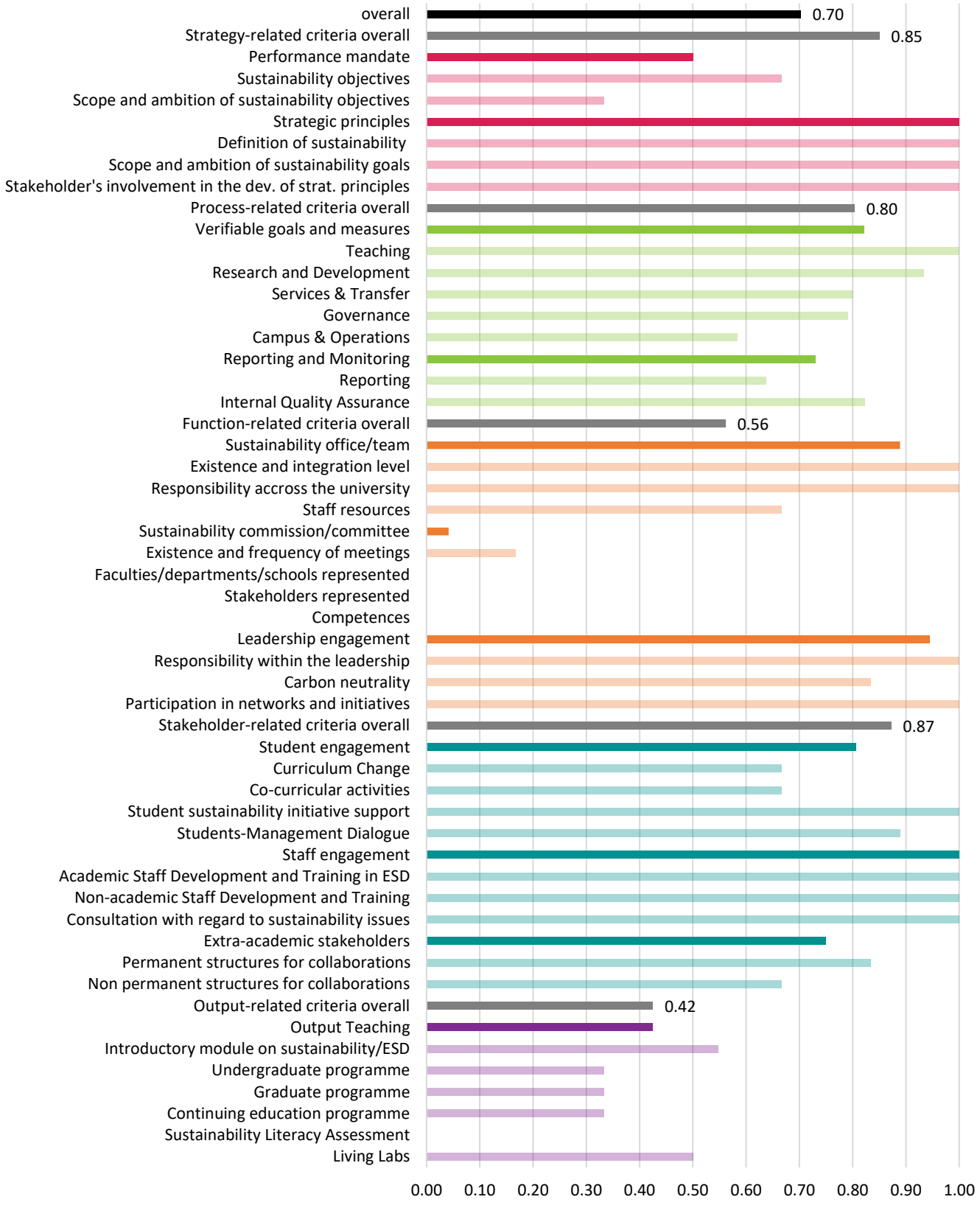
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Teaching and ESD**: There is no comprehensive initiative encouraging academic staff to develop new sustainability courses or embed sustainability into existing programs. The assessment shows moderate scores in teaching and curriculum change, which may be a result of its technical focus.
- **No Dedicated Commission for the areas of Teaching, Research and Transfer**: While ETHZ has an environmental commission overseeing operations, there is no equivalent body focused on integrating sustainability into teaching and research. ETHZ could benefit from establishing a commission focused on integrating sustainability into teaching and research, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to embed sustainability into curricula.
- **Sustainability Unit**: Given the size and scope of ETHZ, its sustainability unit could benefit from more resources to manage the institution's sustainability agenda effectively. It should also be able to coordinate and initiate measures in the fields of education and research.

Notable transfer initiative: ETH4D

ETH4D (Engineering for Development) is an initiative launched by ETH Zurich to address global challenges related to sustainable development through research and innovation. Created in 2019, its mission is to leverage ETH's expertise in science and engineering to develop solutions that contribute to global development and improve living conditions, especially in low- and middle-income countries. ETH4D provides funding for research, innovation, and capacity-building projects. They offer various types of support, including seed funding for new ideas, research grants, and fellowships for students and professionals from developing countries to study at ETH Zurich. Additionally, ETH4D runs the "Excellence in Africa" initiative to enhance collaboration between Swiss and African research institutions. They track their impact through the outcomes of funded projects, such as the number of innovations developed and applied, the number of partnerships formed, and the reach of capacity-building efforts.

École Polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology of Lausanne (EPFL) has made a significant progress in advancing sustainability integration. The creation of a **Vice Presidency for Responsible Transformation** (VPT) in 2021 has enabled sustainability to gain considerable strategic importance and EPFL to make quite a leap forward in this area. In the space of 3 years, EPFL has launched a large number of ambitious projects and has upgraded its internal capabilities to enable it to carry out a wide range of cross-functional initiatives in all areas. In 2023, EPFL launched its **2030 Climate & Sustainability Strategy**, which aims to cut the university's carbon emissions by 40% and incorporates sustainability across education, research, and innovation. This strategy involves all vice presidencies, schools, and many of EPFL's teams, ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated approach to sustainability without relying on a centralized commission. In partnership with UNIL and IMD, EPFL established the ***Enterprise for Society Center*** *(E4S)* in 2021, a pioneering initiative that promotes sustainable management and social responsibility and aspires to turn towards society to transfer academic knowledge and make an impact.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: EPFL has established sustainability as a core element of its strategic planning in the **Climate and Sustainability Strategy 2030**. Key targets include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 (relative to 2006 levels) and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The university ambitions to become a leader in education, research, and operations, integrating sustainability across all its activities and organizational units.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is strongly integrated in EPFL's academic structure. A mandatory introductory module on sustainability, offering ECTS credits, is being implemented across all bachelor's programs starting from the 2024-2025 academic year. The **Durabilis Award** recognizes students for their contributions to sustainability. Additionally, incentives and workshops are available to encourage academic staff to integrate sustainability into their curricula, supported by interdisciplinary initiatives like the **Solutions for Sustainability Initiative (S4S)**.
- **Research and Development**: EPFL promotes sustainability research through dedicated programs and awards, such as the **Zeno Karl Schindler Foundation Prize** for postdoctoral researchers. The university maintains an inventory of sustainability-related research projects, enhancing visibility and interdisciplinary collaboration.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Vice Presidency for Responsible Transformation** oversees EPFL's sustainability initiatives, which include managing campus operations in line with sustainability goals and guiding the university towards carbon neutrality. The sustainability office has approximatively 18 full-time staff and coordinates initiatives across teaching, research, and operations. Additionally, sustainability representatives have been appointed in each school to ensure localized sustainability efforts.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: EPFL aims for carbon neutrality by 2040, with key initiatives focusing on reducing energy consumption, improving campus operations, and promoting renewable energy use. The university monitors greenhouse gas emissions across Scopes 1, 2, and 3, and actively works to reduce carbon footprints from food, commuting, and travel.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: EPFL actively involves students in sustainability initiatives through co-curricular programs, such as the **Climate and Sustainability Action Week (CSAW)** and platforms for student sustainability projects like **The SPOT** and **SKIL (Student Kreativity and Innovation Lab)**. Students are also represented in curriculum development and contribute to the sustainability discourse through meetings with the university management.
- **Community Engagement**: EPFL engages with the local community via permanent structures like **CLIMACT** and **Enterprise for Society (E4S)**, which foster collaborations aimed at tackling sustainability challenges. Additionally, initiatives like **Living Labs** provide spaces for hands-on sustainability projects, such as the **Smart Living Lab** that focuses on energy-efficient building practices.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: The introduction of a mandatory sustainability course for all bachelor's students ensures that sustainability literacy is imparted uniformly across the student body.

Strengths

- **Comprehensive Integration of Sustainability**: EPFL's strategic focus on sustainability is evident across teaching, research, and campus operations. The creation of the Vice Presidency for Responsible Transformation ensures strong governance and accountability.
- **Sustainability office**: Thanks to the dedicated manpower and strong institutional integration under the Vice Presidency for Responsible Transformation, the Sustainability Office is well-equipped to launch and support a wide range of initiatives. These efforts have primarily been focused on advancing sustainable education, improving campus operations, enhancing mobility, optimizing outdoor spaces, and ensuring sustainable construction.
- **Student Engagement and Support**: Co-curricular opportunities and platforms like **The SPOT** and **SKIL** engage students directly in sustainability efforts, ensuring that practical, hands-on experience is integrated with theoretical learning.

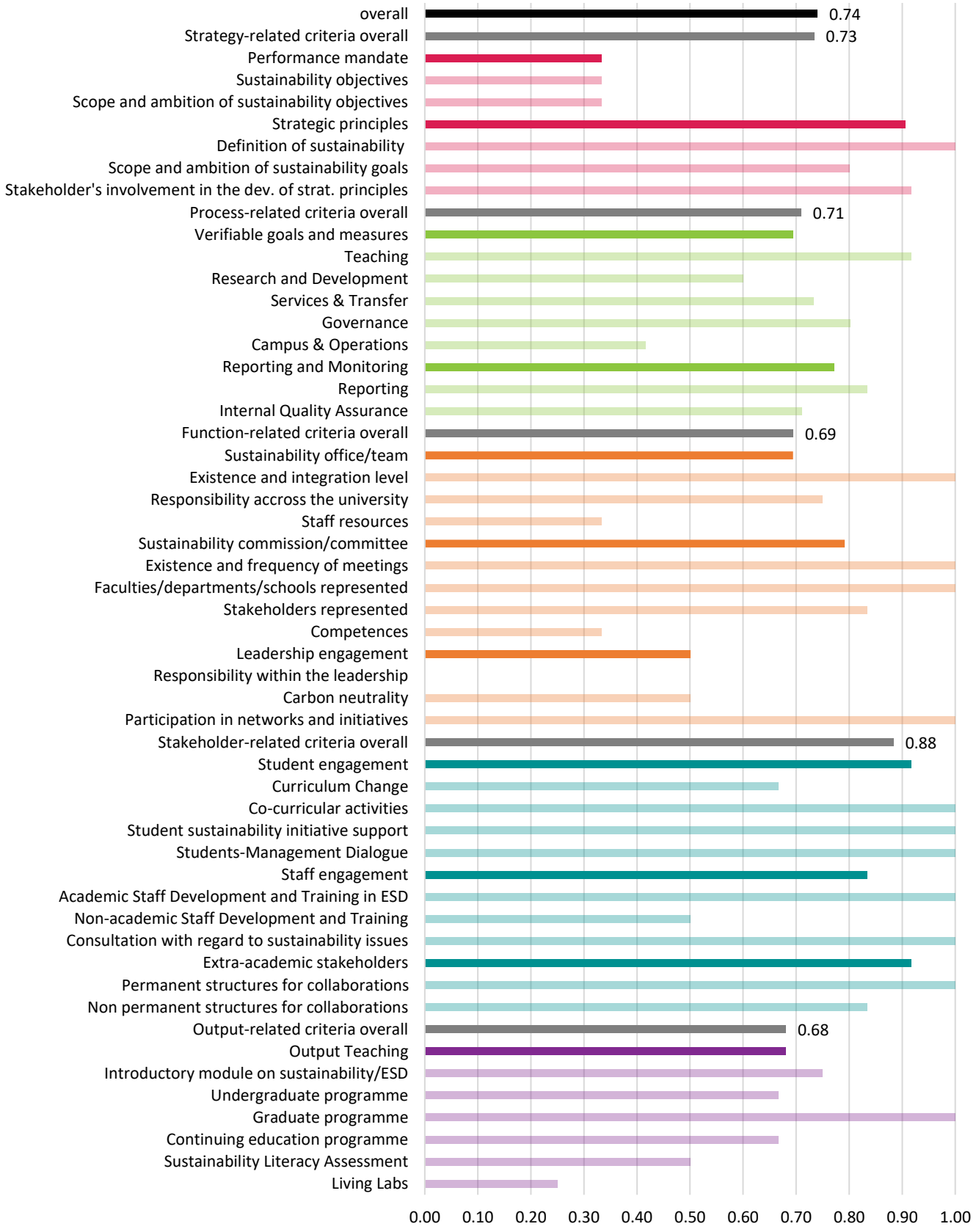
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Standardized Sustainability Literacy Assessment**: Implementing a standardized assessment for sustainability literacy would help evaluate the effectiveness of ESD initiatives.
- **Broader Community Engagement**: Expanding non-permanent structures like **Living Labs** would further enhance community interaction and collaboration in sustainability initiatives.
- **Sustainability Commission**: EPFL does not have a formal "Sustainability Commission". Even though its sustainability office supports a large number of initiatives at the institution level, it remains important that faculties/departments/schools are directly involved in a specific body, both for monitoring measures and for leadership.

Notable transfer initiative: Solution4Sustainability

EPFL's "Solutions4Sustainability" initiative focuses on developing sustainable solutions to reduce energy dependency and carbon emissions both on campus and beyond. The program has launched seven projects with a total funding of CHF 20 million, involving 26 labs across three EPFL campuses (Lausanne, Sion, and Neuchâtel). These projects target a wide range of areas, including carbon capture, energy efficiency, and sustainability in food systems. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between students, researchers, and industry partners, the initiative plays a critical role in the university's transfer mission, ensuring that research outcomes have a tangible, real-world impact that aligns with broader societal needs.

Universität Basel (UNIBAS)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Basel (UNIBAS) has made significant strides in advancing sustainability through various institutional changes and initiatives. For instance, in summer 2022, a steering committee consisting of researchers, students, and administrative staff was established to guide the university's sustainability efforts. This committee advises on the implementation of the university's ambitious **Climate Strategy 2024-2030**, which was released in 2024. The newly created **Senate's Committee on Sustainability** plays a pivotal role in executing sustainability goals across the university, providing strategic direction and incorporating university-wide concerns. In August 2022, the university began managing its non-current financial assets using specific sustainability criteria and started to produce energy on campus from renewable sources, showing a strong commitment to sustainable financial and energy management. On the research front, UNIBAS launched in 2021 the **Sustainable Future research network**, which promotes interdisciplinary research focused on sustainability across its faculties. This network has also contributed to external collaborations, such as joining the **Klimaplattform der Wirtschaft Region Basel**, a platform for climate protection discussions. Overall, it is important to note that UNIBAS scores remarkably well in all the dimensions assessed, demonstrating a broad and effective approach to implementing sustainability goals and measures.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UNIBAS integrates sustainability into all institutional areas, guided by the UN SDGs and a comprehensive **Sustainability and Climate Strategy** that encompasses research, teaching, campus operations, mobility, and community engagement. The university's objective is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2030.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively promoted at UNIBAS, with sustainability-related modules and incentives available for both staff and students. The **Master in Sustainable Development** offers a structured pathway for students, while the **Impuls program** provides incentives for academic staff to develop new sustainability courses and integrate sustainability into existing curricula. Additional interdisciplinary courses are integrated across faculties.
- **Research and Development**: Sustainability research is supported through multiple faculties, and a dedicated **Sustainable Future Network** connects researchers across disciplines. However, UNIBAS does not yet award a prize specifically for sustainability research.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The Sustainability Office at UNIBAS is managed under the President's Office. The office oversees all sustainability measures, including carbon reduction targets and reporting. The university plans to achieve carbon neutrality through absolute emission reductions rather than relying on offsets.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: A target for carbon neutrality is planned for 2030, focusing on reducing emissions from campus operations and promoting sustainable transport. Renewable energy production on-site has also been introduced.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: UNIBAS encourages active student participation in sustainability initiatives through the **AG Nachhaltigkeit** and the **Sustainability Commission**, which includes student representatives. Events like **Sustainability Week** also foster student engagement.
- **Community Engagement**: The **Sustainable Future Network** and initiatives such as **Living Labs** engage the local community. These initiatives provide platforms for collaboration with public, private, and civil society stakeholders.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: UNIBAS offers sustainability-focused courses across various faculties. However, sustainability literacy assessments for students are not yet standardized. Programs like **Climate Fresk** and **Living Labs** in the Wettstein neighborhood provide practical sustainability learning opportunities.

Strengths

- **Comprehensive Integration of Sustainability**: Sustainability is integrated across all institutional areas.
- **Support for Teaching and Research**: The **Impuls program** incentivizes academic staff to integrate sustainability into their curricula, while research initiatives like the **Sustainable Future Network** support interdisciplinary collaboration.
- **Student and Community Engagement**: UNIBAS demonstrates strong student engagement and community collaboration through dedicated events and initiatives.

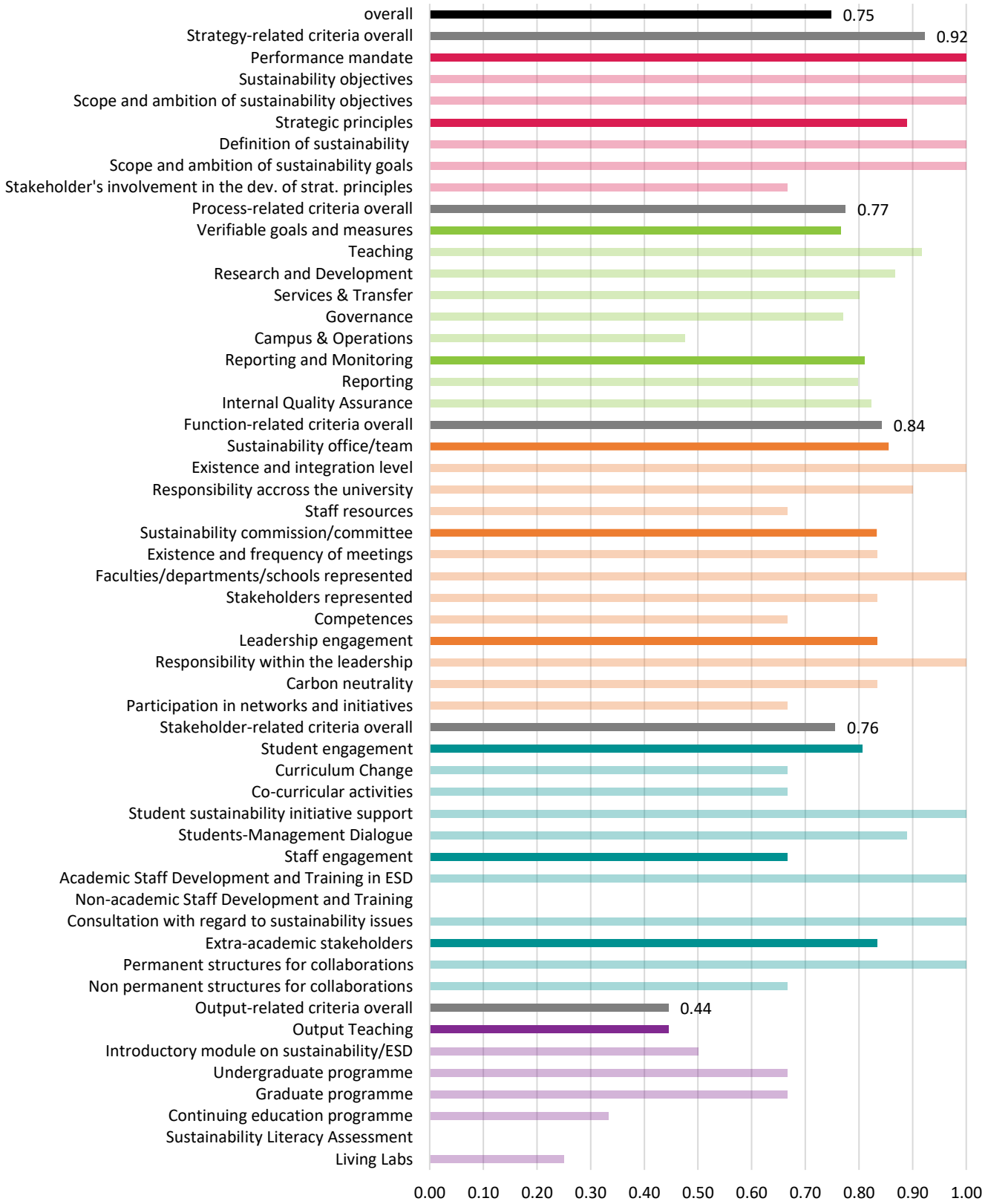
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Sustainability office**: Reinforcing the sustainability office's capacity given the scope of its mandate (teaching, research, operations and transfer/services) would help effectively manage and expand its initiatives, ensuring each area is adequately supported.
- **Mandatory Sustainability Education**: Making introductory sustainability courses mandatory for all students would help ensure a consistent baseline in sustainability literacy.
- **Detailed Carbon Neutrality Plan**: A more specific plan for Scope 3 emissions reduction would further support the carbon neutrality goal.

Notable transfer initiative: SWEET-COSI

SWEET-COSI (Co-Evolution and Coordinated Simulation of the Swiss Energy System and Swiss Society) is a major project with a budget of CHF 17 million, led by UNIBAS. It focuses on the interaction between society and the energy system, aiming to understand how both influence each other and how different energy futures can be realized. This 10-year transdisciplinary project involves over a dozen higher education and research institutions and aims to provide a comprehensive framework for energy modeling that incorporates social and economic factors, as well as stakeholder engagement. Its emphasis on collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and industry partners makes it a prime example of how research can support societal and economic transformation toward sustainability.

Universität Bern (UNIBE)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Bern (UNIBE) has made significant progress in sustainability, emphasizing climate action, education, and stakeholder engagement, by leveraging the strengths of three critical entities: the **Office for Sustainable Development**, the **Sustainable Development Education Team** (ESD) of the **Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)**, and the **Commission for Sustainable Development**. The Office coordinates sustainability initiatives across research, teaching, and campus operations, while the CDE team focuses on integrating sustainability into educational programs and supporting lecturers. The strategic guidance provided by the Commission ensures alignment and coherence across all faculties and administrative levels, resulting in a cohesive and impactful approach that has significantly advanced sustainability throughout the university. In 2024 the university announced the **Climate Neutrality 2030 Roadmap**, shifting from an offset-focused strategy to prioritizing direct carbon reduction and innovative climate action. This participatory roadmap engages stakeholders across the university, aiming to achieve meaningful emission reductions and integrate sustainability deeply into university operations. In 2024, the university introduced a **Master's in Sustainability Transformations**, designed to equip students with the skills to address sustainability challenges and implement real-world projects collaboratively. UNIBE also organized key events such as the **Sustainability Days** in 2021 and 2023, which fostered collaboration between Bern's higher education institutions and engaged the public on topics related to sustainable development. Furthermore, the biennial **Sustainability Report 20-21**, published for the 4th time, continued to track progress in sustainability, reinforcing UNIBE's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in this area.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UNIBE's **Strategy 2030** positions sustainability as a priority, incorporating environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects into teaching, research, and operations. The university aims for climate neutrality by 2025 and integrates sustainability into all study programs. The **Wyss Academy for Nature** and the **Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)** play a significant role in promoting sustainability.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is well-integrated, with a minor in sustainable development available at the bachelor's and master's levels, and a new competence-based master's program in sustainability transformations starting in 2024. The university provides workshops and grants for teaching staff to integrate sustainability into their courses.
- **Research and Development**: UNIBE supports sustainability-focused research through specialized centres like the **Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)** and **Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research**. The university maintains an inventory of research related to the SDGs and awards research prizes to encourage sustainability research. Interfaculty research collaborations are also promoted.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: Managed by the **Vice Rectorate for Quality and Sustainable Development**, the Sustainability Office oversees sustainability initiatives and manages the secretariat of the **Sustainability Commission**.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: UNIBE has committed to becoming climate-neutral by 2025, with detailed emissions tracking and interim targets for energy use, sustainable commuting, and building efficiency.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: UNIBE encourages student engagement through **Students4Sustainability HUB** and initiatives like Sustainability Week. Students are represented in the Sustainability Commission, which meets regularly to discuss issues.
- **Community Engagement**: UNIBE engages in local and regional sustainability projects, such as through the **Wyss Academy for Nature** and **Mobiliar Lab for Natural Risks**. Collaborations with civil society, private, and public sectors focus on sustainable development.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: A broad range of courses focuses on sustainability, with specific programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels. However, the introductory module on sustainability is not mandatory for all students, limiting consistent exposure.

Strengths

- **Integrated Governance and Ambitious Carbon Goals**: UNIBE's Strategy 2030 and its target for climate neutrality by 2025 showcase a strong institutional commitment to sustainability.
- **Climate neutrality**: UNIBE has set itself the goal of being climate neutral by 2025. Although this objective will probably not be achieved and is under review for the next two years, it is notable that with its Roadmap UNIBE confirms its ambition and prioritizes direct emissions reduction in its targets for after 2025 and until 2030.
- **Support for ESD and Research**: Programs like the minor in sustainable development and research incentives reflect a well-rounded approach to integrating sustainability across teaching and research.

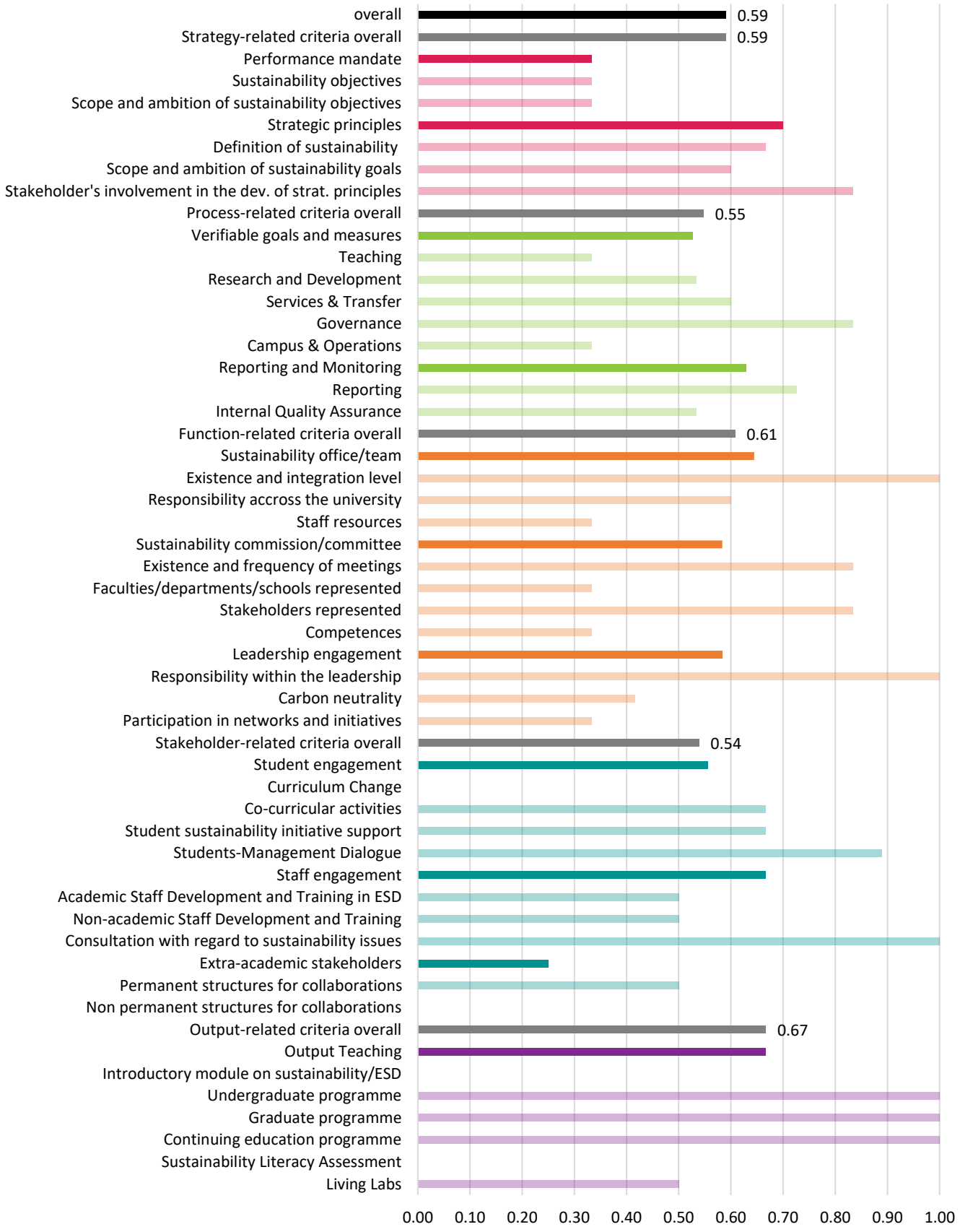
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Sustainability office**: Reinforcing the sustainability office's capacity given the scope of its mandate (teaching, research, public relations, operations and transfer/services) would help effectively manage and expand its initiatives, ensuring each area is adequately supported.
- **Mandatory Sustainability Education**: Expanding mandatory introductory sustainability courses would ensure that all students receive foundational sustainability literacy.
- **Enhanced Community Partnerships**: Establishing structured long-term collaborations with external stakeholders could increase UNIBE's impact on regional sustainability.

Notable transfer initiative: The Wyss Academy for Nature

The Wyss Academy for Nature is a globally recognized research and implementation center focused on developing innovative solutions for sustainable development, engaging stakeholders from policy, business, and civil society across four continents. This initiative emphasizes practical collaboration and direct community engagement, making it a prime example of how UNIBE integrates research outcomes into impactful real-world actions, aiming to meet sustainability and climate goals. The academy collaborates with several key research institutions, including the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) and the Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR), enhancing its interdisciplinary approach to addressing global sustainability challenges.

Université de Fribourg (Unifr)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Fribourg (Unifr) has made significant progress and has undertaken several initiatives to bolster sustainability efforts. In terms of institutional development, the creation of a **sustainability project manager** position in 2022, along with the appointment of a **vice-rector for sustainability**, represent two major milestones. The **Sustainability Commission**, whose work was significantly slowed by the pandemic, has resumed activity by meeting once per semester. It is tasked with developing and coordinating the university's environmental sustainability strategy, ensuring effective communication, and facilitating the sharing of best practices across the institution. Its activities are essentially limited to the management of operations and internal information, with teaching and research being excluded from the mandate. On the teaching front, one of the main drivers of Unifr endeavours is the **Environmental Sciences and Humanities Institute** (ESH), which was established in 2019 and continues to play a key role in promoting interdisciplinary research and teaching on sustainability and environmental ethics. This institute integrates perspectives from various faculties, focusing on ethical decision-making in environmental issues and providing education at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. It has emphasized the role of environmental justice and ethical governance as key themes in its activities. With the "Quali+ in Sustainability" certification the ESH institute offers students the opportunity to take a special course ***entitled "Sustainability for Non-Environmental Scientists"*** as a complement to their regular studies.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: Unifr strategic principles are aligned with the UN SDGs and cantonal goals. The university emphasizes sustainable development in scientific, environmental, and economic terms, with specific coverage of teaching, mobility, infrastructure, and sustainable campus living (e.g., food and waste management). However, there are no defined target values or indicators for these sustainability objectives.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively promoted for students, though there is no university-wide program directory of sustainability-related courses. Unifr has an interdisciplinary centre, the **Environmental Sciences and Humanities Institute**, promoting sustainability in teaching through minors and master's level programs. An incentive program for developing sustainability courses for academic staff is not in place, suggesting a need for institutional support in expanding ESD integration.
- **Research and Development**: Unifr supports sustainability research through its Environmental Sciences and Humanities Institute, and it offers a prize for outstanding sustainability research achievements. The university is currently developing a sustainability research network, but a formal inventory of research projects is yet to be established.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Sustainability Office** and Commission oversee the university's sustainability initiatives, reporting directly to senior management. Unifr has conducted inventories of greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1 and Scope 2) and plans to install solar panels on its facilities by 2024, though comprehensive Scope 3 emissions tracking and reduction measures are lacking.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: A formal target for carbon neutrality is still under discussion, though Unifr aligns with the climate objectives of the Canton of Fribourg.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Unifr encourages student involvement through **Sustainability Week** organized by the student association Myosotis and regular dialogue between students and university management on sustainability issues. There is also a student representative on the Sustainability Commission.
- **Community Engagement**: Unifr is a part of the **Réseau des répondants durabilité de l'Etat de Fribourg**, a permanent structure to engage with local stakeholders on sustainability matters.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: There is no mandatory introductory module on sustainability for all students, nor is there a standard assessment for sustainability literacy, which limits measuring the students' understanding. However, sustainability is integrated in undergraduate and graduate courses through the Environmental Sciences and Humanities Institute.

Strengths

- **Governance and Community Collaboration**: Strong governance through the Sustainability Office and active community collaboration through cantonal networks provide a solid framework for institutional sustainability.
- **Student Engagement and Research Recognition**: Engagement through the Sustainability Commission and the environmental research prize showcases Unifr commitment to fostering sustainability culture.

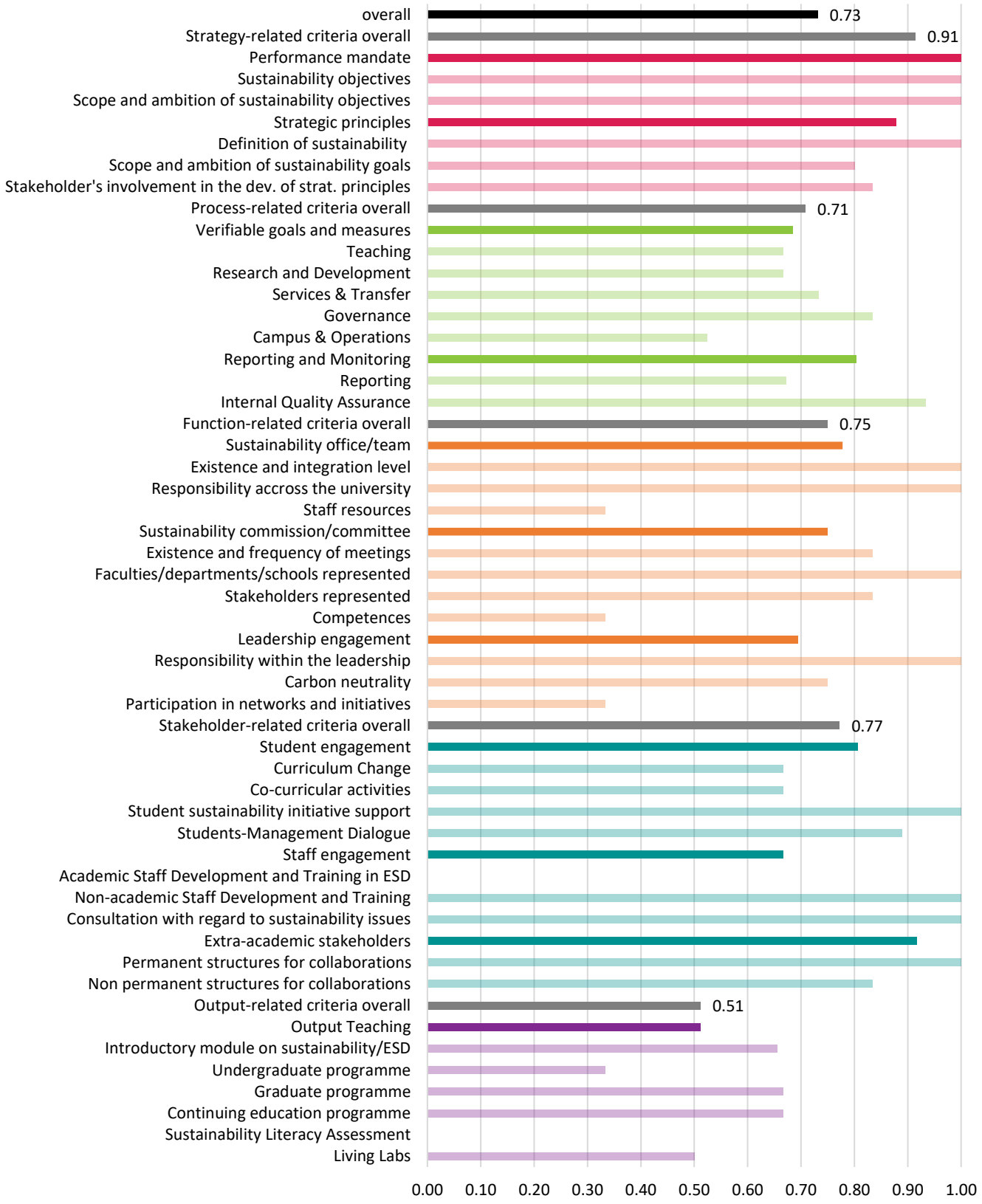
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Formal Carbon Reduction Commitments**: A clear and formalized target for carbon neutrality, including Scope 3 emissions, would strengthen Unifr commitment to climate action.
- **ESD Integration and Course Incentives**: A standardized ESD program and incentives for academic staff to incorporate sustainability in their curricula could ensure that sustainability is consistently integrated across all faculties.
- **Comprehensive Transfer Projects**: Developing more socio-economic transfer projects could broaden Unifr sustainability impact beyond the environmental domain.

Notable transfer initiative: Impossible Materials

"Impossible Materials" is a spin-off company, which originated from research at Unifr and the University of Cambridge, focuses on developing sustainable alternatives to materials like titanium dioxide, which is banned for food use in the EU. By transforming cellulose into a natural light-scattering pigment, Impossible Materials showcases practical innovation driven by sustainable principles. The close partnership between Unifr and the start-up highlights how research at the university is transferred into real-world applications that promote environmental sustainability.

Université de Genève (UNIGE)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Geneva (UNIGE) has significantly advanced its sustainability efforts, embedding them into education, research, and innovation. One major initiative is the **SDG Solution Space**, a hub for open innovation focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Located in the heart of International Geneva, this space promotes the development of sustainable solutions, social entrepreneurship, and public engagement. It also hosts various research activities and collaborations with international organizations, NGOs, and diplomatic missions and has progressively broadened its reach by creating an online platform that consolidates its many sustainability-focused initiatives and projects, such as the **SDG Single and Dual Degree Master Programs.** UNIGE performs consistently across all dimensions, but while its strategy components are very good, there is still plenty of room for improvement in terms of outputs in teaching, i.e. the integration of sustainability into curricula, especially in undergraduate programs, living labs and sustainability literacy.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UNIGE's strategic goals for 2024-2027 emphasize sustainability through teaching, research, and operations. The university aligns its efforts with the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), aiming to make them an "institutional compass." Key goals include advancing interdisciplinary research on climate change and promoting inclusivity and diversity.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively integrated, with courses and interdisciplinary modules available. There are ongoing initiatives to expand incentives for academic staff to incorporate sustainability into their curricula. The **Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire des Educations à la Soutenabilité (LIESS)** also supports sustainability in teaching.
- **Research and Development**: UNIGE supports sustainability-focused research through incentives and programs such as those outlined in the **Convention d'objectif 4**. A sustainability research inventory is maintained, ensuring visibility of projects linked to the SDGs.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: UNIGE has a dedicated Sustainability Office under the Vice Rector for Research and Sustainability. The university targets carbon neutrality by 2050, encompassing all emission scopes. Specific interim targets and monitoring are in place, but more comprehensive measures for Scope 3 emissions could be enhanced.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: The carbon reduction strategy includes key actions such as reducing building energy consumption and expanding soft mobility options.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Students are involved in sustainability efforts through initiatives like the **SDG Council**, which meets twice per year, and **Sustainability Week Geneva**. Engagement is supported by interdisciplinary projects, platforms like **JINX!**, and the **P3 Projects Platform**.
- **Community Engagement**: UNIGE has both permanent and non-permanent structures for community engagement, such as **2050Today** and the **Geneva Trialogue**. These initiatives involve collaboration with public and private stakeholders to meet regional sustainability needs.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: UNIGE offers an optional introductory sustainability module, with ECTS credits awarded, and integrates sustainability into undergraduate and graduate programs across several faculties. However, standardized sustainability literacy assessments are not yet implemented.

Strengths

- **Integration of SDGs and Governance**: UNIGE uses the SDGs as a strategic framework for sustainability, which is reflected in governance, teaching, and research initiatives.
- **Community and Student Engagement**: Regular dialogues with students, interdisciplinary centres, and partnerships with local communities demonstrate UNIGE's dedication to fostering a culture of sustainability.

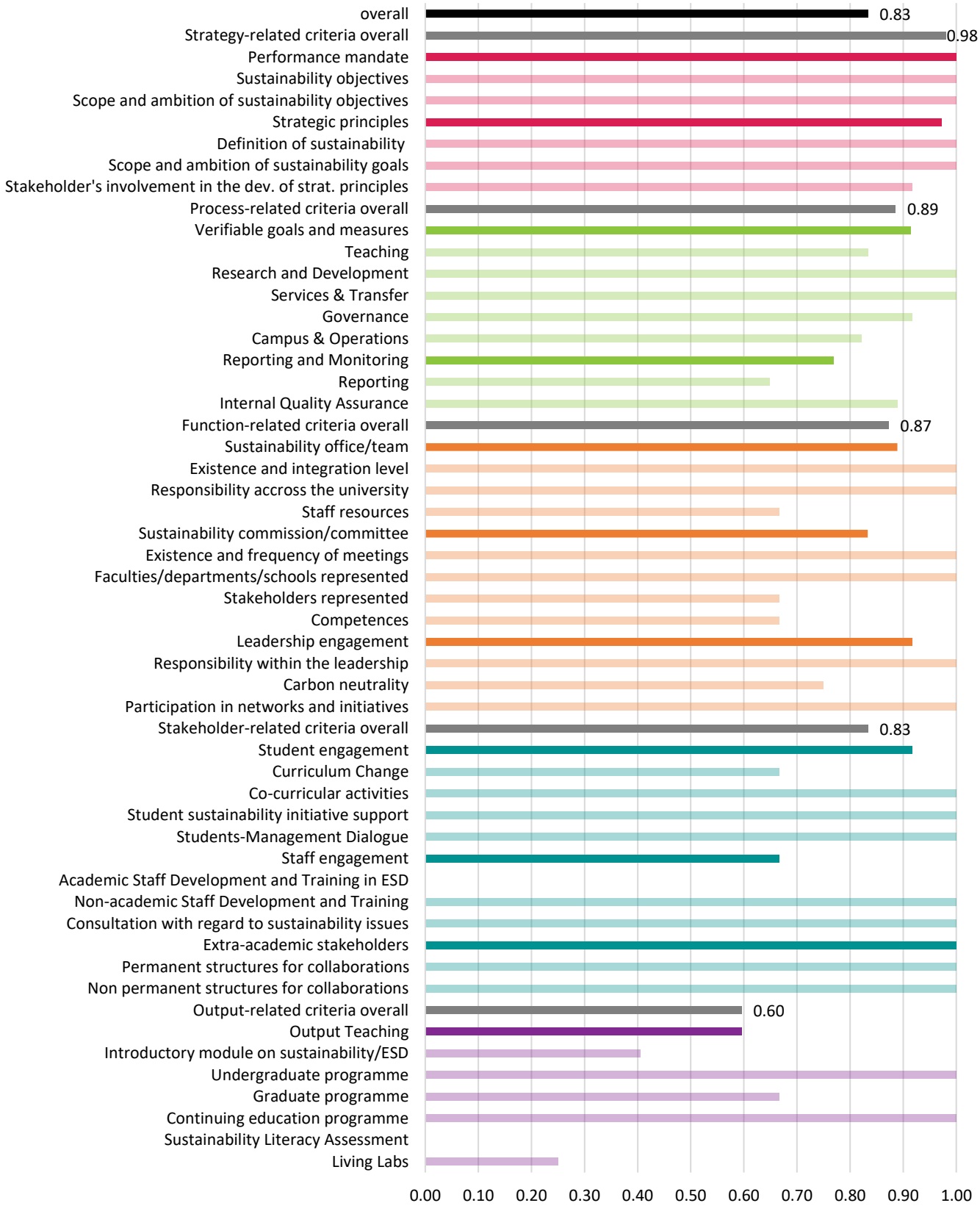
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Enhanced Scope 3 Carbon Reduction Goals**: A clearer plan for Scope 3 emissions reduction would strengthen the 2050 carbon neutrality goal.
- **Uniform ESD Implementation**: Introducing mandatory foundational ESD courses for all students would ensure a consistent baseline in sustainability literacy.

Notable transfer initiative: Horizon Académique

The "Horizon Académique" initiative at UNIGE is a program designed to support refugees and asylum seekers in accessing academic education and professional opportunities in Switzerland. Launched in 2016, it aims to help participants resume or begin studies at UNIGE or other higher education institutions, such as the HES-SO Genève and IHEID. The program offers academic, social, and professional integration through tailored support, including French language courses, individualized advising, mentoring, and access to university courses. Since the onset of the Ukraine crisis, the program has also supported displaced students and researchers, emphasizing a flexible approach to meet participants' evolving needs.

Université de Lausanne (UNIL)



Notable developments since 2021

UNIL has emerged as a leader in sustainability among Swiss universities due to its sustained strategic dedication and extensive institutional framework supporting innovative, impactful sustainability initiatives. Faced with the challenges of integrating and disseminating sustainability in a relatively large and diverse institution, UNIL has crafted a robust structure that fosters experimentation and agility, engaging its community actively while collaborating widely across departments and schools. At the heart of this commitment is the ***Centre de Compétences en Durabilité*** (CCD), established in 2018, which drives interdisciplinary research, education, and innovation across faculties. The center coordinates a variety of sustainability projects targeting pressing environmental and social issues and plays a pivotal role in public engagement by contributing to policy discourse and societal awareness on sustainability. Remaining proactive in its commitment, UNIL has continued to develop and has made significant progress since 2021. To democratize its sustainability approach further, UNIL set up the ***Assemblée de la Transition*** in 2022, a group of 60 randomly selected members from across the university community. This assembly has developed concrete proposals for the university's leadership to help developing its **Strategy for Ecological and Social Transition**, launched in spring 2024. This strategy, using the **Doughnut Economics model**, serves as an integrative framework to help UNIL assess and reduce its ecological footprint while fostering a balance between environmental stewardship and social well-being. In order to provide seed-funding to transformative sustainability research, UNIL has launched the **STRIVE** program. Following a project selection process in 2023, the program has started in 2024, with a total budget of CHF 4 million over 4 years. This program exemplifies UNIL's commitment to catalyzing transformative sustainability research within and beyond campus. The ***Working Group on Research and Engagement***, initiated by the Rectorate and co-led by the CCD and the ***Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche en Éthique*** (CIRE), published a critical report in May 2022 on the public engagement of academics, addressing essential questions on the societal role of research. The solid institutional framework at UNIL further fosters numerous bottom-up initiatives, enabling innovative projects across the university, such as the ***Plateforme Durabilité et Santé***. Launched in 2022 by the Faculty of Biology and Medicine (FBM) in partnership with the CCD, this platform bridges health and sustainability, highlighting UNIL's responsiveness to contemporary global challenges. While the University of Lausanne performs outstandingly well in almost all areas, there is still considerable room for improvement in the support and implementation of sustainability in teaching across the university, both in the development of ESD approaches for teaching staff and in curriculum change.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UNIL's **Plan d'intentions 2023-2026** and **CAP 2037** position ecological transition as a core value, with clear sustainability targets across all areas. Intermediate goals are set for 2037, encompassing teaching, research, and campus operations, such as reducing air travel emissions by 60% and switching to 100% renewable energy for campus needs. Collaborations with students, staff, and external advisors were pivotal in forming these goals.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively integrated across faculties, coordinated by the **Sustainability Competence Center**. While interdisciplinary courses on sustainability are well-represented, ESD consistency across all departments is still developing.
- **Research and Development**: Through the **STRIVE Program** and the **Durabilis Award**, UNIL promotes sustainability-oriented research, with a strong focus on interdisciplinary projects. A joint research platform with IMD and EPFL maps sustainability-related projects, enhancing coordination and visibility.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: UNIL's Sustainability Office, under the Vice Rector for Ecological Transition, oversees and reports on sustainability initiatives. The university aims for full carbon neutrality by 2050, with interim targets for 2037. Annual carbon inventories are conducted, though expanding efforts on Scope 3 emissions would further strengthen this strategy.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: The CAP 2037 plan outlines specific reduction targets, such as decreasing campus energy use by 50% and boosting plant-based food options by 30%. Further measures for Scope 3 emissions would bolster UNIL's holistic carbon reduction approach.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: UNIL encourages student participation through the **Transition Assembly**, a platform where randomly selected members deliberate sustainability issues. The **Volteface program** connects students with sustainability initiatives, allowing students to influence curriculum development.
- **Community Engagement**: UNIL engages with the community through the **Sustainability Competence Center** and events such as **Moins c'est Mieux**, focusing on resource conservation and sustainable practices.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: UNIL offers interdisciplinary sustainability modules, though a standardized sustainability literacy assessment is still absent. Programs like **Volteface** enable students to apply sustainability skills in community projects.

Strengths

- **Integrated Governance and Strategic Climate Goals**: CAP 2037, along with student and staff engagement, supports robust sustainability governance.
- **Research Incentives and Interdisciplinary Engagement**: Programs like STRIVE and platforms like the Sustainability Competence Center foster cross-disciplinary research and community impact.

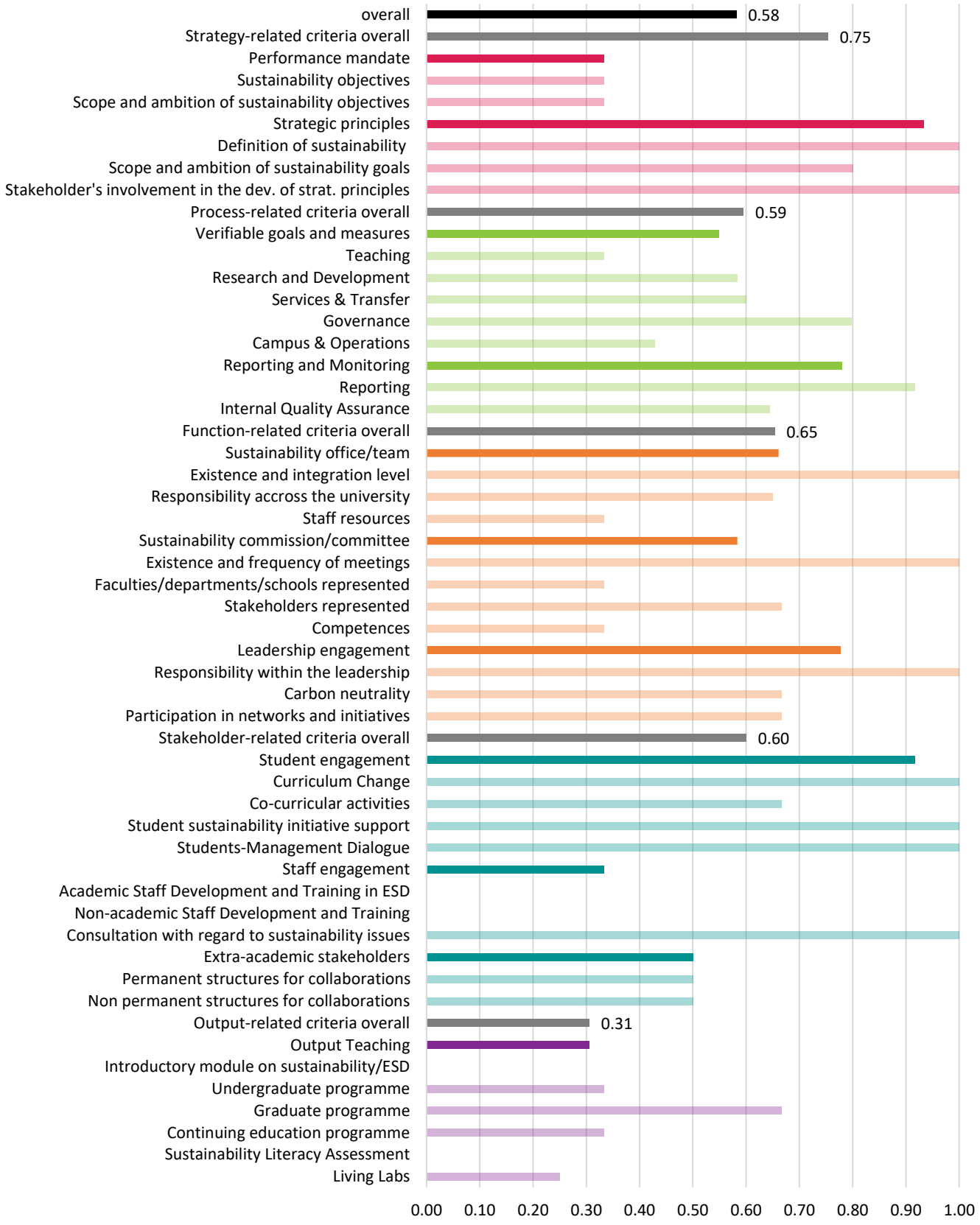
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Detailed Scope 3 Carbon Reduction Plan**: Expanding Scope 3 tracking would complete UNIL's carbon neutrality efforts.
- **Comprehensive ESD Across Programs**: A uniform ESD foundation across departments could ensure all students have baseline sustainability literacy.

Notable transfer initiative: Donut of Greater Geneva

The "Donut of Greater Geneva" is an initiative led by UNIL that applies the "doughnut economics" framework by Kate Raworth to the Greater Geneva area. This concept aims to balance ecological sustainability with social well-being, providing a comprehensive tool for guiding policy and measuring progress towards a sustainable future. The project, known as "PACTE Grand Genève," aims to develop a coordinated action plan for ecological transition, covering both social and ecological dimensions on local and global scales. It uses 14 specific indicators to track progress towards 2050 goals, such as achieving carbon neutrality, improving air quality, and reducing resource consumption. By integrating local and global perspectives, the initiative provides a "barometer" to evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability policies in the Greater Geneva region and to ensure an equitable approach to meeting both environmental and social needs.

Universität Luzern (UNILU)



Notable developments since 2021

UNILU has made great strides since 2021. In 2023, UNILU published its first-ever sustainability strategy, which should provide an important impetus for the next few years in further developing this approach. In terms of institutional architecture, UNILU made a major step forward when, in 2022, it set up an appropriate structure to deal with sustainability issues, with the creation in quick succession of a **sustainability office** and a **sustainability commission**. These structures report to the office of the **vice rector for university development**, ensuring coherence with quality assurance and global strategy development. This has made it possible to start **monitoring** a number of aspects of the university's carbon footprint on campus, from CO2 analysis of flight data from business and study trips to reporting on the objectives and measures of the **Lucerne Cantonal Climate and Energy Plan 22-26**. Many measures are still in the planning stage or are already planned but not yet implemented, indicating that even more progress is expected to take place soon at UNILU.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UNILU's 2023-2026 strategic plan integrates sustainability across all areas, with clear goals for reducing environmental impact, promoting sustainable research, and advancing interdisciplinary projects. Collaboration with the Canton of Lucerne and alignment with federal climate goals provide strong external support.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: UNILU has integrated Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into various programs, offering interdisciplinary courses that emphasize sustainability. Planned incentives to further embed ESD across all departments could enhance uniformity.
- **Research and Development**: The university supports sustainability-oriented research, with planned interdisciplinary projects, and has begun inventorying sustainability-related research to improve coordination.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: Overseen by the **Vice Rectorate for University Development**, UNILU's Sustainability Commission and Office manage sustainability initiatives. The university has committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, focusing on energy conservation, waste reduction, and monitoring emissions, though further expansion on Scope 3 emissions would strengthen this commitment.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: The 2030 target involves monitoring CO_2 emissions, especially from travel. Additional measures for a broader Scope 3 emissions framework are under consideration, which would support a more comprehensive climate commitment.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Initiatives like **VENALU**, **U-Change**, and sustainability-related events encourage student engagement. Regular student-management dialogue promotes an inclusive approach, allowing students to contribute to sustainability policies.
- **Community Engagement**: Through collaborations with the **Uri Institute Cultures of the Alps** and other local partners, UNILU advances community-focused sustainability projects. Permanent structures, such as a campus sustainability center, are in early planning stages.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability courses with ECTS credits are available, though a standardized sustainability literacy assessment would improve consistent evaluation of student competencies.
- **Transfer Projects**: Key projects, such as the **Climate Politics, Economics, and Law program** and collaborations addressing sexual harassment in universities, highlight UNILU's active role in socio-environmental sustainability.

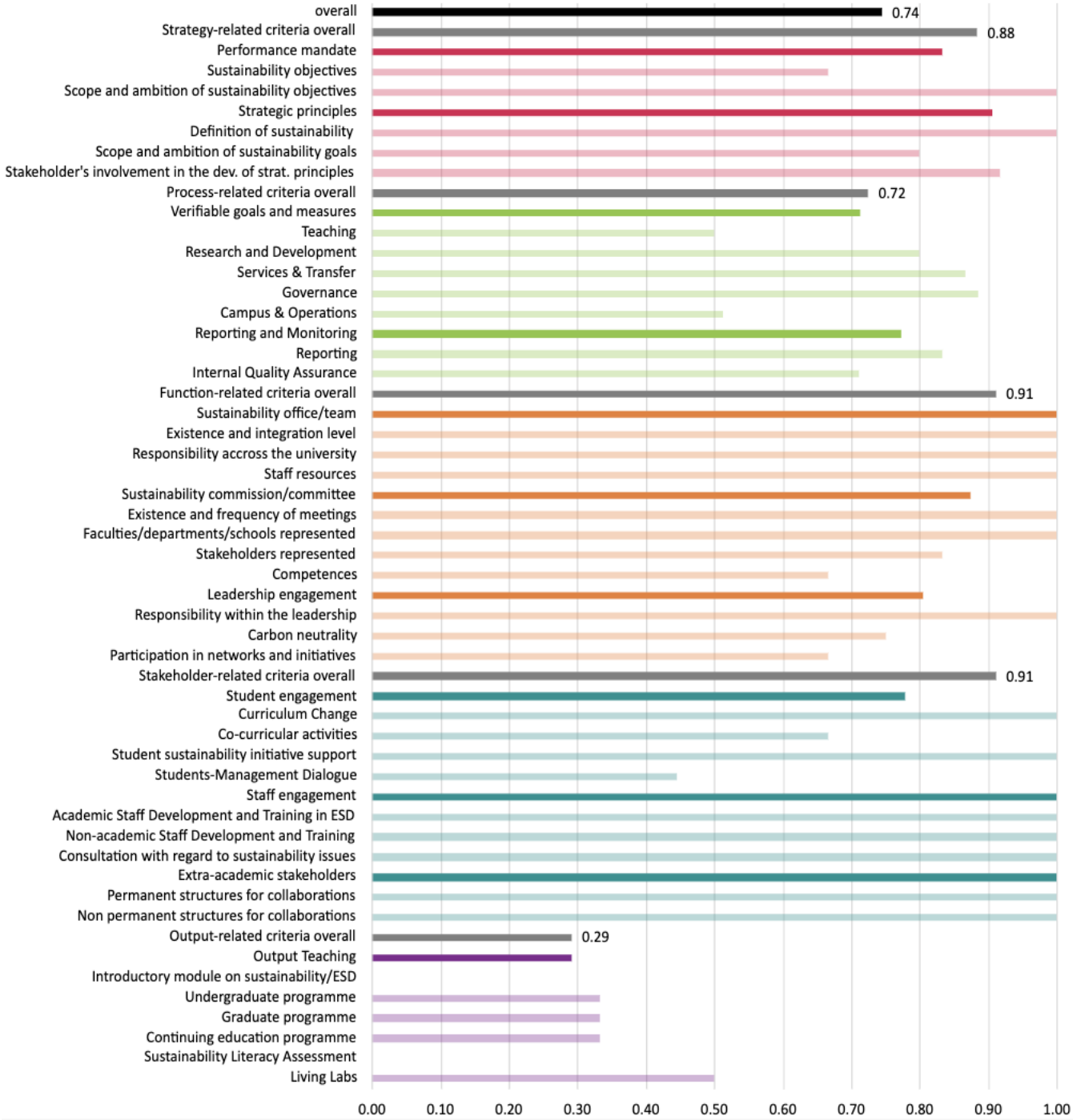
Strengths

- **Robust Governance and ESD Integration**: The Sustainability Office and Commission provide strong support, and the integration of ESD courses supports foundational sustainability education.
- **Community and Research Engagement**: Initiatives with the Uri Institute and sustainability research incentives foster community impact and academic collaboration.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Expanded Scope 3 Carbon Reduction Goals**: A more detailed plan for Scope 3 emissions would reinforce the 2030 carbon neutrality goal.
- **Staff development and training**: Development and training in sustainability and ESD is currently lacking for both academic and non-academic staff. Planning and implementing such training programs would be beneficial, as it is crucial to equip all university members with the skills and knowledge needed to advance sustainability initiatives effectively.
- **Sustainability commission**: Strengthen the sustainability commission to ensure it includes representation from all stakeholders across the entire institution, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to sustainability initiatives.

Université de Neuchâtel (UNINE)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Neuchâtel (UNINE) has made significant strides in sustainability. In 2022, the Rectorate has adopted a ***climate plan*** that serves as a vision and sets the university's climate objectives. On the teaching front, UNINE has been active in **curriculum development**. Pursuing its commitment to interdisciplinarity to reach out to all its students, UNINE has opened for the first time in spring 2024 the interfaculty master's course ***"Climate Change and Societies"***, which aims to address the multiple issues related to climate change in a multidisciplinary approach and is open to all master's students. It also offers an entire ***interdisciplinary Bachelor in Natural Systems***, and a ***Master in Biodiversity Conservation***, and recently made it possible to choose the ***orientation 'sustainable development'*** when studying a Bachelor in economics. In September 2021, the university launched the ***Sustainability Science Dialogue - Sustainable mitigation and adaptation to climate change***, a platform aimed at addressing climate change by facilitating exchange between researchers and fostering collaborative efforts across different faculties.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UniNE's **Plan d'intentions 2023-2026** positions sustainability as a core value, promoting ecological and societal responsibility across teaching, research, and campus operations. Key goals include reducing environmental impact, supporting sustainable research, and enhancing interdisciplinary work. Active collaboration from students, academic staff, and external stakeholders aids in the strategic direction, though more specific measures in some areas could strengthen the implementation.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively promoted, with support measures for faculty integrating sustainability into their curricula. Various interdisciplinary courses and resources are available to all students, including recent additions on biodiversity and sustainability integration across disciplines. However, ESD uniformity across all departments is still developing.
- **Research and Development**: UniNE supports sustainability-oriented research with incentives and an annual prize for excellence in sustainability research. A complete research inventory on sustainability topics is maintained, ensuring visibility and alignment with institutional goals.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: UniNE's **UniD Coordination** and **Sustainability Commission** oversee sustainability measures. The university's 2045 carbon neutrality target includes interim emissions reduction milestones, focusing on energy, mobility, and waste. However, enhanced measures for Scope 3 emissions would strengthen this commitment.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: UniNE has set a long-term target of carbon neutrality by 2045, with specific reduction steps like 35% GHG reduction by 2030. Annual CO_2 inventories help track emissions, though a broader Scope 3 reduction framework remains a future goal.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: UniNE promotes student-led initiatives, such as **Sustainability Week** and involvement in the Sustainability Commission. Structured dialogues with management occur, fostering an inclusive approach to sustainability policies.
- **Community Engagement**: Through the **Ecoparc Foundation** and local sustainability networks, UniNE engages in community outreach and regional projects. Permanent collaborative structures, however, are limited, suggesting potential for expanded local partnerships.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability modules with ECTS credits and several interdisciplinary programs support sustainability literacy. However, without a standardized literacy assessment, it remains challenging to track students' competencies consistently.
- **Transfer Projects**: Key projects, such as sustainable urban design initiatives with **Ecoparc** and biodiversity conservation efforts, exemplify UniNE's applied sustainability work. Additional large-scale ecological initiatives could broaden the environmental impact.

Strengths

- **Comprehensive Governance and Strong Research Support**: The Sustainability Office and strategic plans ensure oversight, while dedicated sustainability incentives enhance research engagement.
- **Active Student and Community Engagement**: Regular student-management dialogues and regional collaborations, such as with the Ecoparc Foundation, support UniNE's societal sustainability role.

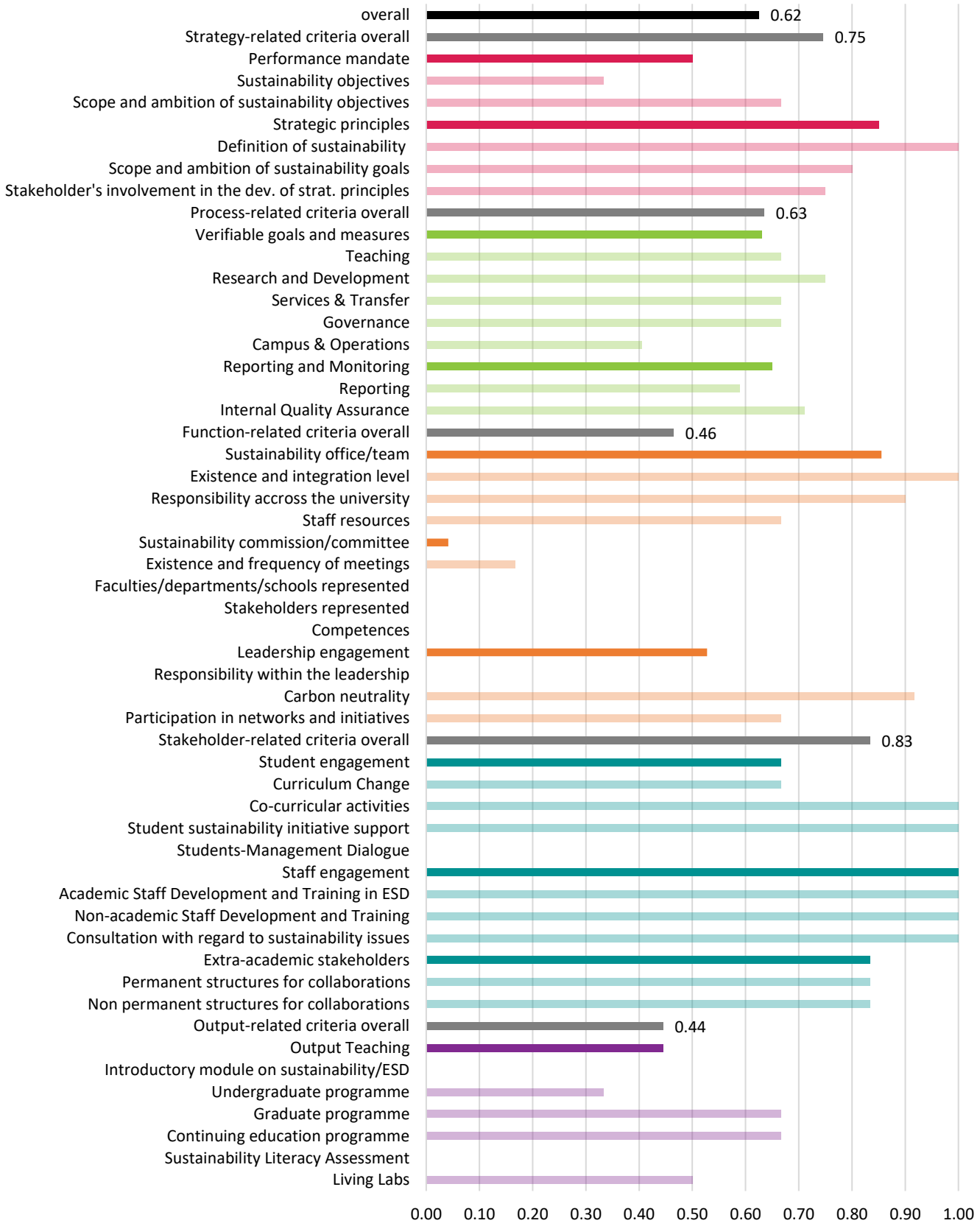
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Detailed Carbon Reduction Goals**: A refined strategy for Scope 3 emissions reduction would reinforce UniNE's climate commitment.
- **Consistent ESD Foundation**: Introducing a mandatory sustainability module across all programs would establish a foundational literacy.

Notable transfer initiative: EcoParc

The EcoParc initiative is focused on transforming a section of the city into a sustainable urban area, integrating research and community engagement. It aims to demonstrate sustainable urban planning, including energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and sustainable mobility. The project emphasizes collaboration between academics, local authorities, and private companies, and serves as a living laboratory for sustainable development practices. EcoParc also supports education and awareness initiatives to promote sustainability concepts within the community and university.

Universität St. Gallen (HSG)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of St. Gallen (HSG) has made good progress in implementing strategic and operational measures for sustainability, setting a strong strategic foundation. It launched the ***Certificate in Managing Climate Solutions*** (MaCS) as part of its commitment to sustainability education. With this initiative students can complement their core Master's program at HSG with dedicated courses enabling them to understand the magnitude of the challenge, to explore the range of possible solutions, to craft behaviourally informed strategies, and to shape a positive future in a carbon-constrained world. In addition, the university initiated the ***Certificate in Integrative Sustainability Management (SuM)*** programme for bachelor's students, starting in 2024, which offers a certificate by providing tools and practical experience in tackling sustainability challenges.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: HSG's **Strategic Plan 2025** and **Vision 2030+** prioritize environmental and societal sustainability. Goals include fostering sustainable leadership, reaching net zero by 2030, and enhancing sustainability in teaching, research, and operations. HSG actively collaborates with university members and external stakeholders to shape its sustainability strategy.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: HSG integrates Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into various programs, with incentives for faculty through initiatives like **Teach4Impact** and interdisciplinary centers. HSG's sustainability programs include the undergraduate **SuM-HSG Certificate in Integrative Sustainability Management** and the **Master's Certificate in Managing Climate Solutions (MaCS)**.
- **Research and Development**: The university supports sustainability-focused research through the **Impact Scholar Community** and targeted programs. Inventory and tracking of sustainability research are standardized, ensuring visibility and alignment with the SDGs.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: HSG's **Responsibility & Sustainability (R&S) Team** manages and reports on sustainability initiatives. The university's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 is integrated in operational strategies, including energy reduction and renewable energy generation on campus, as well as water conservation efforts as a **Blue Community**.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: HSG targets net zero emissions by 2030, with ongoing emission reduction strategies and renewable energy projects on campus, such as the solar panel installation crowdfunded by students.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: HSG promotes sustainability through student associations, such as **ECOnnect** and the **NextGen Mentoring Programme**. Regular forums for student-management dialogue could enhance structured student influence on sustainability policies.
- **Community Engagement**: HSG collaborates with regional partners through the **Circular Lab** and **Blue Community Cluster Eastern Switzerland**, focusing on circular economy and water sustainability. However, expanding permanent engagement structures could amplify community impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability is well-integrated, though no standardized literacy assessment exists for sustainability skills. HSG's **"Be the Change" program**, where students and lecturers swap roles so students lead through a course on sustainability in consulting, exemplifies a blended approach to curricular and co-curricular learning.

Strengths

- **Sustainability Unit/Team**: The sustainability office at HSG provides dedicated resources and coordination for sustainability initiatives.
- **Dynamic Research and Community Engagement**: Programs like **Tech4Impact** and **Circular Lab** demonstrate HSG's focus on interdisciplinary research and regional impact.

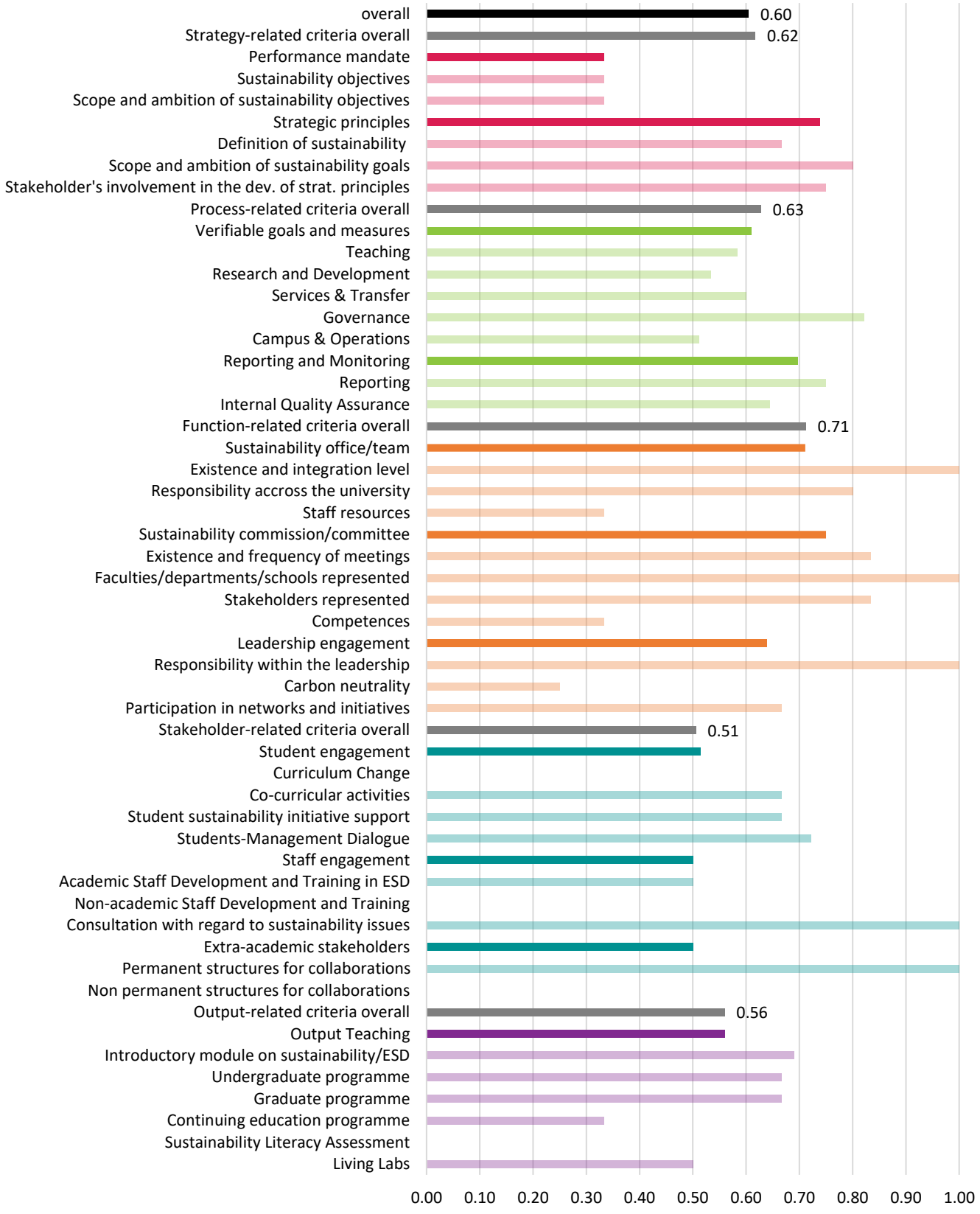
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Standardized Sustainability Literacy Assessment**: Implementing literacy assessments would consistently track student competencies.
- **ESD across Institutes and Departments**: A commission-type structure could help to truly involve all institutes and departments in sustainability efforts, especially in teaching and curriculum change.
- **Expanded Carbon Reduction and Permanent Partnerships**: Further details in emission reduction measures and formalized community partnerships would strengthen HSG's sustainability framework.

Notable transfer initiative: Circular Lab

The Circular Lab at HSG is a collaborative initiative to promote the circular economy in the Lake Constance region. Launched in June 2023, it is supported by €4 million in funding from the EU Interreg Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein program, participating universities, and over 30 business partners. The lab focuses on circular solutions in sectors like textiles and agriculture, optimizing business models, and promoting sustainable ecosystems. It actively transfers knowledge by collaborating with companies to help them implement circular practices and organizing events such as workshops and conferences. The aim is to align with the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan and contribute to regional sustainability efforts.

Università della Svizzera italiana (USI)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Italian Switzerland (USI) has made notable progress in sustainability, both institutionally and through new initiatives. In 2024, USI introduced a **Pro-rectorate for sustainable transformation**, aligning with the new 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. Another key achievement is the ***Casa della Sostenibilità*** *(House of Sustainability)*, established in partnership with the municipality of Airolo. This center aims to foster education and reflection on sustainable development, particularly in the Alpine region. It opened in 2024, positioning itself as a hub for sustainability-related academic and community activities, with support from a multidisciplinary team across all USI faculties.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: USI's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan emphasizes sustainability in teaching, research, and operations, while aiming to change mindsets across all decision-making. In 2024, USI introduced a **Pro-rectorate for sustainable transformation**, aligning with the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, which prioritizes the **"Casa della Sostenibilità"** as a new sustainability hub in Airolo.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: USI supports ESD in course offerings and is developing incentives to increase sustainability integration in teaching from 2025. The **"Alpine Seminar"** in the Casa della Sostenibilità provides an interdisciplinary sustainability experience, planned for mandatory participation by several faculties starting in 2024.
- **Research and Development**: USI encourages interdisciplinary research through dedicated funding and awards for sustainability research. Inventorying and tagging of sustainability-related projects will be standardized in the coming years, enhancing impact visibility.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: Since 2024, USI's Sustainability Team operates under the new Pro-rectorate, reporting to senior management. The university monitors Scope 1 and 2 emissions, with a climate neutrality target under consideration for upcoming strategy cycles.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: USI's carbon monitoring is underway, though specific reduction targets are not yet set. Enhanced focus on Scope 3 emissions and reduction plans would strengthen the climate commitment.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: USI engages students in sustainability through the **SEEDS association** (Students Engaged in Environment, Development, and Sustainability) and **Casa della Sostenibilità** activities. Direct dialogue with management occurs each semester, promoting a responsive approach to student sustainability concerns.
- **Community Engagement**: The **Casa della Sostenibilità** facilitates collaboration between students, local communities, and external organizations, while **L'ideatorio** promotes science and sustainability awareness among the public. Non-permanent community structures may limit sustained impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability-focused modules, including the Alpine Seminar, equip students with sustainability skills, although a standardized literacy assessment is absent. Expansion to include all students could ensure broader literacy.

Strengths

- **Strong Governance and Research Incentives**: The newly established **Pro-rectorate and Casa della Sostenibilità** considerably strengthen USI's structural commitment to sustainability.
- **Interdisciplinary and Community-Oriented Initiatives**: Student and community engagement through **SEEDS, L'ideatorio**, and **Casa della Sostenibilità** demonstrates USI's collaborative sustainability model.

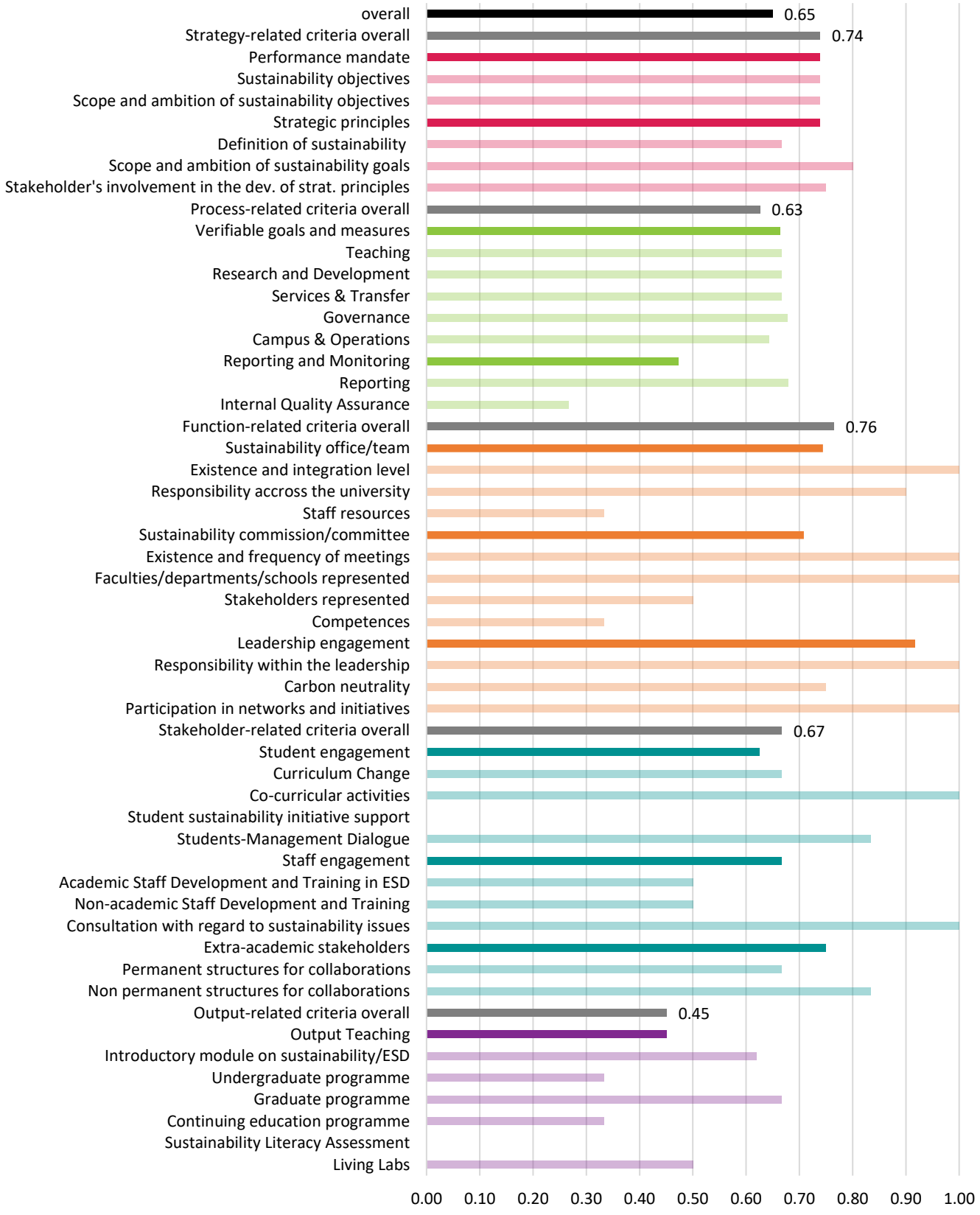
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Formalized Carbon Neutrality Goals**: Setting specific reduction targets and including Scope 3 emissions would improve USI's carbon strategy.
- **Expanded ESD Integration**: Offering foundational ESD courses across all programs would enhance sustainability literacy.

Notable transfer initiative: Center for Climate Finance and Sustainability

The Center for Climate Finance and Sustainability at USI is dedicated to research and education on how financial systems and tools can support the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy. The center works to bridge the gap between financial expertise and sustainability challenges, addressing issues such as green investment, sustainable finance strategies, and the role of regulation in promoting environmental goals. It serves as a hub for knowledge exchange between academia, financial professionals, and policy makers, supporting the transformation of financial markets towards greater sustainability.

Universität Zürich (UZH)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Zurich (UZH) has continued to advance the implementation of its 2019 **Sustainability Policy**, following the 2020 **implementation strategy** looking ahead to 2030. This is supported by a **Sustainability Hub** that coordinates activities and promotes collaboration across the university as well as with other institutions with the **Zurich Knowledge Center for Sustainable Development (ZKSD)** and the **Right Livelihood Center**. Notable progress has also been made in reducing carbon emissions from air travel, including efforts to promote alternatives such as virtual meetings and incentivize train travel for shorter distances. On the teaching front, UZH has been active at integrating sustainability into its curriculum, offering courses through its **School for Transdisciplinary Studies** to ensure students across disciplines engage with sustainability concepts. Another significant initiative is the twice-yearly study week **"Nachhaltige Entwicklung und Transformation"**. It also developed sustainability-related content through its "**Green VVZ**," which highlights courses with a focus on sustainability. In 2021, together with ZHAW, PHZH and ZHdK, UZH founded the **Zurich Knowledge Center for Sustainable Development** (ZKSD), a project platform that aims to bring together research and teaching from various disciplines and universities and make them actionable for the sustainable development goals. Although this platform holds a lot of promise, it seems that its potential has yet to be fully exploited.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: UZH's strategy emphasizes ecological, social, and economic sustainability through its **Sustainability Policy and Implementation Strategy 2030**, covering teaching, research, and operations. All faculties, departments, and services integrate these goals, supported by active collaboration across the university community, although broader stakeholder engagement could enhance these efforts.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: UZH incorporates Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with an introductory sustainability module that awards ECTS credits. Although interdisciplinary centers promote sustainability, there's an opportunity to expand ESD courses consistently across programs to ensure foundational exposure.
- **Research and Development**: The university supports sustainability research through incentives and interdisciplinary projects, particularly via initiatives like the **Global Change and Biodiversity Priority Program**. An inventory of sustainability-focused research is planned to streamline reporting and impact tracking.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: UZH's **Sustainability Team** manages goals across all operations, with direct reporting to the Vice-President. The university aims for climate neutrality by 2030, with a progressive approach including 50% emissions reduction and offsets for remaining emissions.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: UZH's carbon neutrality target covers comprehensive areas, including energy, travel, food, and waste. Starting in 2024, a two-year **Strategic Climate Neutrality Project** will further intensify UZH's climate efforts.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Sustainability-focused initiatives, like **Sustainability Week Zurich** and **VSUZH** dialogues, encourage active student involvement. Students are also represented in the Sustainability Commission.
- **Community Engagement**: UZH collaborates with Zurich's Climate Forum and is part of the **Klimaplattform der Wirtschaft Zurich**. While impactful, the development of long-term structures or permanent centers could strengthen sustained community impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: UZH offers various ESD and sustainability-focused courses through initiatives such as the School for Transdisciplinary Studies, where sustainability is taught among other subjects, or the study week "Nachhaltige Entwicklung und Transformation".

Strengths

- **Comprehensive Governance and Climate Policy**: UZH's Sustainability Policy and commitment to climate neutrality by 2030 demonstrate strong strategic alignment.
- **Engagement in Research and Student Initiatives**: Active student engagement, interdisciplinary research centers, and clear sustainability incentives strengthen UZH's sustainability framework.
- **Verifiable Goals and Measures**: UZH shows consistent performance in all areas.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

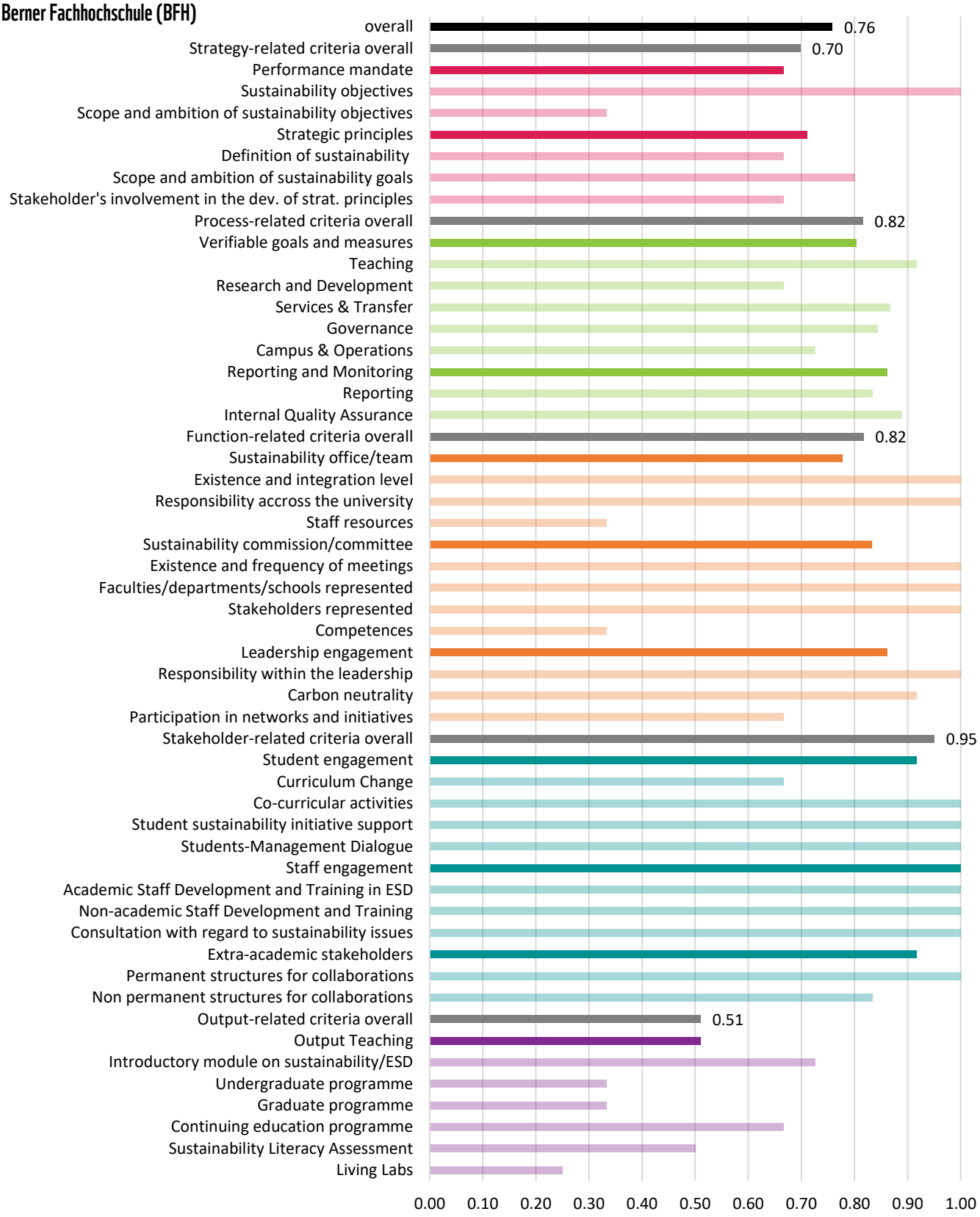
- **Expanded Carbon Reduction Pathways**: Detailed reduction measures for Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions would reinforce UZH's climate goals.
- **Consistent ESD Integration**: Mandatory ESD across all programs could ensure that all students gain foundational sustainability knowledge.
- **Permanent Community Partnerships**: Developing structured, ongoing partnerships with local stakeholders would enhance UZH's community sustainability impact.

Notable transfer initiative: Right Livelihood Center

Connected to the Sustainability Hub, this center focuses on promoting the "Right Livelihood" ethos, which aims to foster sustainable living practices through education, research, and collaborations with external partners. It acts as a platform for transferring sustainability knowledge to a broader audience, including policymakers and the public.

6.2 Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS)

Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)



Notable developments since 2021

The progress made since 2021 confirms that the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) has continued to gradually establish itself as a benchmark among UAS in terms of sustainability in the recent years. BFH is committed to leading by example and is actively involved beyond the institution's borders, collaborating in national networks and supporting student engagement. BFH conducted its first comprehensive **energy and greenhouse gas inventory** in 2021 to track and reduce its consumption and emissions, which provided an important baseline for identifying levers and measures for action. Its **reporting**, based on **GRI principles**, is good quality and allows targets and measures to be consequently tracked. Institutionally, it updated its strategic goals with a strong focus on becoming climate-neutral by 2030, an accelerated target compared to previous plans for 2040. The recently adopted **Climate Roadmap 2030** plans a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030 through 30 concrete measures like for instance the "**Long Distance and Air Travel Policy**" introduced in 2021 to curb the environmental impact of travel. BFH also enhanced sustainability in teaching and research. In 2022 an **interdisciplinary master's programme in Circular Innovation and Sustainability** was introduced, and this year two new degree programmes were launched: the **Bachelor in Environment and Resource Management** and the **interdisciplinary MAS in Sustainable Transformation** - both focussing on the current big challenges.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Integrated Across Departments**: Sustainability is foundational at BFH, with all 8 departments and vice-rectorates for teaching and research adopting sustainability strategies, making it a cross-cutting focus. BFH's commitment to climate neutrality by 2030 (60% reduction in emissions, 40% offsets) and achieving Net Zero by 2040 (including scope 3 emissions) further reflects this integration. However, further external stakeholder engagement could enhance implementation.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively promoted across BFH, supported by dedicated workshops and funding for ESD-related teaching projects. The **BFH Diagonal** initiative further strengthens interdisciplinary collaboration by bringing together students, faculty, and external partners to tackle sustainability challenges. Although efforts are underway to embed sustainability in core curricula, there's an opportunity to create a more uniform approach across departments.
- **Research and Development**: Sustainability research is robust and supported by ESD workshops and a project funding instrument. BFH's emphasis on biodiversity as a Nature Positive University is promising, though a full biodiversity impact assessment and specific goals are pending.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: BFH's Sustainability Office oversees strategic sustainability goals, with direct reporting to management. The ambitious 2030 carbon neutrality target includes emission reductions and offsets, yet specific reduction steps, especially for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, could be expanded to strengthen impact.
- **Climate Policy**: BFH's clear roadmap—60% emission reduction by 2030, complete Net Zero by 2040—indicates an ambitious climate policy, covering even indirect scope 3 emissions like supply chains and travel.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Initiatives such as **Students4Sustainability** encourage student-led projects and dialogues with management. Formalizing these dialogues could allow students to shape BFH's sustainability strategy further.
- **Community Engagement**: BFH partners in regional projects, like **Allianz Kreislaufwirtschaft** and **BioGipfel**, supporting circular economy and sustainable agriculture. Developing more long-term partnerships with external stakeholders would amplify regional impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability courses and interdisciplinary projects, particularly through **BFH Diagonal**, equip students with sustainability competencies. However, without a standardized sustainability literacy assessment, BFH cannot consistently track students' sustainability understanding across programs.

- **Transfer Projects**: BFH's focus on impactful ecological and socio-economic initiatives, including **Swircular** for sustainable construction and **Klimastar** for sustainable agriculture, emphasizes its applied sustainability role. Expanding ecological projects would further enhance BFH's environmental impact.

Strengths

- **Sustainability Integrated Across Departments**: Sustainability is deeply integrated into the university's foundational principles. All 8 departments and the vice-rectorates for teaching and research have adopted sustainability strategies, ensuring it is treated as a cross-cutting issue.
- **Ambitious Climate Policy**: BFH has committed to achieving climate neutrality by 2030 (60% reduction in emissions, 40% compensation) and Net Zero by 2040, including scope 3 emissions (which includes indirect emissions from activities like supply chains and travel).
- **Support for Lecturers to Integrate SD and ESD**: BFH actively supports educators in integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their courses through specific ESD workshops and a funding instrument designed for sustainability-related teaching projects.

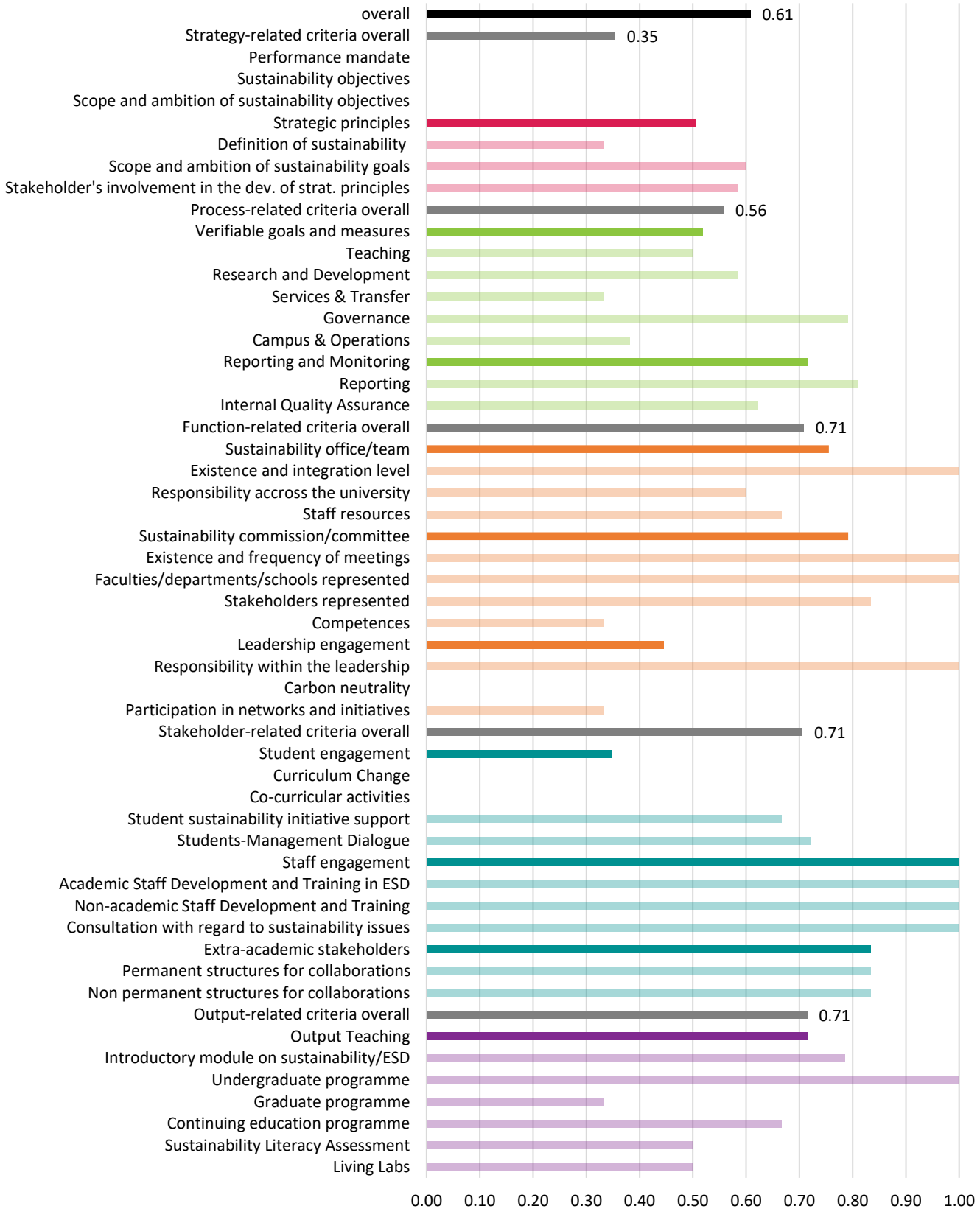
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Embedding of Sustainability in Core Curricula**: While BFH has made efforts to integrate sustainability into education, its application across departments is uneven. More work can be done to ensure sustainability is consistently integrated in core curricula across all departments to promote a more uniform approach.
- **Biodiversity Impact Goals**: Completing a biodiversity assessment and setting clear conservation targets would reinforce BFH's Nature Positive University commitment.
- **Curriculum Change**: Involving students in curriculum change could help ensure their voices are heard in integrating sustainability into their education.

Notable transfer initiative: Berner Bio Offensive 2025 (BBO25)

The Berner Bio Offensive 2025 (BBO25) is a strategic initiative aimed at promoting a sustainable and organic agricultural and food system in the Canton of Bern. Its main goal is to strengthen collaboration between the various actors in the value chain, from farming to processing, logistics, and trade, to foster a more organic and sustainable approach to agriculture. The initiative is part of the Bernese government's "Engagement 2030" guidelines and seeks to increase the visibility and appreciation of Bernese organic products, ultimately contributing to the growth of the bio-market in the region. The BFH, particularly its School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL), plays a significant role in this initiative. The HAFL contributes through research, education, and networking, particularly in the area of bio-food production and sustainability. The project also emphasizes bio-education in schools and community food services, promoting awareness and consumption of organic products. The collaboration between BFH and INFORAMA ensures that the initiative integrates innovation and knowledge sharing across the agricultural sector and beyond.

Fachhochschule Graubünden (FHGR)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons (FHGR) has continued to prioritize sustainability as a key institutional focus. One notable effort is its ongoing commitment to the **UN Principles for Responsible Management Education** (PRME), a global initiative designed to promote responsible management education. FHGR was the first Swiss public university to join this initiative in 2009, and it remains a member of the PRME Champions Group. This commitment integrates the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its curricula, teaching students how to apply sustainability principles in their future professional roles. The university has also emphasized sustainability through its research projects, many of which focus on Alpine region development, where sustainable tourism and construction practices are explored. FHGR's **Service Innovation Lab** (SIL) and its emphasis on applied future technologies contribute to innovative solutions for sustainability challenges in areas like data analysis, artificial intelligence, and smart sensors.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: FHGR's strategic framework includes sustainability across education, research, and operations. However, no formal sustainability goals are tied to the canton's mandate, and FHGR's initiatives are self-directed, with funding from its general budget, leaving room for measurable sustainability targets.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is integrated in FHGR's curricula, and staff have access to ESD support. While introductory ESD modules are available, expanding ESD further to cover a broader curriculum base would ensure consistent exposure to sustainability concepts across programs.
- **Research and Development**: FHGR supports applied sustainability research, notably in sustainable tourism and alpine development. Further dedicated incentives and structured funding for interdisciplinary sustainability research would support broader impact and cross-disciplinary efforts.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: FHGR's sustainability office manages sustainability projects, offering strong governance support.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: While initial steps like carbon tracking and some energy efficiency measures are in place, FHGR could enhance its commitment by setting a clear carbon neutrality target and developing specific reduction pathways.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Student involvement is fostered through regular dialogues with management and initiatives like **U-Change**. Formalized sustainability channels would provide students with a more structured role in influencing sustainability strategies.
- **Community Engagement**: FHGR collaborates with regional partners on projects such as **Living Labs** in alpine tourism, but establishing more permanent collaborative structures with local stakeholders would deepen its societal impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability modules earn ECTS credits and are available as electives, but no standardized sustainability literacy assessments are conducted. This limits the evaluation of students' competencies in sustainability upon graduation.

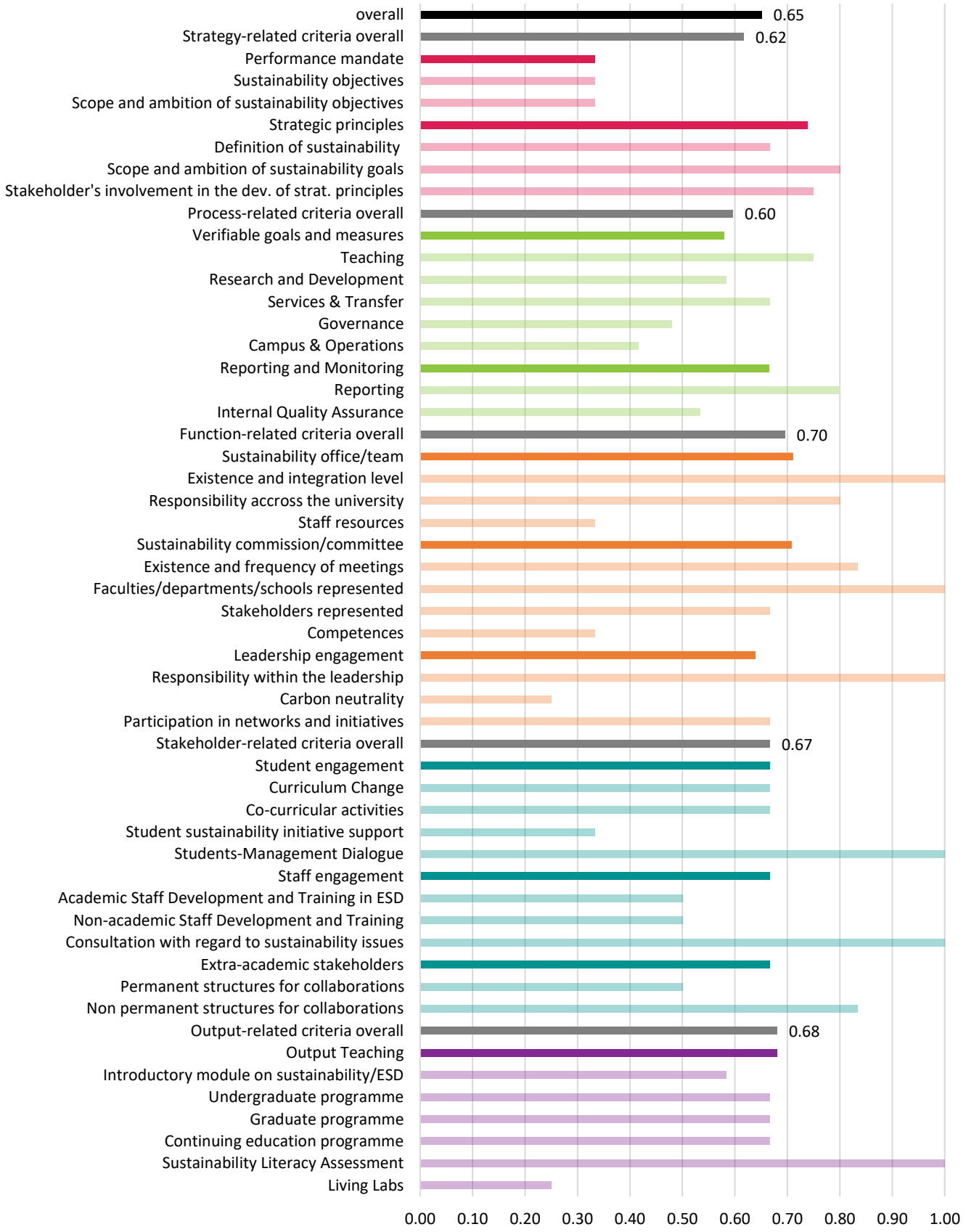
Strengths

- **Established Governance and Community Engagement**: The sustainability office and commission as well as regular student dialogues provide strong support for institutional and student engagement.
- **Applied Transfer Projects**: FHGR's focus on alpine and regional sustainability projects, such as **Living Labs**, showcases its commitment to local impact.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Performance Mandate**: Since no formal sustainability goals are tied to the canton's mandate, the FHGR's initiatives are self-directed, with funding from its general budget, which is not optimal and would require more specific support from the cantonal authorities.
- **Clear Carbon Neutrality Commitment**: Setting a carbon neutrality target with defined reduction measures would enhance FHGR's environmental goals.

Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, FHNW has made significant progress in its sustainability efforts across various domains. One major institutional change was the adoption in December 2023 of the ***FHNW 2035 strategic priorities*** **for sustainability**, which set clear goals and guidelines for social, ecological, and economic sustainability. These priorities were supported by a multi-year action plan to monitor progress and address specific targets. Notably, FHNW emphasized sustainability in its educational approach, launching a cross-school teaching module, **"The SDGs and Switzerland,"** starting in 2023, aimed at equipping students with practical skills to tackle sustainability challenges. Additionally, the **Swiss Sustainability Challenge**, organized annually, fosters innovative student-led projects focused on ecological and social sustainability.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: FHNW's strategy, integrated in the **FHNW 2035 Strategy**, incorporates ecological, social, and economic sustainability as part of its mission. Key areas include carbon neutrality, sustainable mobility, and resource-efficient construction standards. Although the objectives are comprehensive, external stakeholder engagement could be expanded to strengthen community involvement.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is integrated in curricula, with mandatory sustainability skill profiles for academic staff and students, promoting comprehensive sustainability understanding. FHNW offers various ESD courses, but introductory ESD modules are not uniformly mandatory for all students.
- **Research and Development**: FHNW encourages interdisciplinary research, particularly through climate-related and applied social projects. While there is an inventory of projects, a consolidated strategy for ESD-specific research incentives could support more comprehensive research.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Sustainability Office** and **Sustainability Commission** coordinate initiatives and report directly to the management, showing a strong governance framework. While there is a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2035, FHNW relies partly on offsets rather than full-scale emission reductions, an area needing further strategic focus.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: FHNW aims to reduce its carbon footprint with long-term targets, yet specific reduction pathways need additional clarity, especially concerning direct carbon emissions from operations.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: FHNW facilitates sustainability-focused student initiatives, including **Sustainability Challenge** and **Sustainability Week**. Student representation is strong within sustainability commissions, yet creating formalized dialogue channels could enhance student influence on sustainability policies.
- **Community Engagement**: The institution collaborates with local communities, particularly through partnerships with cantonal networks, yet permanent structures for continuous community engagement would broaden the scope of its regional impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: FHNW offers several sustainability modules and assigns ECTS credits for introductory courses; however, making such courses mandatory would ensure a more consistent sustainability foundation across programs.

Strengths

- **Established Governance Structure**: The **Sustainability Office** and Commission provide a strong framework for comprehensive sustainability management across departments.
- **Robust Student and Community Engagement**: Initiatives like **Sustainability Week** and strategic partnerships with local networks foster significant student and regional involvement.

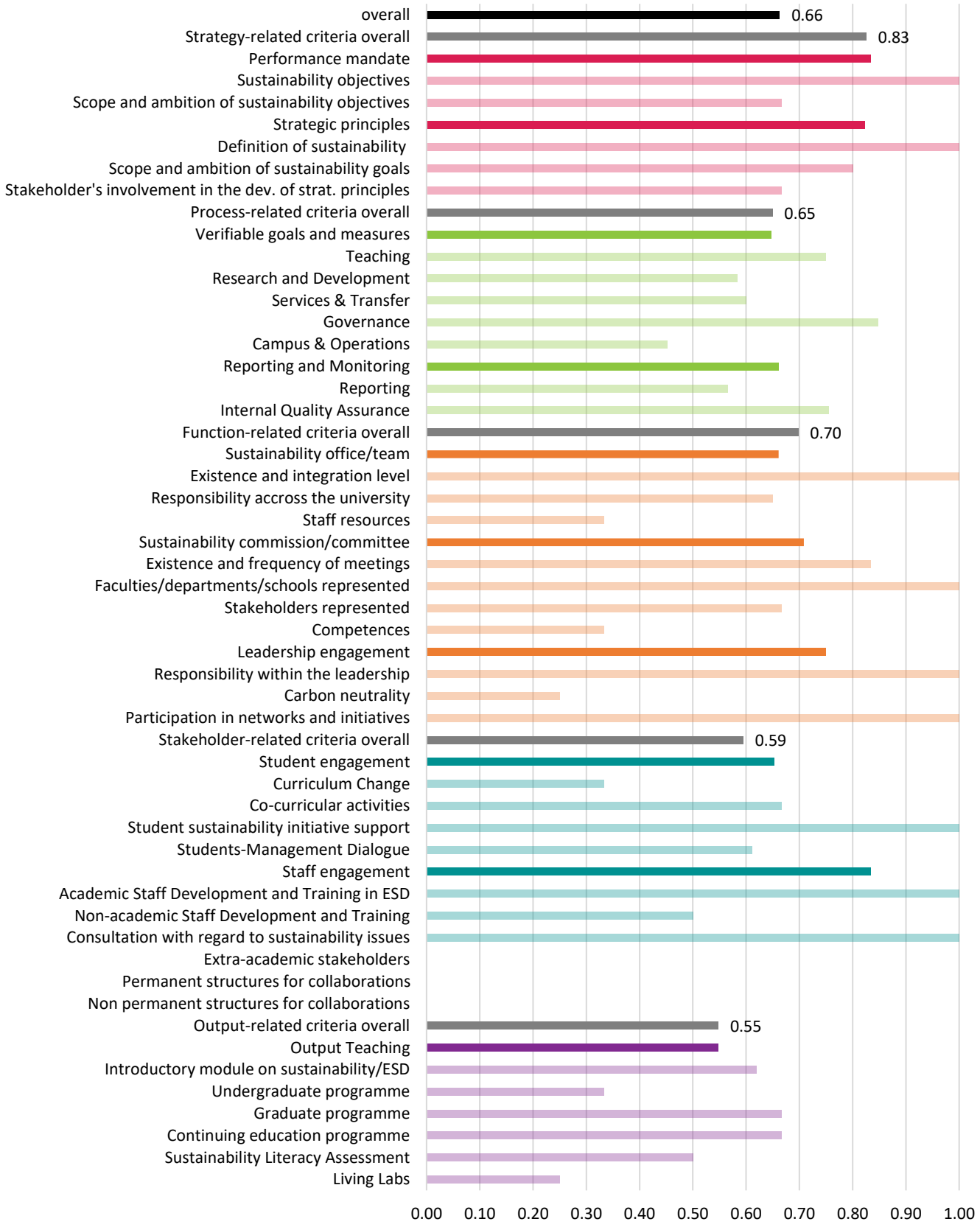
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Enhanced Carbon Reduction Measures**: Clearer strategies for reducing carbon emissions, rather than relying on offsets, would strengthen the carbon neutrality plan.
- **Living Labs**: Involving students in living labs could enhance their engagement with real-world sustainability challenges and practical learning experiences.

Notable transfer initiative: Agrocomposit project

The Agrocomposit project focuses on recycling biogenic residues into organic fertilizers and soil conditioners by adding biochar, thereby supporting the circular economy. FHNW conducts life cycle assessments and environmental analyses, working with agriculture and biogenic residue treatment partners to promote sustainable agricultural practices and effective knowledge transfer

Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale (HES-SO)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (Haute École Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale – HES-SO) made significant progress in sustainability at both the rectorate and school levels. The rectorate focused on strengthening sustainability as a cross-cutting theme through its departments, particularly in teaching, research, campus and social responsibility. The **Vice-Rectorate of Quality and Social Responsibility** played a key role in aligning sustainability efforts across all departments. At the strategic level, sustainability was integrated into the **Plan of Intent for 2025–2028**, reflecting the institution's long-term commitment and the university launched a **Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024**, which set new ambitions and defined a framework to implement sustainability across its institutions, focusing on both environmental and social dimensions. A follow up Sustainability Strategy for the 2025-2028 period is currently being finalized. One notable institutional development is the establishment of a **Platform for Sustainability** was launched in 2021, building relations with HES-SO's 28 schools, spreading across various disciplines such as Engineering and Architecture, Business, Management and Services, Health, Design and Visual Arts, Music and Performing Arts and Social Work. This Platform serves as a collaborative hub for sharing resources, best practices, and projects, while supporting the integration of sustainability into teaching, research and student initiatives. Representatives of the schools, the **sustainability facilitators**, act as liaisons between their school and the sustainability platform of the Rectorate, promoting collaboration, co-construction, and the exchange of best practices, as well as discussions on relevant issues and projects. On the teaching front, the HES-SO has prioritized updating its degree programs to better prepare students to face societal challenges, especially those related to sustainable development, as part of its 32 priority objectives outlined in the development strategy for 2021-2024. In addition to that, it launched in 2021 **"Former pour Transformer"**, a project that aims to integrate sustainability into the curricula by training faculty members to adopt transformative pedagogical approaches, creating a network of educators who can influence institutional practices, study plans and inspire students to engage in sustainability initiatives throughout HES-SO.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: HES-SO's performance mandate (2021-2024) focuses on adapting curricula and research to societal sustainability challenges, particularly through governance, education, research, societal responsibility, and sustainable campus management. The strategy includes future targets (2025-2028) for further measurable outcomes, which will strengthen monitoring efforts.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is actively promoted across academic staff and students, partly through **"Former pour Transformer"**. Dedicated ESD programs and courses are ongoing, but a complete course inventory of ESD offerings is still planned. The **"Guide Integration Durabilité"** provides support to integrate sustainability across curricula, fostering gradual growth in ESD practices.
- **Research and Development**: HES-SO promotes sustainability-related research through various interdisciplinary initiatives, including a recently funded transdisciplinary research program. A comprehensive research inventory is planned to streamline sustainability-focused projects and measure their impact across fields.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Sustainability Office** (team at the Rectorate level and network of schools' sustainability delegates) oversee strategic sustainability goals. While HES-SO has introduced carbon assessments for most schools, a unified carbon-neutrality target is not yet formalized, though future strategies may address this gap.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: Partial assessments and reduction initiatives are in place, especially in energy and emissions management both at rectorate and schools' level, but a cohesive, organization-wide neutrality goal remains under discussion.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: The HES-SO supports student projects through platforms like **U-Change** and organizes an annual **Sustainability Week**. These events encourage student participation and sustainability learning, but there is a need for structured, recurring dialogues between students and management at the level of the schools.
- **Community Engagement**: Although HES-SO engages with local communities through non-permanent collaborations like the **Smart Living Lab** and **Energy Living Lab**, establishing more permanent structures would enhance long-term regional impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: HES-SO offers sustainability modules and ECTS-accredited courses across programs. However, introductory ESD modules are mandatory only for a tiny proportion of first-year students. There is no standardized tool to assess sustainability literacy across students, limiting consistent educational outcomes in sustainability.
- **Living Labs**: The institution is involved in impactful living labs, connecting teaching and research to transfer: The HES-SO Valais is leading the **Sweet Lantern** project, which aims to co-design energy solutions for a low-carbon Switzerland. HES-SO Geneva is leading **CréAgir** ("Inventer la ville de demain") an inter-school collaborative project involving students from the Bachelor's programs at its six schools (HEPIA, HEG, HEAD, HEM, HEdS, HETS).

Strengths

- **Structured Governance and Support**: The combined establishment of the **network of facilitators for sustainability** and the **platform for sustainability** facilitate effective integration of sustainability across the decentralized institution.
- **Student and Community Engagement**: Platforms and active transfer projects engage students and local communities in impactful sustainability initiatives.

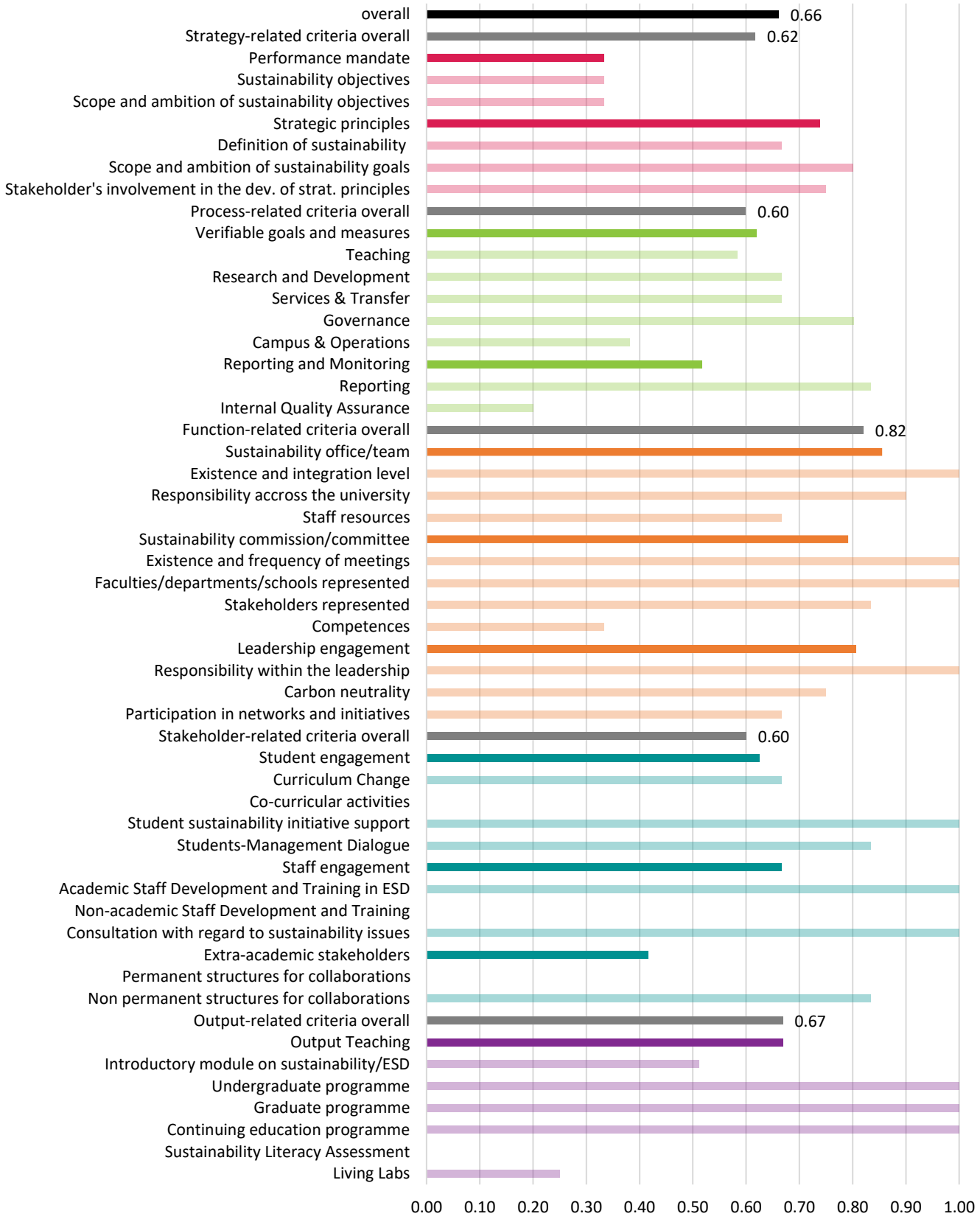
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Carbon Neutrality Commitment**: A unified carbon-neutrality target with concrete reduction measures would enhance HES-SO's climate strategy.
- **Comprehensive ESD Integration**: Increasing mandatory introductory ESD modules and implementing standardized literacy assessments would promote consistent sustainability literacy.
- **Expanded Community Collaboration**: Establishing permanent structures with local stakeholders would deepen HES-SO's long-term sustainability impact.

Notable transfer initiative: SWEET Lantern

The SWEET Lantern project is a large-scale initiative coordinated by HES-SO Valais-Wallis as part of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy's SWEET program. It aims to support Switzerland's energy transition by developing and co-designing solutions for a low-carbon society. The project brings together a diverse group of partners, including universities, federal research institutes, public authorities, NGOs, and private companies, focusing on energy, transportation, building, and other sectors.

Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Hochschule Luzern - HSLU) has made significant progress in sustainability, implementing both institutional changes and launching new projects. The university's sustainability strategy aligns with the UN's 2030 Agenda, incorporating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across all activities. In teaching, sustainability has been embedded into a wide range of study programs, including mandatory courses within the Department of Technology and Architecture. Among other things, the university has focused on achieving carbon neutrality through energy-efficient buildings to make the campus in the near future nearly C02-neutral. Research projects, such as the **"Lucerne Living Labs"** and initiatives like **"Smart Region Zentralschweiz"** and **"ClimateActions 4 Companies,"** illustrate HSLU's commitment to sustainable regional development and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the **"Think Earth"** framework promotes regenerative building practices, focusing on sustainable construction materials such as wood and clay. The sustainability office, in collaboration with the Sustainability Commission, has also provided a structured, cross-departmental approach to ensure cohesive efforts in sustainability initiatives at HSLU.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: HSLU's strategic commitment to sustainability spans all operations, including teaching, research, and campus management, as outlined in the **HSLU 2024-2027 Strategy**. The strategy integrates measurable sustainability targets, but external stakeholder engagement could be further developed to enrich HSLU's sustainability initiatives.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: HSLU offers a broad range of sustainability-focused modules, from which a few are mandatory, however only for students from the construction specialization of the Department of Technology and Architecture.
- **Research**: Research at HSLU is conducted through a diverse range of projects, many of which are focused on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary themes, such as initiatives as the **Lucerne Living Labs** and focused research clusters like "Health" and "Digital Transformation of the Workplace". Since 2023, HSLU has adopted SDG labelling for its research, making contributions to sustainability more visible internally and externally, and fostering a unified understanding of sustainability goals across the university.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: HSLU's **Sustainability Office** coordinates efforts across departments with advisory roles in the university's leadership.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: HSLU has conducted an emissions inventory for Scope 1 and Scope 2 but has not yet completed a Scope 3 assessment, which is planned for 2026. The institution also aims for carbon neutrality by 2040; however, several key initiatives, such as reducing business travel emissions are still at the planning stage.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: HSLU supports student involvement through sustainability platforms and direct dialogues between students and management. Students at HSLU are involved in curriculum change through formal participation in department-specific committees, feedback surveys, and active roles in curriculum evaluations.
- **Community Engagement**: Through Living Labs and research projects like the **Lucerne Living Labs**, the university motivates diverse actors to engage actively in sustainability, fostering practical contributions and innovation in energy research and sustainable development. Each department is also connected through advisory boards or foundations that link them politically, such as the **Climate and Energy Advisory Board** in Lucerne. HSLU also actively participates in initiatives like the **Rektorenkonferenz der Hochschulen in Luzern** (ReKoLu).

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: HSLU integrates sustainability comprehensively into its teaching programs, with relevant courses available across multiple departments, including mandatory modules within the Department of Technology and Architecture. The curriculum is designed to foster self-directed learning and skill acquisition, with many programs incorporating aspects of sustainability, including specialized courses and interdisciplinary modules labelled according to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to enhance visibility and understanding both internally and externally. There is no sustainability literacy assessment.

Strengths

- **Strong Governance**: Supported by a dedicated sustainability office, a sustainability commission, and an engaged leadership, HSLU shows strong institutional integration. This governance structure ensures coordinated efforts across teaching, research, services/transfer and operations.
- **Sustainability in study programs**: Sustainability is effectively integrated across all levels of study, including undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education, particularly within specific areas such as the Department of Technology and Architecture.
- **Research and Transfer Initiatives**: The Lucerne Living Labs and iHomeLab are strong platforms for research in energy efficiency and sustainable living, positioning HSLU as an active player in applied sustainability research.

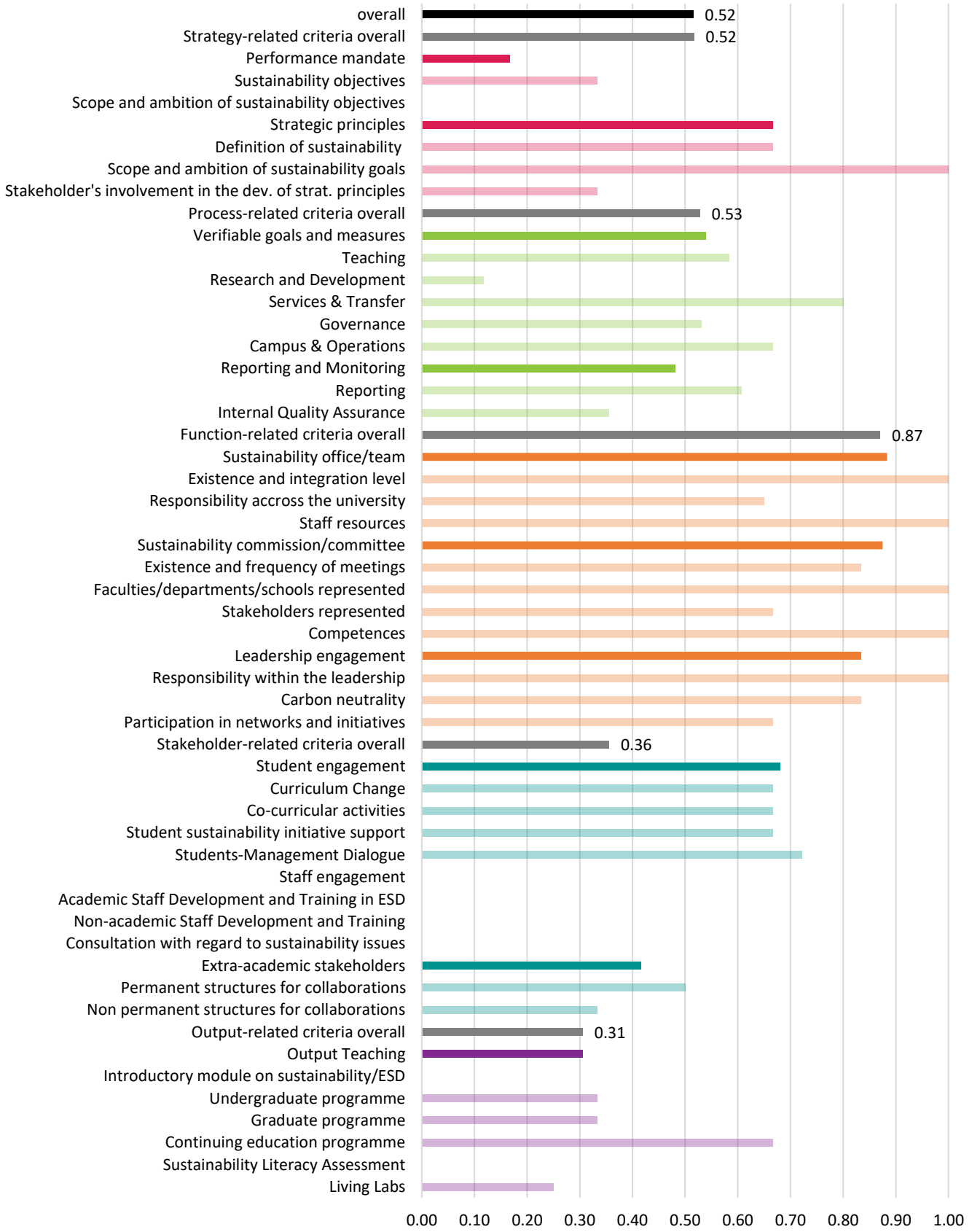
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Detailed Carbon Reduction Planning**: Clearer reduction strategies in carbon emissions, especially for Scope 1 and Scope 2, could bolster HSLU's carbon neutrality efforts.
- **Mandatory ESD Foundation**: Introducing a mandatory foundational ESD course for all students would ensure consistent sustainability literacy.
- **Non-academic Staff Development**: HSLU could enhance its sustainability efforts by offering targeted staff development programs, such as training in sustainability, for its non-academic staff. This initiative would help ensure that all employees are equipped to contribute meaningfully to the university's sustainability goals.

Notable transfer initiative: iHomeLab

HSLU's transfer project **iHomeLab** focusses on energy efficiency and aging-in-place technologies. The researchers at the iHomeLab are conducting applied research in energy efficiency, ambient assisted living and internet of things. The competence center also offers education and acts as an interface with the public, the industry and organizations.

Ostschweizer Fachhochschule (OST)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the **Ostschweizer Fachhochschule** (OST) has made significant strides in sustainability. In 2023, the university launched its **Sustainability Strategy 2030**, which aims to integrate sustainability into all areas of university operations, education, research, and community engagement. A significant aspect of this strategy is the establishment of a dedicated sustainability office, tasked with coordinating activities across departments and promoting interdisciplinary projects. On the teaching front, the university launched several initiatives aimed at integrating sustainability into their curricula, among which a **Master's program in Renewable Energy and Environmental Engineering**, which focuses on sustainable energy solutions and environmental protection. However, because of these still very recent developments, OST has plenty of room for improvement, and there is no doubt that the next three years will enable it to implement a large number of measures arising from its sustainability strategy.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: OST's strategy emphasizes ecological, social, and economic sustainability, guided by the **OST 2025-2035 Strategic Plan**. Sustainability principles are integrated across departments, but with limited engagement from external stakeholders, which could expand to deepen community impact.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: OST has implemented ESD in various programs and encourages faculty involvement. However, a mandatory introductory module on sustainability is not yet established, limiting broad-based ESD exposure for all students.
- **Research and Development**: Sustainability research is supported, notably in the fields of environmental and energy systems, and facilitated through interdisciplinary clusters such as the **Klimacluster**. OST leads the **GreenHub**, one of eight large-scale flagship projects of the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse), which aims to demonstrate that an energy self-sufficient Switzerland that stimulates economic growth can be achieved.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **OST Sustainability Office** oversees sustainability initiatives across departments, reporting to university leadership. While the university has committed to carbon neutrality by 2040, concrete reduction pathways and timelines need further development for stronger accountability.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: OST's carbon neutrality commitment includes gradual reductions, but reliance on offsetting without comprehensive reduction plans highlights an area for improvement.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Students at OST are actively involved in initiatives like **Sustainability Week** and the **Climate Lunch Series**. Student-management dialogues occur regularly.
- **Community Engagement**: OST engages in regional sustainability projects, including the **OZG Center for Municipalities** for sustainable community development. Adding more permanent structures could strengthen its long-term community partnerships.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: OST offers elective sustainability courses but lacks a standardized introductory ESD module. This gap means there's no consistent baseline assessment of sustainability literacy among students, limiting the tracking of educational outcomes.

Strengths

- **Comprehensive Sustainability Governance**: The **Sustainability Office** and **Sustainability Commission** ensure structured oversight across all university functions.
- **Strong Student Engagement**: Students are well involved in OST sustainability initiatives and the university provide ongoing support for projects.

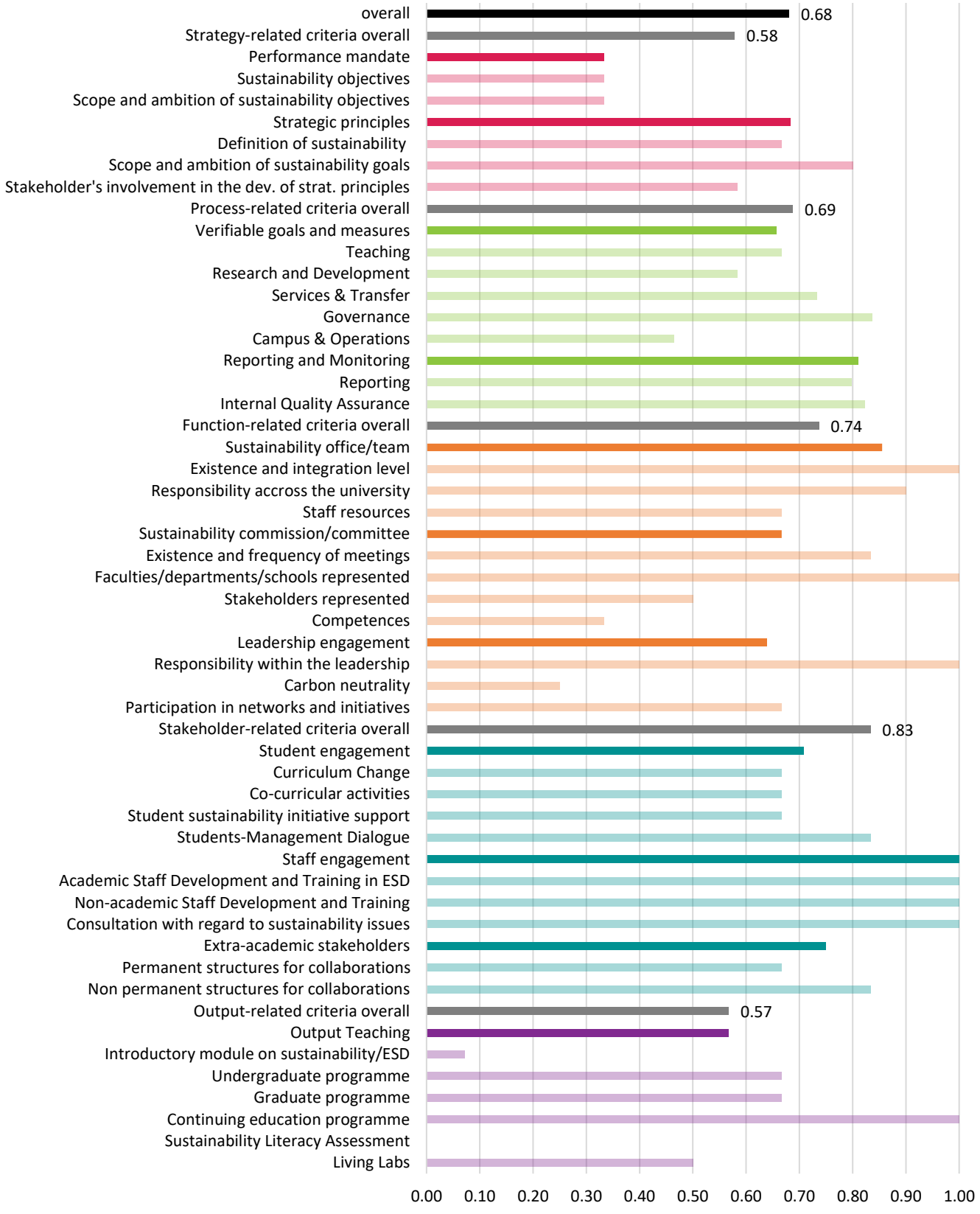
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Carbon Reduction and Neutrality Plans**: Developing more detailed reduction measures beyond offsets would enhance OST's carbon neutrality roadmap.
- **Mandatory ESD Module**: A foundational ESD module would provide all students with essential sustainability literacy, ensuring consistent exposure to core sustainability concepts.
- **Expanded Community Collaboration**: Establishing more long-term partnerships and initiatives beyond project-based collaborations would deepen OST's regional sustainability impact.

Notable transfer initiative: GreenHub

The **GreenHub** project at OST is an Innosuisse flagship initiative aimed at developing systemic approaches for the production, conversion, and storage of renewable energy into environmentally friendly liquid fuels. It involves 16 research partners and utilizes the Horgen waste incineration plant as a living lab to demonstrate the feasibility and scalability of these innovations for energy autonomy in Switzerland.

Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana (SUPSI) implemented significant sustainability initiatives, reflecting its commitment to sustainability across various dimensions. Its strategic framework for 2021-2024 builds on previous efforts, focusing on sustainability as a core aspect of its institutional development, integrating related objectives into all institutional activities. Key initiatives include the **SUPStain platform**, which encourages student engagement in sustainability projects, and the organization of **Sustainability Week 2024** to promote awareness and sustainable practices among the student body. The **Iterborea project** creatively combines art and digital technology to foster sustainable mobility, while **TeamUp** introduces a collaborative quiz game focused on the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, the **Long Night of Careers** in 2022 highlighted the intersection of career prospects and sustainability, showcasing the importance of sustainable practices in professional contexts. These efforts illustrate SUPSI's proactive stance in embedding sustainability into its educational and research frameworks, contributing positively to both the local community and the environment.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: SUPSI's strategic objectives emphasize sustainability in education, research, operations, and community engagement, as seen in its **SUPSI 2025-2035 Strategy**. It integrates these objectives into all departments but involves limited input from external stakeholders, leaving room for increased community collaboration.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: SUPSI promotes Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across various programs and departments, facilitated by the **Sustainability Group**. There are support programs for faculty to incorporate ESD, yet a mandatory sustainability module for all students is still being developed, meaning foundational ESD exposure varies across programs.
- **Research and Development**: Research is coordinated through specialized centers such as **ISAAC** (energy) and **ISTePS** (industrial sustainability), and there is a strong focus on applied, regionally impactful projects.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: SUPSI's **Sustainability Office** actively oversees sustainability initiatives across teaching, research, and operations. The **Sustainability Commission** also plays an advisory role, but carbon neutrality is currently at a planning stage, with partial initiatives in place but no formal reduction measures yet.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: SUPSI's commitment to carbon neutrality, targeted through emission inventories and energy efficiency projects, demonstrates an initial commitment, yet more concrete reduction plans are needed to enhance its long-term carbon strategy.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: SUPSI fosters student-led sustainability initiatives through the **SUPStain platform** and the annual **Sustainability Week**. Students actively participate in sustainability dialogues with management, though more formalized engagement pathways could increase student influence on institutional decisions.
- **Community Engagement**: SUPSI engages with local communities in sustainability-related projects, such as **San Bernardino Lab**, a living lab supporting sustainable regional development. While impactful, expanding permanent partnerships with broader stakeholders could enhance SUPSI's regional contributions.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: SUPSI offers elective sustainability-focused courses, yet there is no mandatory introductory ESD modules for all students and no sustainability literacy assessment to gauge student learning outcomes.

Strengths

- **Robust Institutional Framework**: SUPSI's strategic objectives for sustainability are integrated into education, research, operations, and community engagement, supported by a structured, cross-departmental approach through the **Sustainability Office** and **Commission**. These bodies ensure cohesive efforts across all departments, aligning sustainability initiatives with SUPSI's institutional goals and fostering collaboration throughout the university.

- **Student and Regional Engagement**: Initiatives like **SUPStain** and regional labs like **San Bernardino** showcase strong involvement in student-led projects and community engagement.
- **Research Focus with Applied Impact**: Research efforts are coordinated through specialized centers like ISAAC and ISTePS, with a strong emphasis on applied projects that have a regional impact.

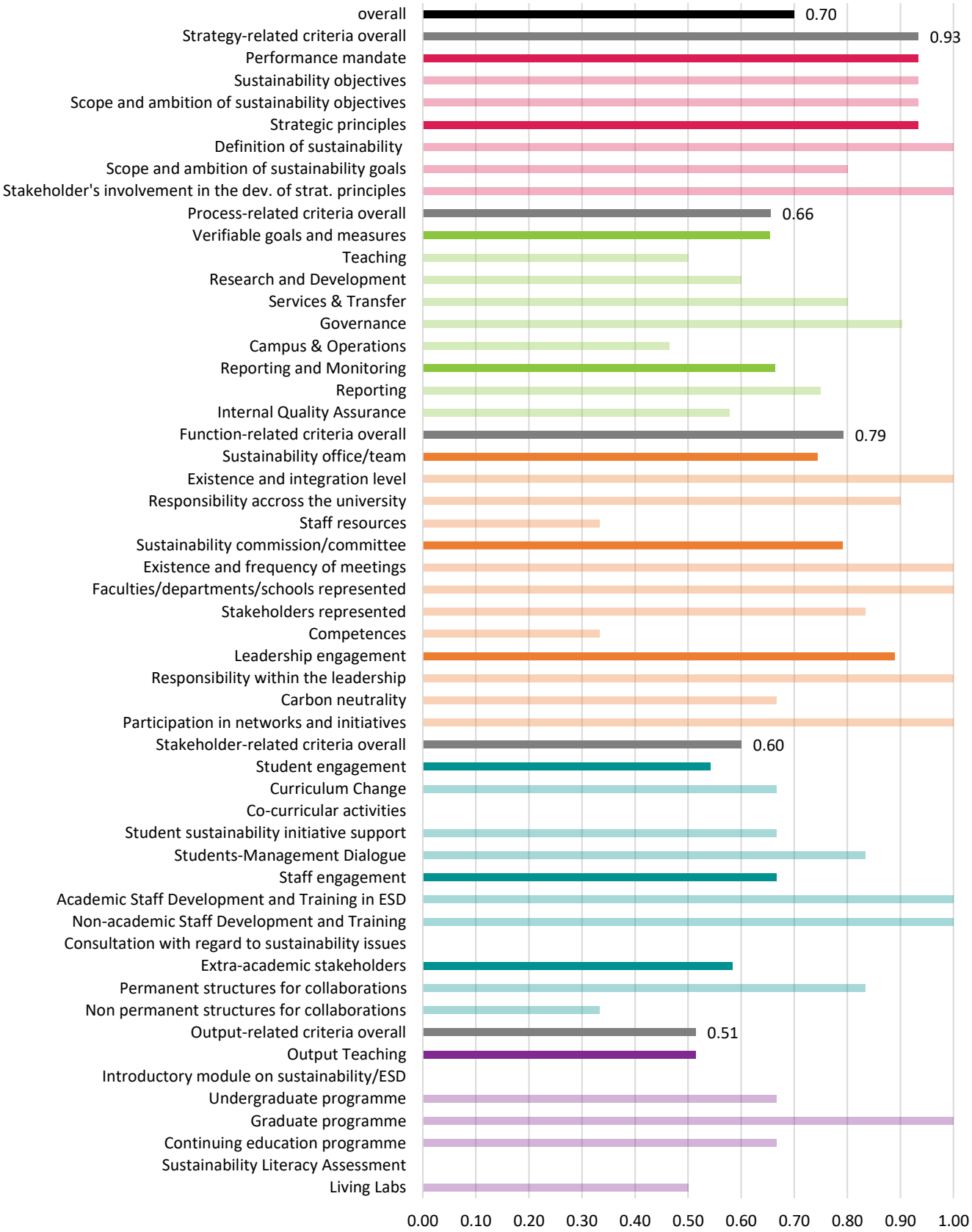
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Carbon Reduction Initiatives**: Although SUPSI is committed to carbon neutrality, current efforts are at a planning stage regarding formal reduction measures. Developing specific, actionable reduction plans would strengthen SUPSI's long-term carbon strategy.
- **Comprehensive ESD Integration**: **Expand ESD in Teaching**: A mandatory sustainability module for all students is still under development, leading to limited foundational exposure to ESD. Implementing a universal module would ensure that all students have a solid grounding in sustainability.
- **Expanded Community Collaboration**: Developing more long-term partnerships beyond current regional labs would deepen SUPSI's external impact and promote sustainable solutions on a broader scale.

Notable transfer initiative: Emergenza Terra

Emergenza Terra is a public conference series organized by SUPSI's Department of Environment, Construction, and Design since 2021. It focuses on addressing the environmental crisis, with discussions centered around the themes of water, air, earth, and fire—interpreted in the context of climate change impacts. Each year, the event brings together experts from different disciplines to explore the pressing issues related to climate change. This initiative promotes both knowledge dissemination and student involvement in tackling sustainability challenges.

Zürcher Hochschule der Angewandten Wissenschaften (ZHAW)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) made impressive progress in sustainability through various initiatives and significant institutional changes. ZHAW's strategic initiative, **ZHAW sustainable**, is structured to coordinate sustainability efforts across all departments, ensuring that sustainability remains a core focus within the university's framework. The establishment of the **Sustainable Development Committee** strengthens an institutional commitment to sustainability, involving various stakeholders in decision-making processes and promoting a culture of sustainability within the university community. In addition to that, it launched its **Sustainable Impact Program** aimed at promoting student, teaching, and research projects that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the university's sustainability strategy. This program provides funding and support for innovative projects, fostering collaboration between staff and students. In November 2023, ZHAW published its first ever **sustainability report**, detailing how sustainability is integrated across the institution. The report offers insights into the university's operations, highlighting achievements in energy, mobility, and resource management. Adding to this, the ZHAW has created a guide to specifically improve the ecological sustainability of its operations named the **Green Impact Book** (GIB). It specifies concrete goals for the university's operations in the area of environmental sustainability and defines ZHAW-wide basic measures that are expected to have a high impact and can also be implemented under the ZHAW's own responsibility. After its first review planned for beginning 2025 the ZHAW will set university-wide and organisational unit-specific target values.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: ZHAW's long-term strategy, as outlined in the **ZHAW 2035 Sustainability Strategy**, addresses ecological, social, and economic sustainability through initiatives in teaching, research, and campus operations. However, the strategy lacks specific measurable targets. Involving more external stakeholders could improve strategy relevance and alignment with community needs.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: ZHAW incorporates **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** through dedicated courses, an interdisciplinary center, and incentives for staff to integrate ESD. Although impactful, there's no mandatory introductory ESD course, which limits the foundational sustainability exposure for all students.
- **Research and Development**: Sustainability research is promoted and organized through various interdisciplinary centers, such as the **Institute of Environment and Natural Resources**. The **Sustainable Impact Program** provides funding for projects, although a more comprehensive inventory of sustainability research could improve visibility and tracking.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: ZHAW's **Sustainability Office** (ZHAW Sustainable) has decision-making authority, directly supporting sustainability governance across all departments.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: ZHAW aims for carbon neutrality by 2040 and has explicitly chosen not to use carbon trading mechanisms at this time, prioritizing an actual reduction pathway to achieve net-zero emissions. This approach inherently means that, at some point in the future, negative emission technologies will need to be implemented.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: ZHAW supports student-led initiatives through platforms like the **Sustainable Impact Program**, and student representatives participate in sustainability committees. While student engagement is strong, formalized, direct dialogues with management could deepen their influence on sustainability decisions.
- **Community Engagement**: ZHAW collaborates with the **WinLab** in Winterthur for sustainable urban projects and is involved in multiple public-private partnerships. However, permanent structures beyond these projects would strengthen long-term community collaboration.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability is incorporated into various programs, with specialized courses and the option to pursue sustainability-focused majors. The absence of Living Labs and formal assessments of sustainability literacy, however, limits practical, experiential learning opportunities for students.

Strengths

- **Strong governance**: Strategic fundamentals and structures such as ZHAW sustainable and the Committee for Sustainable Development demonstrate strong governance.
- **Active Transfer and Research Projects**: Numerous sustainability-focused projects and partnerships contribute positively to the community and enrich ZHAW's research portfolio.
- **Staff Engagement**: ZHAW engages well with its academic and non-academic staff and provides ESD training in particular.

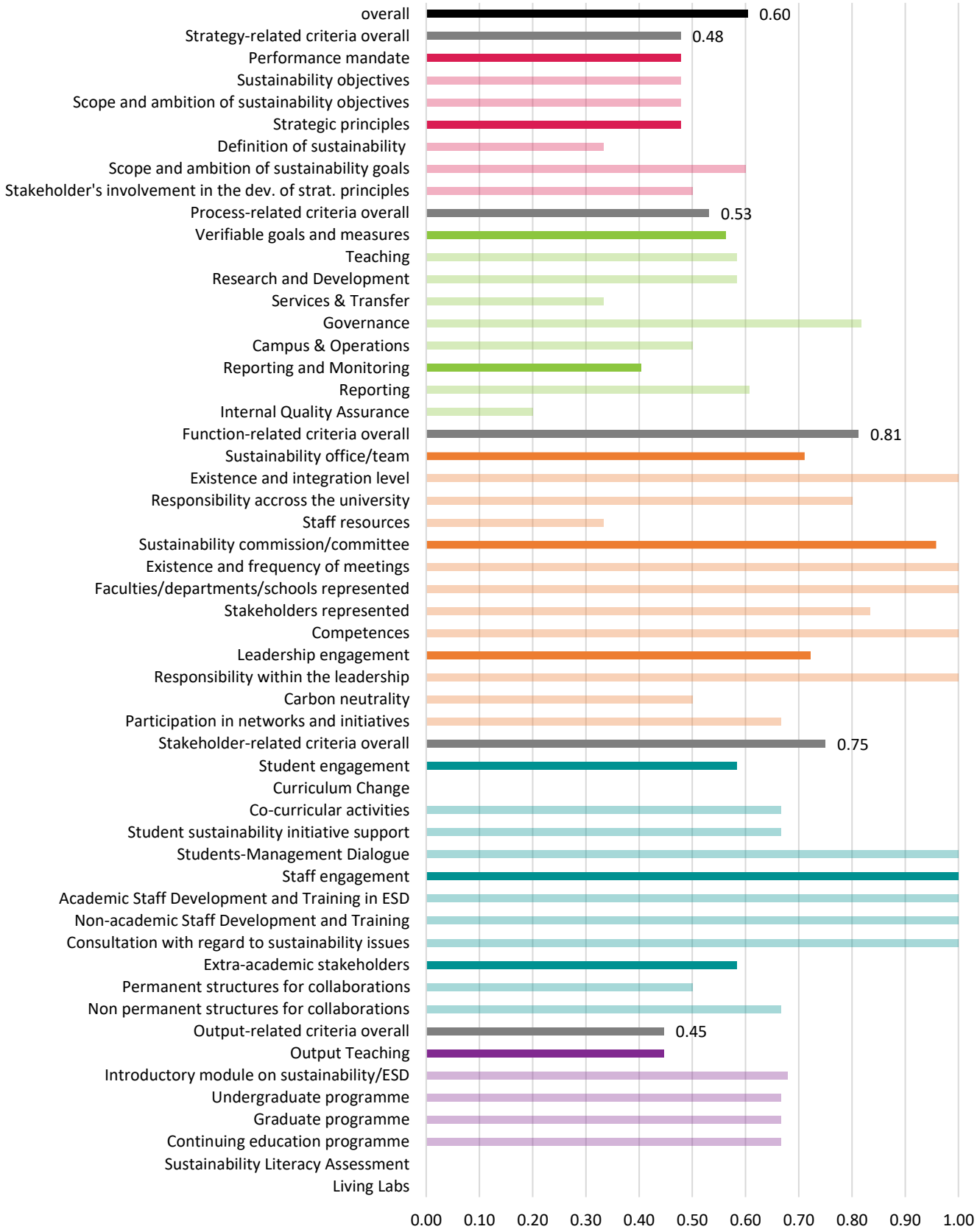
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Mandatory Sustainability Education**: Introducing a required introductory ESD module would ensure foundational sustainability knowledge for all students.
- **Enhanced Community and Student Dialogue**: Establishing permanent, direct dialogue channels with students and expanding structured community partnerships could further embed sustainability in institutional practices and outreach efforts.

Notable transfer initiative: Platform Smart Cities & Regions

The Platform Smart Cities & Regions at ZHAW focuses on the development of innovative, sustainable solutions for urban and regional environments. The platform brings together interdisciplinary research and expertise to support the creation of interconnected cities and regions that prioritize quality of life, resource efficiency, and environmental sustainability. It addresses key areas such as smart energy systems, digital twins for city planning, smart mobility, renewable energy, and smart grids. The platform also involves stakeholders in developing strategies and transformation processes that consider societal, economic, and environmental needs, effectively bridging the gap between research and practical implementation.

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK)



Notable developments since 2021

In a short space of time, ZHdK has succeeded in transforming itself institutionally to respond to the challenges of sustainability. Focusing on the contribution of design and art to sustainability, the ZHdK has rapidly established itself as a model for other art and design schools in Switzerland. Since 2021**,** the university has emphasized the integration of sustainability into its operational framework, launching its **Sustainability Strategy**. The combined efforts of the Dossier Committee and the Sustainability Affairs Office at ZHdK ensure an integrated approach to sustainability. The **Dossier Committee** focuses on overseeing strategic planning and evaluating sustainability initiatives, while the **Sustainability Affairs Office (re-source)** coordinates efforts across teaching and research, ensuring cohesive progress toward the university's sustainability objectives. A significant aspect of ZHdK's sustainability initiatives is the development of the **Sustainable Campus sub-strategy**, which focuses on achieving a climate-neutral campus by 2030. In addition, ZHdK published its third **Sustainability Report** in 2024, detailing its progress and outlining future goals related to resource consumption and ecological footprint. Furthermore, ZHdK has launched **Growing Sustainability in the Arts**, a web platform that promotes knowledge exchange, networking, and sustainable practices in the arts and design, and hosted events and workshops focused on sustainability, fostering dialogue and awareness around cultural and ecological transformations relevant to the arts. These engagements are part of their broader mission to educate and inspire future generations about sustainable practices in creative fields. On the teaching front, ZHdK collaborates internationally, notably with the **Shared Campus Critical Ecologies Cluster**, and now offers two minors in sustainability (**Alternative Futures: Sustainability and Ecology in Practice, basic and advanced**) as well as around ten minors with a focus on sustainability.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: ZHdK has embedded sustainability into specific sub-strategies, with a strong emphasis on both operations and teaching. This integration ensures that sustainability principles are actively considered in institutional planning and decision-making, guiding the university towards reducing its environmental impact while promoting sustainability in education.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been integrated through specialized courses and incentives for faculty to include sustainability in their teachings.
- **Research and Development**: ZHdK actively supports sustainability research, particularly in design and art education, with an online inventory showcasing projects.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: ZHdK's **Sustainability Office** (re-source) coordinates initiatives across teaching, research, and services.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: ZHdK achieved partial carbon neutrality by offsetting emissions from Scope 1, 2, and 3.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: ZHdK has platforms for student involvement and provide funding for sustainability projects. With the **Sustainability Thinking Points** initiative, ZHdK actively engages its students in sustainability by encouraging them to interact with creative installations and contribute to sustainable actions across the campus.
- **Community Engagement**: While ZHdK collaborates with local stakeholders in art and design, no permanent sustainability-focused structures, such as Living Labs or community partnerships, are in place.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability courses, especially within design and art education, are offered as electives or minors. There is no formal sustainability literacy assessment, which limits insight into students' sustainability competence upon graduation.

Strengths:

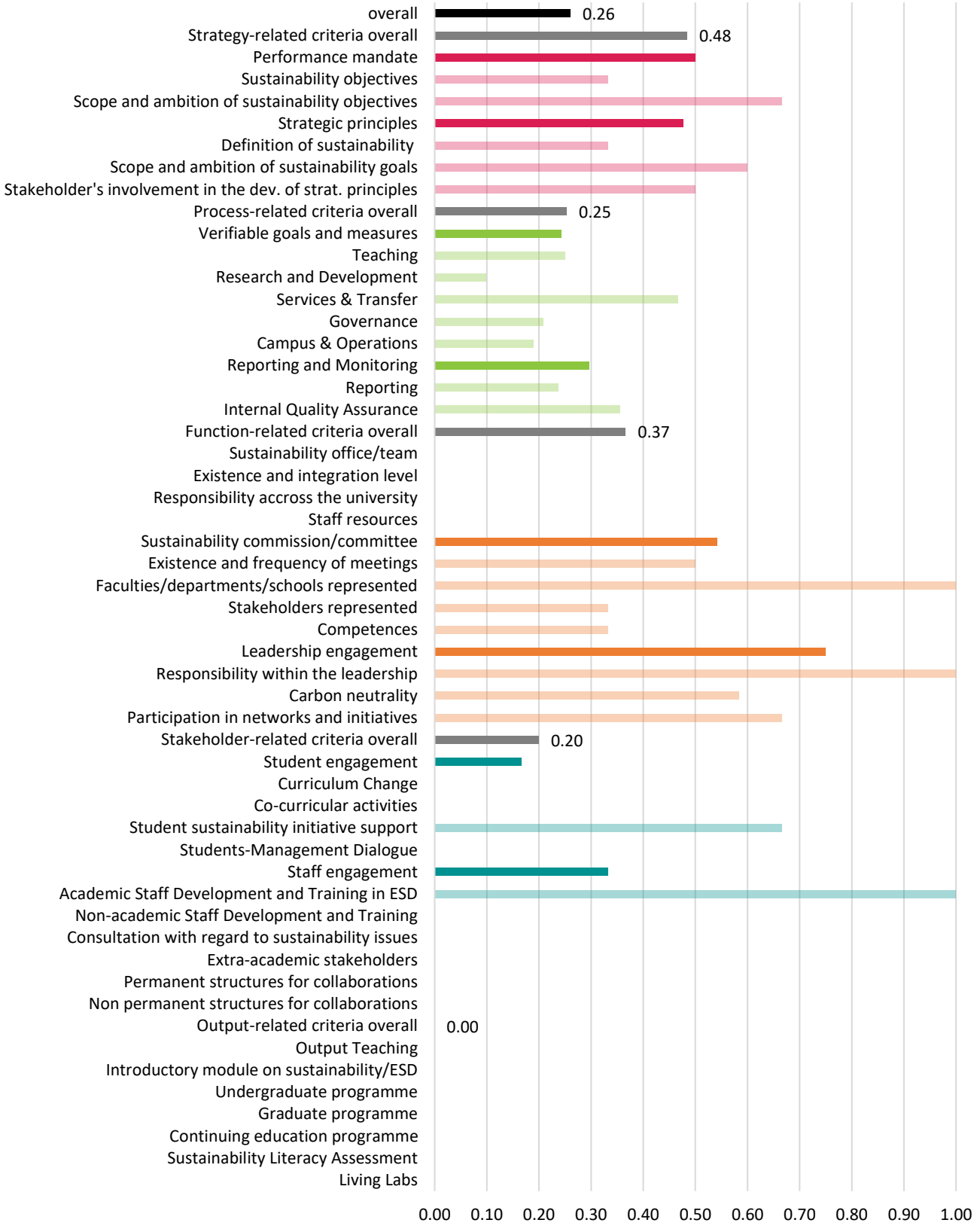
- **Staff Engagement**: ZHdK demonstrates strong engagement with both academic and non-academic staff on issues related to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and sustainability in general. The university provides training opportunities for all staff members and actively consults them on sustainability initiatives, fostering a collaborative approach to advancing its sustainability goals.
- **Sustainability Commission:** The sustainability commission at ZHdK (Dossier Committee) demonstrates a high level of integration, with a good representation of departments and from nearly all stakeholder groups. Preparing the grounds for decision-making it ensures broad engagement and effective governance in advancing sustainability initiatives across the institution.
- **Support for Sustainability in Teaching and Research**: ZHdK offers specialized sustainability courses and provides incentives for faculty to integrate sustainability themes into their teachings. The university also actively supports sustainability research, particularly in areas related to design and art.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Carbon Reduction Measures**: ZHdK could benefit from placing a continued strong emphasis on concrete carbon reduction actions, such as optimizing energy use and enhancing sustainable transport. This would help further reduce their carbon footprint and fulfil their “Sustainable Campus Strategy”.
- **Extra-academic Stakeholders**: While ZHdK collaborates with local stakeholders in art and design, establishing permanent sustainability-focused structures, such as Living Labs or community partnerships, could enhance sustained external collaboration in ecological and socio-economic transitions. This would foster deeper, ongoing engagement and impact in these areas.
- **Curriculum Change and Student Participation**: Sustainability modules could be made mandatory, and more formal opportunities for student engagement could be created, such as co-curricular activities and structured dialogues with management. This would help ensure broader student involvement and deeper integration of sustainability across the institution.

6.3 Universities of Teacher Education (UTE)

Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung (EHB)



Notable developments since 2021

The **Swiss Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training** (EHB) is still in the early stages of its sustainability integration journey, which explains its rather modest results in several dimensions. Governance and management commitment are present, but strategic sustainability objectives and their scope are still limited. The process of setting up structures and teams dedicated to sustainability is progressing, but still lacks an ambitious vision and concrete long-term objectives. This is mainly due to the fact that sustainability has only recently been taken into account in the institution's overall strategy. However, the EHB is showing promising signs, particularly in student involvement and initiatives in support of sustainability, which could form a solid basis for future developments.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: EHB's strategic goals, set by the Swiss Federal Council, encompass lifelong learning (LLL), sustainability education, and innovation. A "Whole Institution Approach" anchors EHB's sustainability strategy, integrating ecological, social, and economic goals.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is gradually being integrated, with plans to incorporate sustainability into LLL and vocational education training.
- **Research and Development**: While ESD research is promoted, direct incentives or centers dedicated to sustainability research are not yet in place. Nonetheless, EHB's vocational projects (e.g., sustainable identities in Swiss apprenticeships) indicate a progressive step toward integrating ESD into applied research.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: A formal sustainability office is absent, though sustainability governance is overseen by the **CSR Group**. This group includes representatives across divisions and advisory competences.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: EHB committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, formalized through a 2024 agreement with the **RUMBA program**, but concrete action plans for reducing emissions are still under development.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Platforms like **U-Change** enable student-led sustainability initiatives. Expanded student involvement could enhance institutional accountability and responsiveness.
- **Community Engagement**: EHB has limited mechanisms for community collaboration, with most community-based sustainability efforts occurring through temporary research projects. Establishing permanent structures could strengthen long-term sustainability impacts.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: EHB lacks a mandatory introductory module on sustainability for all students, and practical applications like Living Labs are minimal. There is also no standardized assessment for students' sustainability literacy, suggesting areas for improvement in curriculum design and evaluation.

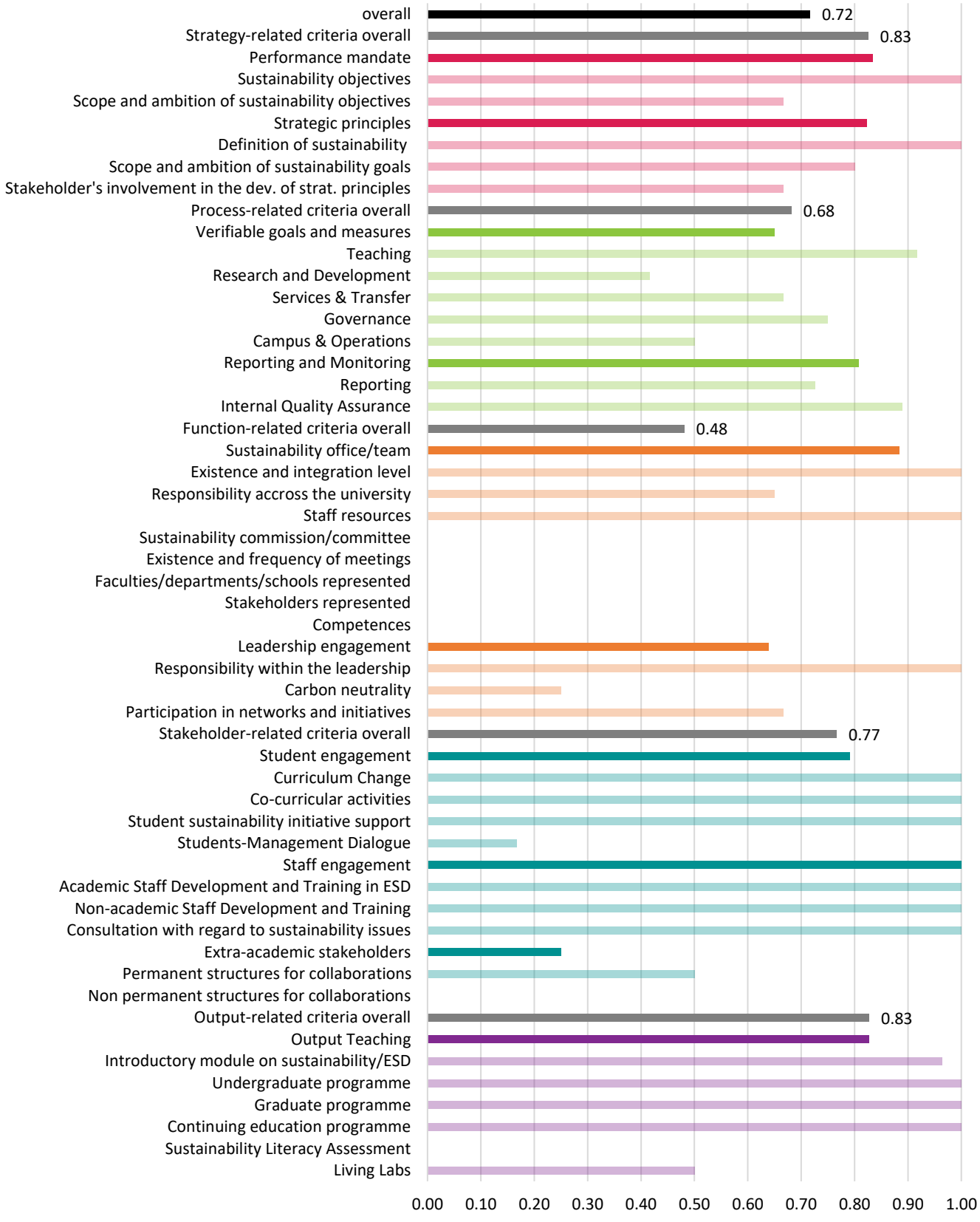
Strengths:

- **Leadership Engagement**: The leadership's commitment to sustainability showcases responsibility at the top level.
- **Sustainability Commission**: The CSR Group, acting as a sustainability commission, involves representatives from all divisions, ensuring a comprehensive approach to sustainability efforts.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: The commitment to carbon neutrality, formalized through an agreement with the RUMBA program in 2024, highlights proactive action toward environmental responsibility.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Sustainability Office**: The establishment of a sustainability office could significantly enhance the institution's capacity to coordinate and drive sustainability initiatives, providing a dedicated structure to manage, implement, and support sustainability projects across all areas of the university.
- **Sustainability and ESD in Teaching**: Although sustainability education is listed as a strategic objective, the integration of sustainability into study programs remains limited. Expanding sustainability across the curriculum and developing ESD approaches would help ensure broader and more consistent exposure for all students.
- **Student Support**: EHB could strengthen student support for sustainability by fostering engagement through co-curricular activities, dialogue with management, and involvement in teaching programs. This approach would empower students to actively contribute to sustainability while developing key skills for future challenges.

Haute école pédagogique du canton de Vaud (HEP-VD)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021 the Haute École Pédagogique Vaud (HEP VD) has made notable strides in sustainability through various strategic initiatives and projects. In 2020, with the support of the Executive Committee, a "Sustainability" working group was formed under the impetus of the **Laboratoire International de Recherche en l'Éducation à la Durabilité (LirED)**, which drew up an action plan for 2020-2022, ensuring that by 2022, the HEP VD would recognize sustainability education and sustainability in its strategic plan for 2022-2027 in all its areas (teaching, research, contribution to society, institutional policy). In March 2024, the HEP VD published the **2030 Strategy for Education for Sustainability & Sustainability**, based on the models of planetary boundaries and the donut economy.
The **Sustainable HEP** initiative, launched in 2024, focuses on engaging students and staff in sustainability practices, promoting awareness, and creating projects that contribute to a greener campus.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: HEP Vaud has outlined clear objectives that emphasize social justice, resource efficiency, and respect for planetary boundaries. These are woven throughout its strategic axes in teaching, research, community contributions, and institutional policy. Internal stakeholders (academic and administrative staff) are actively involved in the process.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is strongly integrated in the curriculum, with nearly all students required to complete introductory sustainability modules. Additionally, HEP Vaud supports interdisciplinary research through its **Laboratoire de Recherche sur l'Éducation à la Durabilité (LiRED)**, which facilitates sustainability research across teaching faculties.
- **Research and Development**: HEP Vaud is active in sustainability-focused research, particularly in interdisciplinary educational settings. Through **LiRED**, the institution collaborates across faculties on various ESD projects, positioning itself as a hub for educational sustainability research.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Bureau de la Durabilité** and **Pôle Éducation à la Durabilité** play central roles in coordinating sustainability initiatives across teaching, research, and operational practices. Leadership is engaged, and these units report directly to the rectorate. Although there is no formal Sustainability Commission, established structures like the LiRED and the Pôle, which together achieve a similar role by involving faculty and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to integrate ESD into courses and research areas.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: Although committed to achieving carbon neutrality, HEP Vaud's approach is in the preliminary stages. Strengthening emissions reduction measures in campus operations and setting specific milestones would support more measurable progress.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Student involvement is robust, with initiatives like **Hepisèmerie** (focused on food waste reduction and supporting students) and **Sustainability Week** (an annual event to promote sustainability). Plans are underway to formalize dialogue between university management and students on sustainability topics, which could improve communication and support a more responsive sustainability agenda.
- **Staff Engagement**: Professional development and training opportunities for both academic and non-academic staff in the field of ESD are promoted. Additionally, staff is consulted on sustainability-related issues, such as energy consumption and sustainable mobility, and its feedback is incorporated into decision-making processes.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability and ESD seem to be integrated into the study programs comprehensively. Nearly all students are required to take an introductory sustainability module, which aims to provide a solid foundation in sustainability concepts. Additionally, sustainability is embedded across different levels, from undergraduate to continuing education programs, ensuring that its principles are part of the academic journey for a wide range of students.

Strengths

- **Clear Sustainability Objectives**: HEP Vaud has established well-defined sustainability objectives that emphasize social justice, resource efficiency, and respect for planetary boundaries. These objectives are integrated into the institution's strategic focus areas, including teaching, research, community contributions, and institutional policy.
- **Strong Integration of ESD in Teaching**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is well embedded in the curriculum. An introductory module on sustainability is mandatory for 90% of first-year students, and ECTS credits are provided for these modules, ensuring that foundational sustainability concepts are accessible to almost all students. Additionally, specific ESD-focused modules are offered at both undergraduate and graduate levels, contributing to a widespread inclusion of sustainability across the curriculum.

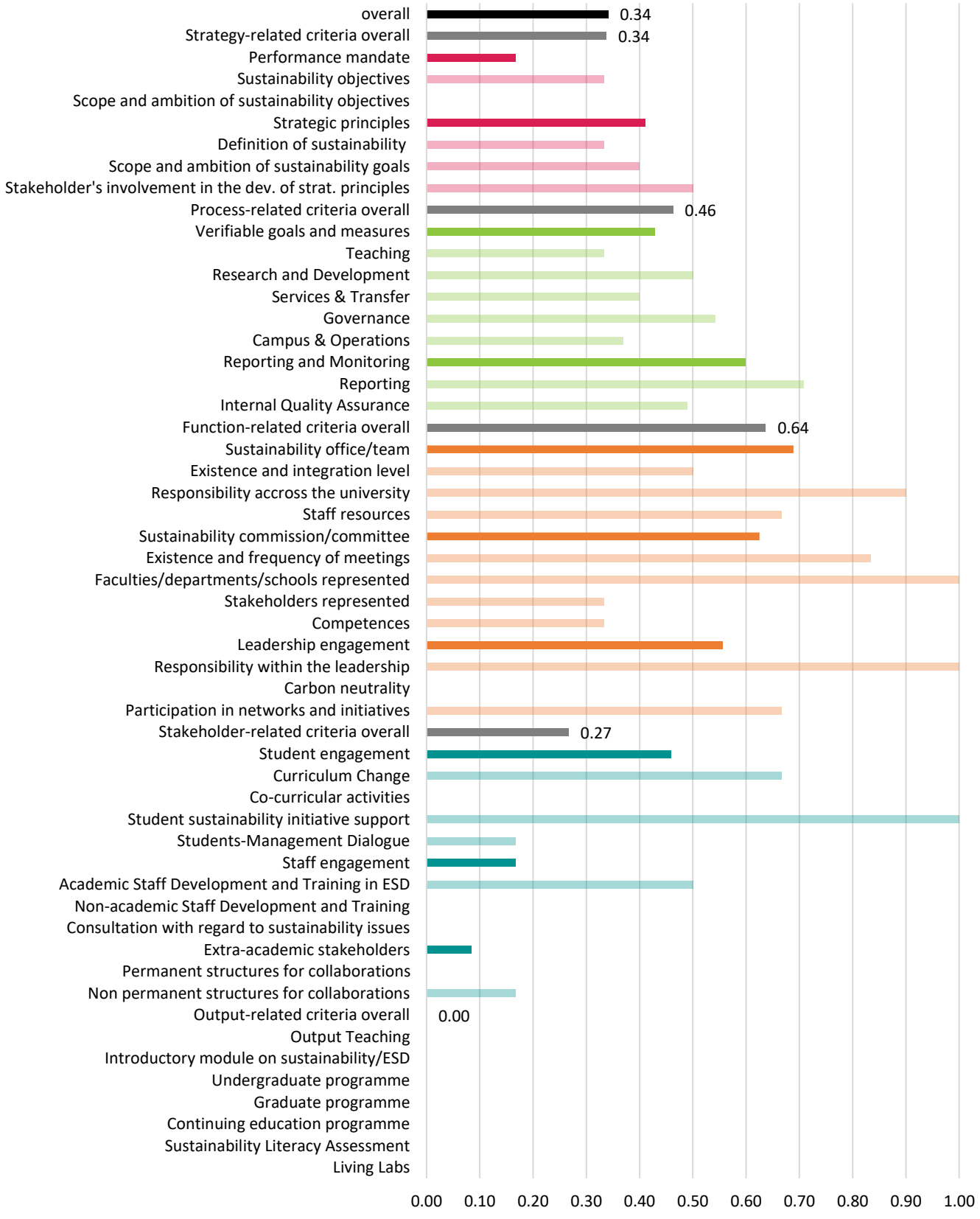
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Expand External Community Engagement**: While internal stakeholders are actively involved in sustainability initiatives, HEP Vaud could improve by expanding its engagement with external community partners. Establishing more structured and long-term partnerships with extra-academic stakeholders could amplify the institution's impact.
- **Carbon Neutrality Planning**: While HEP Vaud is committed to carbon neutrality, more concrete timelines and detailed actions need to be established to support measurable carbon reduction goals.

Notable transfer initiative: A Rounder Sense of Purpose 2

The project **"**A Rounder Sense of Purpose 2**"** at HEP Vaud is a European initiative funded by Erasmus+ aimed at developing a practical competency framework for educators to promote ESD. It builds upon an earlier competency framework from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, with a focus on providing measurable learning outcomes and tools for teacher training. The project has involved more than 400 participants across Europe and aims to support both initial and continuing education for teachers in sustainability.

Interkantonale Hochschule für Heilpädagogik (HfH)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Interkantonale Hochschule für Heilpädagogik (HfH) has made substantial progress in sustainability by integrating it into the **Strategic Plan for 2022-2025**, which focuses on economic, ecological, and social responsibility in curative and special education. Key developments include establishing a **sustainability office** reporting to the rector, a **sustainability commission** with advisory powers, and the formulation of a **Catalog of Measures** and an **Action Plan for 2024-2028** that outline specific sustainability goals and implementation processes. While HfH plans to incorporate **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** into teaching, operational improvements have already been initiated, such as reducing energy consumption, promoting sustainable food systems, improving sustainable transportation, and adopting a **sustainable procurement policy**. These steps reflect significant advances in governance and planning, setting the stage for deeper integration of sustainability throughout the institution.

1. Strategy-related criteria

- **Overview**: HfH's approach to sustainability is based on the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development, emphasizing the interdependent dimensions of ecological sustainability, social justice, and economic performance. The **Strategic Plan 2022-2025** aims to align institutional practices with these dimensions by promoting inclusive education, diversity, and sustainable business practices.

2. Function-related criteria

- **Governance and Leadership**: Sustainability governance at HfH is supported by a sustainability office that reports directly to the rector and a sustainability commission with advisory powers. The commission, which meets regularly, involves representatives from various university units. Strategic responsibility for sustainability lies with a member of the university management, ensuring that sustainability is an institutional priority.

3. Process-related criteria

- **Implementation and Monitoring**: HfH's approach to implementation includes plans for integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into teaching, research, and transfer processes. A **Catalog of Measures** and an **Action Plan for 2024-2028** outline specific sustainability goals and responsibilities, although they are currently a work in progress. The university's quality assurance system plans to include sustainability assessment tools across multiple areas, ensuring an integrated approach to sustainability.

4. Stakeholders-related criteria

- **Internal and External Engagement**: Internally, the sustainability commission includes academic staff, technical staff, and administrative personnel, while students have a role in curriculum advisory. Externally, HfH collaborates with networks such as **Arbeitsgruppe Bildung für Nachhaltige Entwicklung** and **Netzwerk Nachhaltigkeit** under swissuniversities.

5. Output-related criteria

- **Education, Research, and Community Engagement**: In teaching, HfH plans to actively promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), although it currently lacks introductory sustainability modules for students. There is also a focus on inclusive educational research, with a directory of sustainability-related research projects available on their website. In operations, measures to reduce energy consumption and support sustainable transportation are being implemented, along with a sustainable procurement policy.

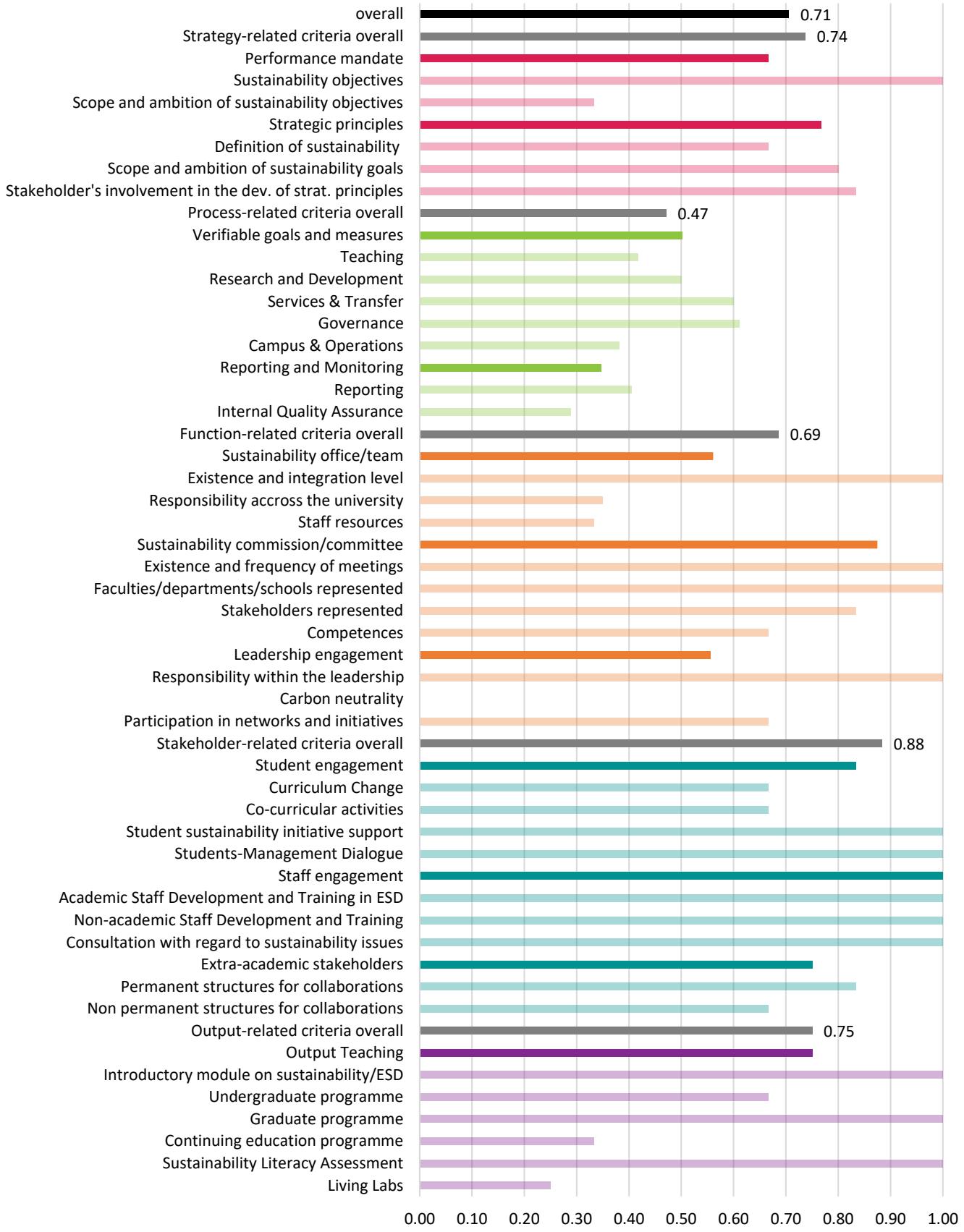
Strengths

- **Dedicated Governance Structures**: The presence of a sustainability office, reporting directly to the rector, and a sustainability commission ensures good oversight for sustainability initiatives.
- **Initial Steps in Implementation**: Measures to reduce energy use, improve sustainable transportation, and a procurement policy demonstrate initial progress in embedding sustainability into operations.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Lack of Carbon Neutrality Commitment**: HfH has not set a formal goal for carbon neutrality. Defining a clear target for achieving carbon neutrality would help to establish a stronger environmental impact strategy.
- **Limited Student and Community Engagement**: Student involvement is currently limited to an advisory role in curriculum development, and there is no permanent structure for engaging with the local community on sustainability topics. Expanding these initiatives would improve stakeholder engagement and foster a culture of sustainability within the community.
- **Incomplete Integration of ESD**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is still being planned for implementation. Introducing ESD modules across all programs and ensuring mandatory participation would strengthen sustainability education at HfH.
- **Monitoring and Tracking Mechanisms**: Although there are plans for tracking sustainability progress, these mechanisms have not yet been fully implemented. Establishing systematic monitoring and evaluation practices could ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Pädagogische Hochschule Bern (PHBE)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the Pädagogische Hochschule Bern (PH Bern) has continued its focus on sustainability within its overarching 2018–2025 strategic framework, which emphasizes innovation, adaptability, and interdisciplinary collaboration. One major institutional development is the **2022–2025 "Personalstrategie**" (Human Resources Strategy), aligned with their core institutional goals to support professional development, as well as new teaching and learning methods. In recent years it has actively advanced its sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) efforts through several strategic projects and initiatives. A key new development has been **Students4Sustainability**, a cross-institutional platform established in 2024 with the University of Bern, the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and PH NMS. This platform supports student engagement across institutions, offering a collaborative space for sustainability projects and fostering student-led initiatives in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In terms of ESD integration, PH Bern also holds **BNE im Dialog** and **Forum BNE**, which are ongoing forums that promote dialog among educators, researchers, and students on sustainability themes. These platforms provide resources, professional exchanges, and targeted workshops, strengthening sustainability in teaching practices across PH Bern's institutes. For instance, the **Primary Education** program incorporates ESD into several core modules, while **Secondary I and II Education** offers interdisciplinary learning opportunities that emphasize sustainability through bachelor theses and specialized ESD profiles. On the research side, PH Bern hosts several core research programs that intersect with sustainability themes. Areas like "Inclusive Education," "Governance in Education," and "Migration, Mobility, and Global Education" are designed to address social sustainability by researching equity, inclusivity, and adaptation in education. These research efforts contribute to understanding how educational practices can be more adaptive and supportive of diverse, sustainable learning environments.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: PH Bern's objectives emphasize social justice, environmental responsibility, and resource efficiency. However, targets for carbon neutrality remain underdeveloped, indicating an opportunity for clearer, measurable goals in emission reduction.
- **Stakeholder Involvement**: Although academic staff and students are engaged, external stakeholder involvement remains minimal. Expanding collaboration with community and industry partners could enhance the relevance and impact of sustainability efforts.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: PH Bern has integrated Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into its curriculum, particularly with an introductory module in sustainability required for most first-year students. However, further expansion of mandatory ESD content could strengthen sustainability literacy across all programs.
- **Research and Development**: While the institution is active in sustainability research, particularly through the **Institute for Primary and Secondary Education**, structured incentives and dedicated funding for sustainability research are limited, signalling an area for potential growth.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The institution benefits from a dedicated sustainability office under the Rectorate, along with a **Sustainability Commission**. These provide strong internal support but need to translate this governance into impactful projects across the university.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: PH Bern has not yet committed to a specific carbon-neutrality target, reflecting a gap in addressing carbon emissions at the institutional level.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: PH Bern supports student-led initiatives, including participation in **Students4Sustainability** and co-curricular programs like the **Bildungsgarten**. Regular dialogues between university management and students underscore a commitment to active student involvement in sustainability.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: The strong integration of ESD into primary and secondary education programs reflects PH Bern's commitment to sustainability in teaching. However, **Living Labs** and practical applications of sustainability are less prominent, limiting hands-on learning experiences.

Strengths

- **Clear Sustainability Objectives**: PH Bern has established sustainability objectives that focus on social justice, environmental responsibility, and resource efficiency, providing a solid foundation for guiding its initiatives.
- **Strong Governance Structures**: The presence of a dedicated sustainability office and a Sustainability Commission under the Rectorate ensures a structured approach to implementing sustainability initiatives throughout the institution.
- **Student Engagement**: PH Bern actively supports student-led initiatives like Students4Sustainability and provides opportunities for co-curricular programs such as the Bildungsgarten. The regular dialogues between management and students also highlight a commitment to fostering student involvement in sustainability.

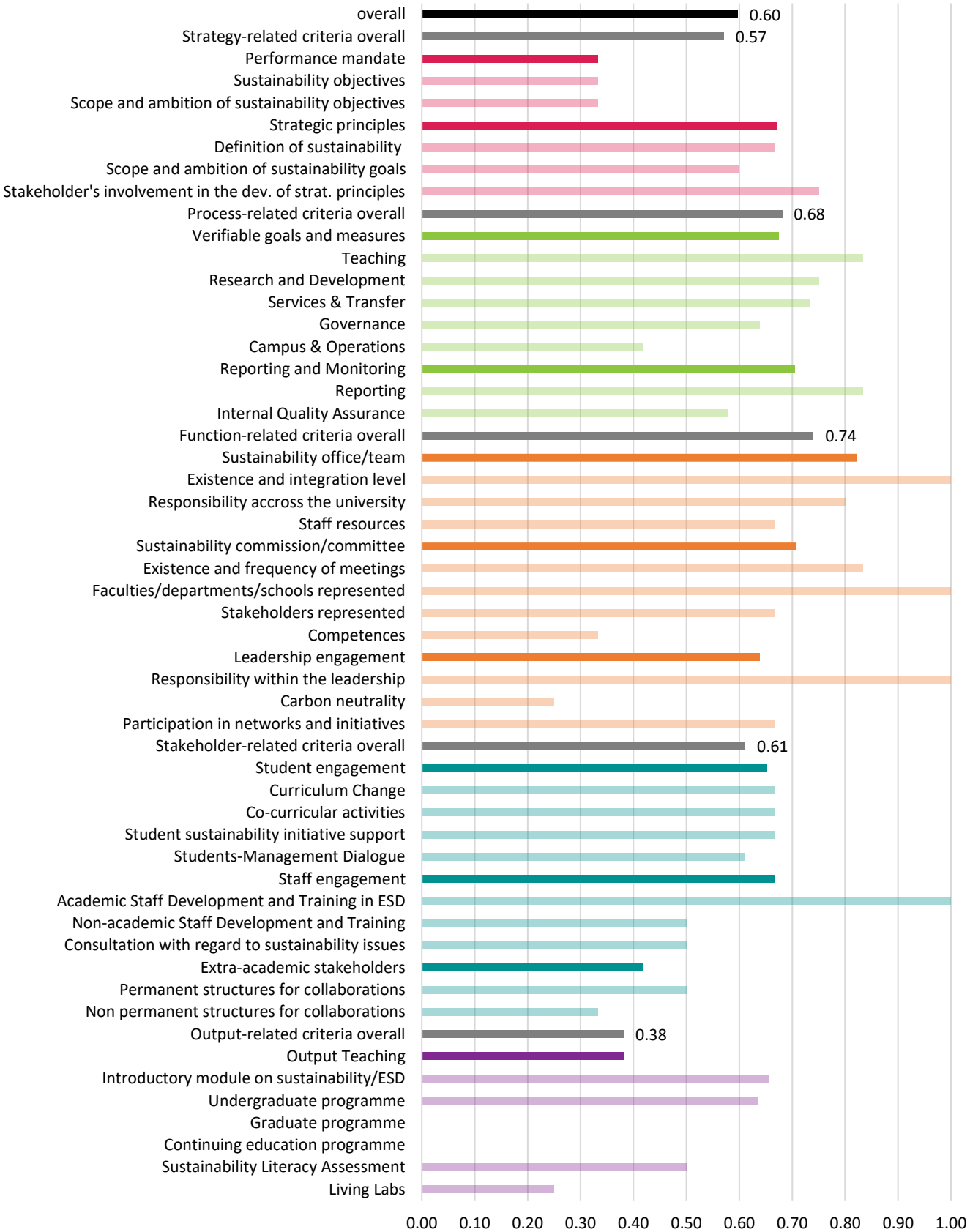
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Carbon Neutrality Targets**: PH Bern currently lacks well-developed targets for achieving carbon neutrality. Setting specific, measurable goals in emission reduction could enhance the institution's environmental impact.
- **Expand External Stakeholder Involvement**: While internal engagement is evident, the involvement of external stakeholders, such as community and industry partners, remains limited. Expanding these collaborations could significantly enhance the relevance and impact of sustainability efforts.
- **Broaden Hands-On Learning Opportunities**: Although ESD is well-integrated into teaching programs, the use of Living Labs and other practical applications of sustainability is minimal. Expanding such experiential learning opportunities would help strengthen students' understanding and practical engagement with sustainability concepts.

Notable transfer initiative: Bildungsgarten

The Bildungsgarten is a new educational garden project that serves as a learning, experiential, and experimental site focused on ESD. Located at the Institute for Continuing Education and Services (IWD), the garden aims to train teachers and students in gardening pedagogy, allowing them to become multipliers who implement garden-based learning projects in public schools. The garden also serves as a research and development site, promoting sustainability education through practical experiences. The Bildungsgarten has ties with several sustainability initiatives, including Bern ist Bio, the Bernese organic movement, and the Stiftsgarten AG, an engagement of the Oekonomische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft Bern (OGG Bern).

Pädagogische Hochschule FHNW (PH-FHNW)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the **Pädagogische Hochschule of the FHNW (PH FHNW)** has made significant strides in the field of sustainability, aligning its actions with the broader strategic goals of the **FHNW 2035 strategy**. One of the key developments has been the introduction of a comprehensive **sustainability strategy**, focusing on energy use, resource efficiency, inclusion, and health. This strategy integrates sustainability into both teaching and research and promotes FHNW's role as a think tank for innovative social solutions. While the **PH FHNW** participates in many FHNW-wide initiatives (like the **Swiss Sustainability Challenge** and **Sustainability Week**), its focus is more specialized in applying sustainability within educational contexts. The integration of sustainability into teacher training and the development of educational programs that address sustainability is a distinguishing feature of the PH FHNW's approach. In terms of teaching, PH FHNW offers courses and modules that directly address the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). For example, since 2023, the **cross-school teaching module on the SDGs and Switzerland** has been offered, fostering interdisciplinary learning and encouraging students to develop solutions to pressing sustainability challenges.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: Sustainability is integrated into the overarching **FHNW 2035 Strategy**, which commits to addressing global challenges and sustainability in all its operations. The strategic goals cover environmental, social, and economic sustainability, including reducing CO_2 emissions, promoting sustainable mobility, and balancing work-life efforts for the staff.
- **Stakeholder Involvement**: PH FHNW demonstrates strong involvement of university leadership, academic staff, and management in developing sustainability principles. However, there's scope for more extensive engagement with external stakeholders and students.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are increasingly integrated in the curriculum. There are dedicated introductory modules on sustainability and SDGs available to students, with ECTS credits awarded. However, this is still an optional course for many first-year students, limiting its impact.
- **Research and Development**: PH FHNW is involved in several sustainability-related research projects, especially in social and educational contexts. However, it is noted that specific support mechanisms for research in ESD are still developing.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: PH FHNW has a centralized sustainability office that coordinates sustainability across teaching, research, and campus operations. The university also has a **Sustainability Commission** that meets regularly, involving representatives from all faculties, which demonstrates strong governance around sustainability.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: PH FHNW has set long-term goals for carbon neutrality by 2035, though specific reduction measures are in early stages, and stronger action is needed to reduce CO_2 emissions from energy use, mobility, and campus operations.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: The institution demonstrates strong student engagement, providing co-curricular opportunities related to sustainability and supporting student initiatives such as the **Sustainability Challenge**. There is also a structured dialogue between students and university management on sustainability issues.
- **Staff Engagement**: There are professional development opportunities in ESD for academic staff, but similar training for non-academic staff is still being planned, indicating an area where further engagement could occur.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: While introductory courses on sustainability are offered, the assessment highlights that they are not mandatory for all students, limiting their reach. Additionally, there is room for improvement in offering **Living Labs** and other practical sustainability applications.

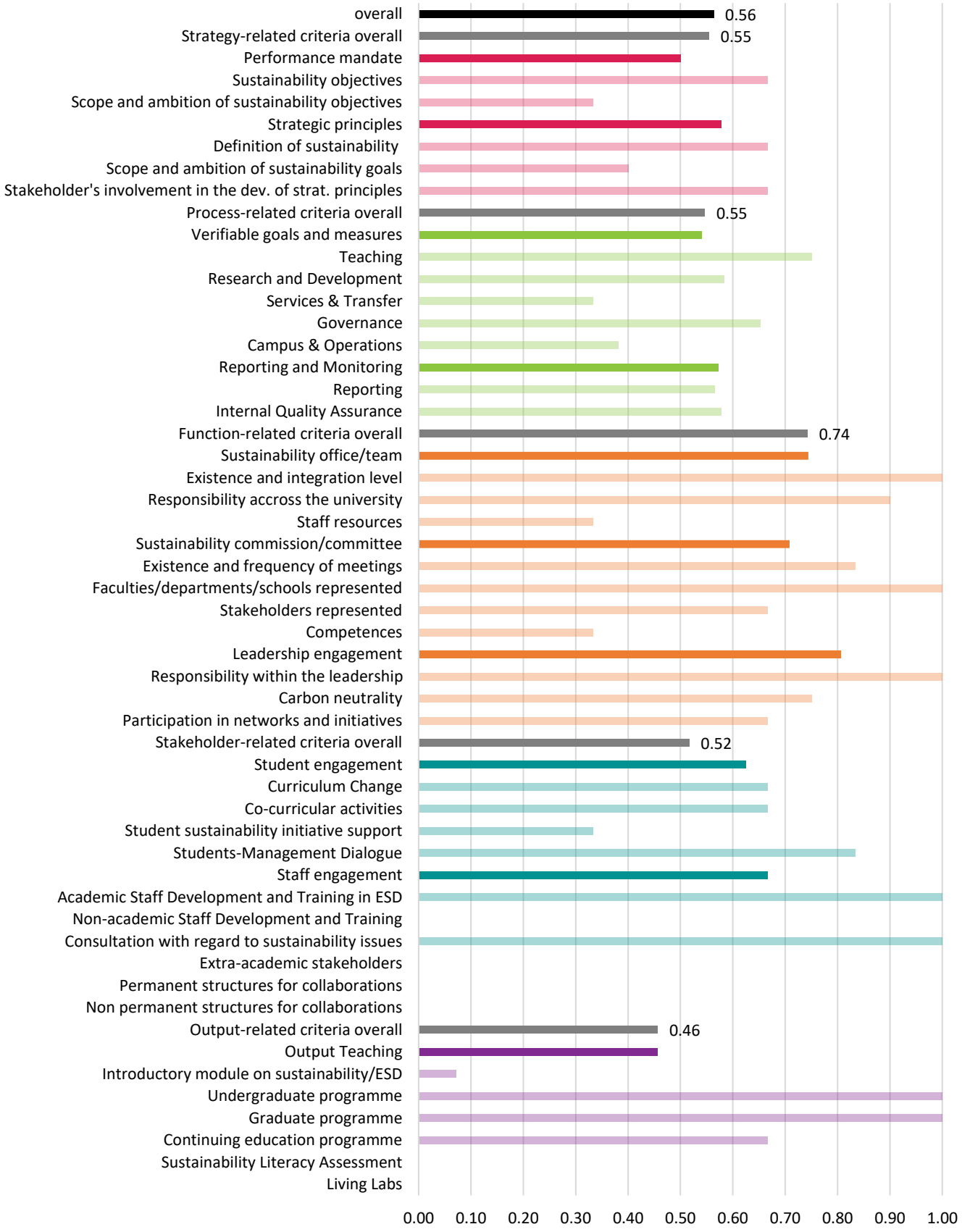
Strengths

- **Sustainability Strategy**: Sustainability is well-integrated into the overarching **FHNW 2035 Strategy**, which addresses environmental, social, and economic dimensions. The commitment to reducing CO_2 emissions, promoting sustainable mobility, and supporting work-life balance for staff demonstrates a comprehensive approach to sustainability.
- **Governance Structures**: The centralized sustainability office and Sustainability Commission, involving representatives from all faculties, provide strong governance for sustainability initiatives. These structures ensure coordination across teaching, research, and operations.
- **Student Engagement**: There is strong student involvement in sustainability initiatives, including co-curricular opportunities and structured dialogue with university management. This engagement empowers students to actively participate in shaping the institution's sustainability agenda.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Expand External Stakeholder Engagement**: While there is strong internal involvement, there is room for greater engagement with external stakeholders, such as community partners and students. Expanding these collaborations could enhance the relevance and impact of sustainability efforts.
- **Broaden Sustainability Integration in Teaching**: Although sustainability and ESD are part of the curriculum, they remain optional for many first-year students and are absent from graduate programs. Developing ESD modules across the institution would increase their impact and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability across the student body.
- **Strengthen Carbon Neutrality Measures**: While the institution has set long-term goals for **carbon neutrality by 2035**, specific reduction measures are still in the early stages. Accelerating the development and implementation of actionable steps, particularly in energy use, mobility, and campus operations, is necessary to ensure measurable progress toward this goal.

Pädagogische Hochschule Luzern (PHLU)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, the **Pädagogische Hochschule Luzern** (PHLU) has made significant progress in integrating sustainability into its strategy and organization. In January 2022, the project "Sustainability topologies at the Lucerne University of Teacher Education" was launched to integrate profession-specific knowledge on sustainable development into as many courses as possible. In line with a bottom-up approach, 23 ESD ambassadors from all subjects are promoting this process. In the same year, PHLU set up the **Sustainability and ESD unit** that coordinates efforts through working groups in teaching, research and operations. Also since 2022, an annual didactics student conference on ESD has been held, which was initiated by students. In 2023, the unit developed a **Sustainable Development Strategy (2024-2027)**, which is meant to guide future actions in social, economic, and environmental sustainability, supported by an upcoming action plan. In the area of teaching, the **Institut für Fachdidaktik Natur, Mensch, Gesellschaft** (IF NMG) and the **Masterstudiengang für Fachdidaktik Natur, Mensch, Gesellschaft und Nachhaltige Entwicklung** play key roles in integrating sustainability into education by providing specialized programs focused on subject-specific didactics and sustainable development. On the research front, PHLU runs an **institute for STEM and sustainability didactics**. An important focus of the institute is education in sustainable development (ESD). The institute is currently conducting around a dozen projects on issues relating to education in sustainable development, two of which are funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). PHLU is very close to making a major leap forward, as it now fulfils fundamental institutional conditions with a specific strategy, an action plan, dedicated unit and management support. As the strategy and action plan are very recent, many measures have yet to be implemented, which partly explains the results in the various dimensions.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: The university integrates the social, ecological, and economic dimensions of sustainability, aligning its approach with the **UNESCO strategy**. It commits to promoting social justice, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and optimizing resource use.
- **Stakeholder Involvement**: While there is active collaboration within university management and faculties, the involvement of external stakeholders remains limited, suggesting a need for wider engagement with the broader community.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: Sustainability is increasingly integrated into degree programs. The university plans to implement an **ESD action plan** across its education services, but the development of specific sustainability-related courses is still evolving. PHLU is involved in various educational networks and working groups to enhance sustainability teaching practices.
- **Research and Development**: The school is involved in numerous ESD research projects, including some funded by the **SNSF**. These research efforts are focused on issues like critical ESD and sustainability pedagogy, but the output could be expanded further, especially in terms of transfer and impact on local communities.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: PHLU has a dedicated sustainability team, which reports directly to the rectorate. The team oversees sustainability efforts in teaching, research, services, and campus operations, ensuring a coherent approach across the institution. There are also **sustainability working groups** that involve various departments and service areas, ensuring widespread internal collaboration.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: The institution is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040 as part of the **Race to Zero** initiative. However, the current measures to reduce emissions are still in the planning stages, indicating that stronger efforts are needed to meet this goal.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: Student participation in sustainability is robust, with regular exchanges between student representatives and the university management. The university also promotes co-curricular programs, though formal platforms for student-led sustainability initiatives are still being developed.
- **Staff Development**: Training in ESD is actively promoted for academic staff, but opportunities for non-academic staff are underdeveloped, limiting the broader institution's engagement with sustainability.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: While sustainability is increasingly integrated into existing degree programs, PHLU lacks practical learning opportunities such as **Living Labs**. Furthermore, there is no standardized sustainability literacy assessment in place to evaluate the impact of these teaching efforts on students.

Strengths

- **Sustainability Office**: PHLU has an adapted institutional structure for sustainability, particularly through the sustainability office and the commission. The existence and integration level of these bodies show a high level of commitment, which supports institutionalizing sustainability within the university.
- **Leadership Engagement**: The score for leadership engagement indicates a positive commitment from university leadership towards sustainability.

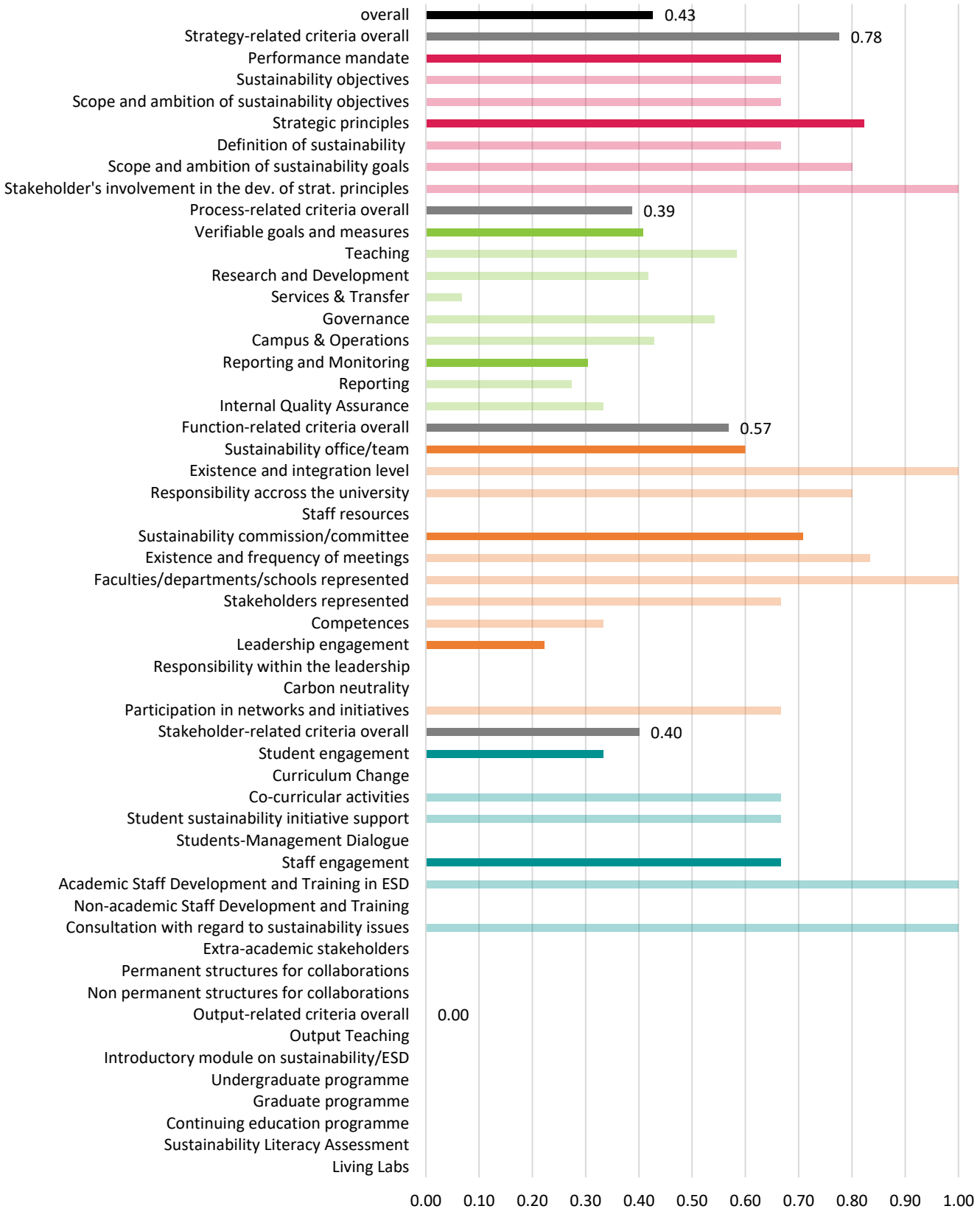
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Structures for Collaborations Focused on Sustainability**: More robust structures for both **permanent and non-permanent collaborations** focused on sustainability could be developed. Creating living labs, community-based projects, or other collaborative platforms could facilitate the translation of research into impactful sustainability solutions and enhance experiential learning opportunities for students.
- **Development and Training for Non-Academic Staff on Sustainability Issues**: Expanding training opportunities for administrative and technical staff would ensure that all university members are well-informed and actively engaged in sustainability initiatives, fostering a comprehensive culture of sustainability throughout the institution.

Notable transfer initiative: Fallarbeit zu Bildung in Nachhaltiger Entwicklung

In this project, students work in small groups to address real-world sustainability issues proposed by partner organizations, applying their theoretical knowledge to create practical, science-based solutions. This project involves developing educational concepts that integrate ecological, social, political, and ethical dimensions of sustainability, using a service-learning approach to foster skills relevant for civil society initiatives.

Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen (PHSG)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, PH St. Gallen (PHSG) made considerable progress in the field of sustainability through various strategic initiatives and projects. The establishment of the **"Zentrum Nachhaltige Entwicklung"** played a key role, providing a hub for activities related to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and supporting projects across different departments. The center developed educational models for sustainability integration and led initiatives in areas such as energy, service learning, and outdoor teaching, all of which are pivotal to advancing sustainable practices at the institution. One notable project was the **"Nature Project"** launched in May 2021, which involved PHSG students collaborating with local schoolchildren to enhance the biodiversity of green spaces around the Gossau campus. Additionally, the **"Enabling Outdoor-Based Teaching (EOT)"** project, running from 2019 to 2024, focused on promoting outdoor education as a tool for implementing ESD. This project investigated the attitudes of educators and students toward outdoor teaching, provided networking opportunities, and developed resources to support outdoor learning across multiple teacher training institutions in Switzerland.

1. Strategy-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Objectives**: PHSG's strategic goals cover promoting a sustainability culture, integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across programs, and achieving resource-efficient campus operations. The strategy is integrated in various aspects of the university but could benefit from measurable targets for impact assessment.

2. Process-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: PHSG promotes ESD within its curricula, facilitated by the **Zentrum Nachhaltige Entwicklung**. They plan to offer a comprehensive ESD course catalog, enhancing sustainability integration across teaching fields. However, a universal mandatory introductory module remains under development.
- **Research and Development**: While PHSG conducts sustainability-related research, especially in ESD, it lacks specific incentives to further support sustainability research initiatives, which could broaden its research impact.

3. Function-Related Criteria

- **Sustainability Office**: The **Zentrum Nachhaltige Entwicklung** manages sustainability initiatives across teaching, research, and operations, with advisory functions reporting to the rectorate. However, PHSG has not yet set a formal carbon neutrality goal, and specific carbon reduction measures are in early stages.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: The institution has initiated partial energy efficiency improvements but has yet to implement a comprehensive carbon neutrality plan.

4. Stakeholder-Related Criteria

- **Student Engagement**: PHSG supports student sustainability initiatives through the **Inkubator BeNE** for project incubation.
- **Community Engagement**: PHSG lacks permanent structures for external collaborations, though it participates in temporary projects like the **Inkubator BeNE** with external partners, supporting socio-ecological impact.

5. Output-Related Criteria

- **Teaching**: ESD is integrated into PHSG's curriculum, with elective sustainability modules, though a formalized sustainability literacy assessment is not yet established. This limits PHSG's ability to gauge student understanding and application of sustainability concepts.

Strengths

- **Established Sustainability Governance**: The **Zentrum Nachhaltige Entwicklung** oversees sustainability across departments, fostering integration and cross-departmental support.
- **Strong Student and Project-Based Community Engagement**: Initiatives like **Inkubator BeNE** enable student-led and community-connected sustainability projects, advancing practical sustainability applications.

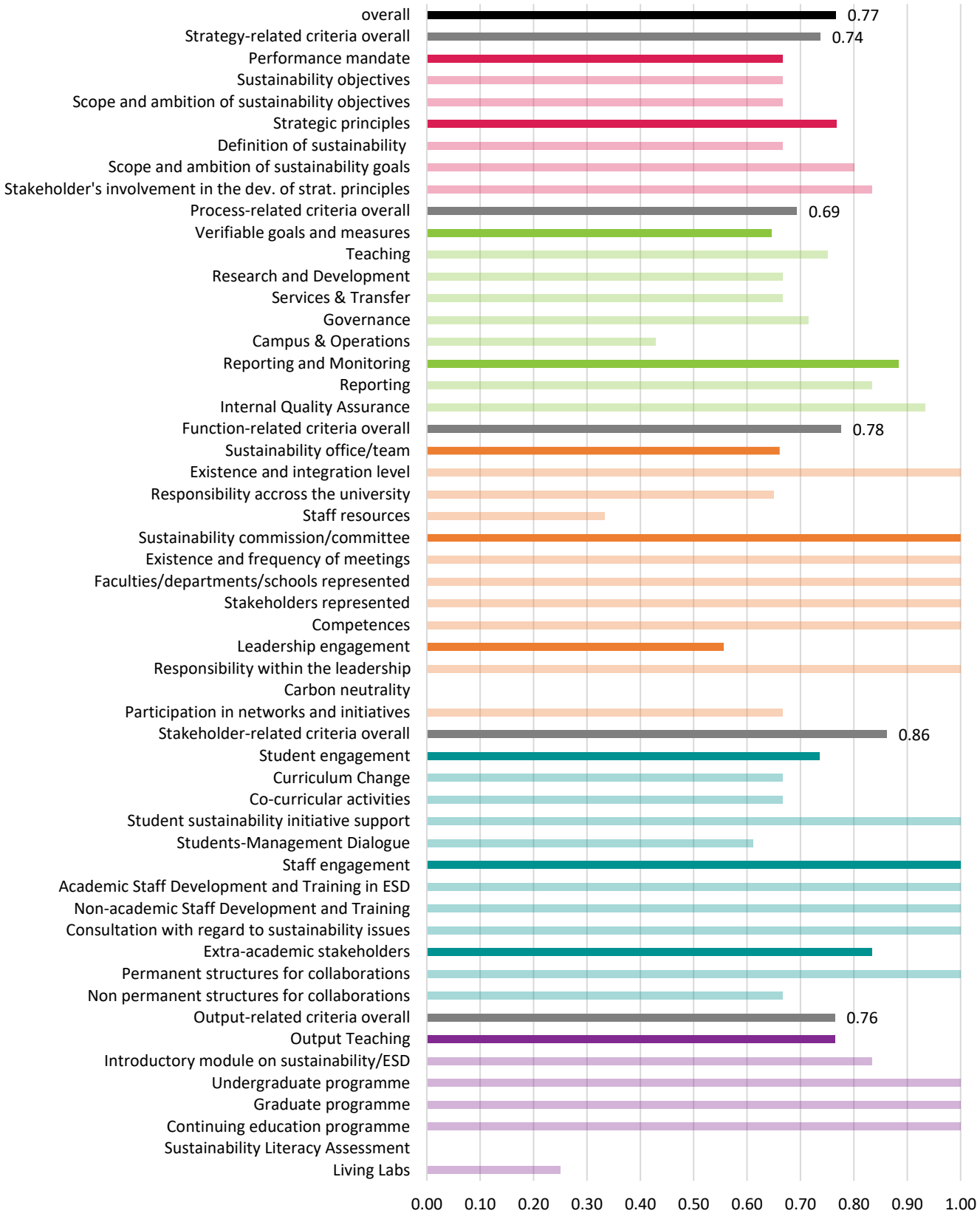
Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Formal Carbon Neutrality Commitment**: Establishing a formal carbon neutrality target and developing comprehensive emission reduction plans could strengthen PHSG's climate response.
- **Mandatory ESD Foundation**: A required introductory ESD module for all students would ensure baseline sustainability literacy.
- **Permanent Community Partnerships**: More long-term, structured partnerships with external stakeholders would broaden PHSG's regional sustainability impact.

Notable transfer initiative: Inkubator BeNE

The Inkubator BeNE is a central hub designed to support sustainability projects and to promote service learning as a key method for sustainability education. It provides tools, coaching, and workshops to help students develop, implement, and reflect on sustainability projects, ranging from small projects integrated into modules to larger projects with at least 2 ECTS, often as part of elective courses. The projects aim to contribute to a safe and just society through practical student engagement. The Inkubator BeNE also provides resources like workshops on Scrum and Design Thinking to foster creativity and project management skills among participants and aims to train educators to effectively mentor students in sustainability projects.

Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich (PHZH)



Notable developments since 2021

Since 2021, PH Zurich (PHZH) has been actively advancing its sustainability initiatives through several impactful projects. One notable effort is the **Sustainable Leadership Project** (2024–2026), aimed at developing quality standards for sustainable schools and providing an online toolbox titled "Sustainable Leadership – Designing Sustainable Schools" to assist educational leaders. The **Smart Schools (SMASCH) Project** (2021–2024) involved collaborations with schools in Hamburg and Belgium to create sustainable, pedagogically meaningful digitization strategies, ensuring a balanced integration of technology and sustainability. PHZH's **strategic goals for 2022-2025** incorporate sustainable development into all key objectives, supported by three overarching sustainability goals: promoting education for sustainable development (ESD), shaping a sustainable university, and strengthening sustainability networking. Initiatives include interdisciplinary centers such as the **Zurich Knowledge Center for Sustainable Development** (ZKSD), projects like **"Schulnetz21"** for sustainable schools, and sustainability-focused teaching and research programmes.

1. Strategy-related criteria

- **Scope and priorities**: PHZH has incorporated sustainability as a central element of its strategic goals for 2022-2025. Sustainability is explicitly integrated in the five strategic goals of the university, addressing key areas like education, collaboration, and professional development. The sustainability policy sets three major university-wide goals: promoting education for sustainable development (ESD), fostering a sustainable institution, and enhancing networking on sustainability topics.

2. Function-related criteria

- **Governance and Leadership**: The sustainability strategy is overseen by a designated sustainability officer and the Health and Environment Commission, which have decision-making authority. Sustainability leadership is formally held by a member of the university management, ensuring high-level oversight and prioritization of sustainability initiatives. The governance system includes a clear quality assurance process that monitors sustainability goals throughout all organizational units.

3. Process-related criteria

- **Implementation and Monitoring**: PHZH implements its sustainability strategy through the Vice-Rectorates, Administrative Directorate, and Rectorate. Each unit is responsible for achieving sustainability-related goals within a specific timeframe, monitored via an annual quality control cycle. This ensures that the university remains aligned with its sustainability targets and can adjust measures as necessary. The Health and Environment Commission, along with the sustainability office, coordinates the day-to-day implementation and review of sustainability activities.

4. Stakeholders-related criteria

- **Internal and External Engagement**: PHZH actively involves a broad range of internal stakeholders in its sustainability efforts, including university management, academic staff, students, and administrative personnel. Externally, PHZH collaborates with several partners, including Zurich universities and community stakeholders, through projects like the Zurich Knowledge Center for Sustainable Development (ZKSD). It is also involved in multiple sustainability-focused networks such as Copernicus Alliance and Schulnetz21, which supports local schools in implementing sustainability initiatives.

5. Output-related criteria

- **Education, Research, and Community Engagement**: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is integrated across teaching modules, and all first-year students participate in an introductory sustainability course. PHZH also offers incentives for staff to incorporate sustainability into teaching and research. Significant projects like **Schulnetz21** and the ZKSD help translate sustainability education into practical community engagement. In terms of research, sustainability topics are promoted in various fields, including science education and school improvement, while initiatives like **Schloss Au** establish practical spaces for community-driven sustainability engagement.

Strengths

- **Comprehensive Strategic Integration**: Sustainability is integrated in all strategic objectives, ensuring a consistent focus across university functions.
- **Dedicated Governance Structures**: The presence of a sustainability office, commission, and formal leadership roles ensures robust governance for sustainability.
- **Internal and External Engagement**: PHZH has strong internal participation and significant collaboration with external stakeholders, enhancing the scope of its sustainability efforts.
- **Education and Research Focus**: ESD is actively promoted at all levels of education, and sustainability-related research is incentivized and supported by specific programs.

Areas for Improvement from the Perspective of WWF

- **Environmental Impact**: PHZH does not have an inventory for its greenhouse gas emissions, a water reduction policy, nor a goal for achieving carbon neutrality**.**
- **Sustainability team**: Even at a small university like PHZH, a larger sustainability team could significantly support sustainability efforts by ensuring there is enough capacity to design, implement, and sustain effective initiatives throughout the institution.
- **Standardized Assessment of Sustainability Literacy**: Introducing a standardized assessment for student sustainability literacy could enhance the understanding of learning outcomes and guide improvements in sustainability education.

Notable transfer initiative: Schloss Au Conference Center

The Schloss Au Conference Center serves as a hub for sustainability-focused events, providing facilities for conferences, workshops, and educational activities that align with PHZH's mission for sustainability education. It supports both internal and external stakeholders in promoting sustainable development initiatives.

Appendix

A) WWF vision for a sustainable university

The visionary sustainable university is a pioneering institution, embodying cutting-edge approaches to sustainability across its five key areas. It is not merely a place of learning but a living system where sustainability principles are woven into every action, decision, and interaction. Here's how this university manifests its vision across its five areas:

Teaching

Teaching is grounded in the concept of transformative learning, where **students are not only educated but challenged to rethink** their assumptions and values about the world. Sustainability is integrated across every discipline, from engineering to the arts, creating a deeply interdisciplinary environment. Students learn systems thinking and are encouraged to **approach complex global challenges through a holistic lens.** **Active, participatory** teaching methods would dominate, with a strong **focus on project-based learning and experimentation.** Therefore, **courses often revolve around real-world projects** in partnership with local communities, businesses, or NGOs, blending theory with practice. The curriculum is not static but **dynamic,** evolving with the needs of society, and students are empowered to **co-create** learning pathways through social innovation labs, where they design solutions to contemporary sustainability issues.

Research

The university **leads the way in mission-oriented research, targeting global challenges** such as **climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality.** Research is heavily collaborative and driven by the impact it can have on society, rather than just academic advancement. Multidisciplinary research hubs focus on **bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and its application,** drawing from both the natural and social sciences. **Partnerships** with governments, private industry, and civil society are integral, ensuring that findings directly **influence policy and practice.** Research results would be disseminated widely, not only through academic publications, but also via **open platforms** accessible to all. Open and citizen science would be encouraged, **enabling society to participate actively in the co-creation** of sustainable knowledge, aligning with the broader goals of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

Services and Transfer to Society

A core mission of the university is **impact through transfer to society,** where the **knowledge, innovations, and solutions** developed within the institution actively **contribute to societal transformation.** This is achieved through a robust **knowledge transfer ecosystem,** which includes **start-up incubators** for sustainability-focused businesses, community **workshops,** and ongoing **education** for professionals. The university serves as a convener for **dialogue** on sustainability, hosting global and local **forums** that **bring together diverse stakeholders to collaborate on solutions.** In this model, the university is both a **hub for innovation and a facilitator of change,** continually adapting its services to the evolving needs of the community and wider society.

Governance

Governance at the visionary university is based on **participatory democracy.** Decision-making is **inclusive,** with students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders **actively involved** in shaping the university's strategic direction. The university adopts **experimental structures** akin to "citizen councils", **ensuring that decision-making processes include voices beyond those in formal leadership positions.** This **participative culture** is deeply aligned with theories of governance for the common good, ensuring that **every voice is heard** and that **all actions are in harmony with long-term ecological and social well-being.** The organizational structure is **fluid,** allowing for **agility** and rapid adaptation to emerging sustainability challenges. Leaders within the university see themselves as stewards, responsible not just for the institution's success, but for its role as a **driver of systemic change.** To encourage bottom-up engagement, especially on matters where **academic freedom** is critical, the university sets up **commissions or collaborative bodies** where all stakeholders can **co-develop** projects and influence decisions, ensuring that **diverse perspectives** are integrated, and that innovation and academic autonomy thrive together.

Operations and campus

The campus itself is a regenerative space, following the principles of **Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics.** This means that the university **operates within the planet's ecological boundaries,** with **zero carbon emissions** and a **closed-loop system** for energy, water, and waste. The campus is a showcase of **circular economy** in action, where all materials used are either **reused, repurposed, or composted.** Solar panels, geothermal energy, and green roofs are omnipresent, while the **biodiversity** on campus is actively fostered with native plant species, urban farms, and permaculture gardens that feed both the community and contribute to local ecosystems. The campus is also a living lab, where **students and researchers continuously test and implement new sustainability innovations.** By prioritizing sustainable procurement, the university ensures that all goods and services sourced have **minimal environmental impact,** support **ethical labor** practices, and contribute to a **circular economy.** To increase its positive impact beyond its direct sphere, the university **uses its investments as leverage to maximize its sustainable impact,** adopting impact investing practices that **direct funds** towards projects and companies that contribute to environmental and social goals. In addition, **strict control of third-party funds** is in place to ensure that all capital managed or associated with the university complies with strict sustainability criteria, reinforcing its **role as a leader in responsible finance and the sustainable economy.** In terms of sustainable mobility, the university **promotes car-free zones, bike-sharing, and charging stations** on campus, while encouraging public transport and carpooling off-campus. Implementing a **CO_2 budget** limits air travel, pushing for more virtual meetings and local collaborations to cut emissions from flights. In terms of sustainable catering, it actively promotes **plant-based meals** and **sources local, seasonal and organic produce,** which significantly reduces emissions. It **incorporates composting and food waste tracking systems to reduce waste,** while **eliminating single-use plastics** in favor of biodegradable materials, thus **minimizing its overall environmental impact.** In the digital realm, the university actively **reduces its ecological footprint**, recognizing the reliance on rare resources often extracted under unsustainable and unethical conditions. It **optimizes data storage,** utilizes energy-efficient servers, and promotes responsible device use and recycling, **addressing both environmental and social challenges tied to digital infrastructure.**

B) Overview of all universities contacted and participating in the study

Listing of all contacted universities with participation	Listing of all contacted universities that did not participate	Listing of not contacted universities because of size (<1000 students)
Berner Fachhochschule BFH	Kalaidos Fachhochschule	Haute école pédagogique des cantons de Berne, du Jura et de Neuchâtel HEP-BEJUNE
Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne EPFL		Haute école pédagogique du Valais | Pädagogische Hochschule Wallis HEP-VS | PH-VS
Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung EHB		Haute école pédagogique Fribourg | Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg HEP | PH FR
Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich ETH		Hochschulinstitut IVP NMS
Fachhochschule Graubünden FHGR		Pädagogische Hochschule Graubünden | Alta scuola pedagogica dei Grigioni | Scola auta da pedagogia dal Grischun PHGR
Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz FHNW		Pädagogische Hochschule Schaffhausen PHSH
Haute école pédagogique du canton de Vaud HEP Vaud		Pädagogische Hochschule Schwyz PHSZ
Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale HES-SO		Pädagogische Hochschule Thurgau PHTG
Hochschule Luzern HSLU		Pädagogische Hochschule Zug PH Zug
Interkantonale Hochschule für Heilpädagogik Zürich HfH		Schweizer Hochschule für Logopädie Rorschach SHLR
Ostschweizer Fachhochschule - Ost		SUPSI - Dipartimento formazione e apprendimento SUPSI-DFA
Pädagogische Hochschule Bern PHBern		
Pädagogische Hochschule Luzern PH Luzern		
Pädagogische Hochschule Nordwestschweiz PH FHNW		
Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen PHSG		
Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich PH Zürich		
Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana SUPSI		
Università della Svizzera italiana USI		
Universität Basel		
Universität Bern UniBE		
Universität Luzern Unilu		
Universität St. Gallen HSG		
Universität Zürich UZH		
Université de Fribourg UniFr		
Université de Genève UNIGE		
Université de Lausanne UNIL		
Université de Neuchâtel UniNE		
Zürcher Hochschule der Künste ZHdK		
Zürcher Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften ZHAW		

C) Comparative overview of 2024 and 2021 study criteria

As the questionnaire and the data analysis have been refined since the last rating in 2021, direct comparison of the overall methodology is possible only to a certain extent.

Criteria	Corresponding Criterion 2021	Comments
Performance mandate	Leistungsauftrag	
Strategic priniciples	Strategische Grundlagen	
Verifiable goals and measures	Überprüfbare Ziele, Massnahmen	The two categories were combined in the 2024 evaluation
Reporting and monitoring	Reporting und Controlling	
Sustainability office/Team	Fachstelle	
Sustainability Commission/Committee	Kommission/Gremium	
Leadership engagement	Hochschulleitung: Verankerung und Engagement	
Student engagement	Studentisches Engagement	
Staff engagement		New criterion
Extra-academic stakeholders	Gesellschaftliches Engagement	
Output Teaching		New criterion

Criteria	Indicators	Corresponding Indicator 2021	Comments
Performance mandate	Sustainability objectives	Politischer Auftrag der Hochschule (question 1)	
	Scope and ambition of sustainability objectives	Politischer Auftrag der Hochschule (question 2)	
Strategic priniciples	Definition of sustainability	Strategische Verankerung (question 1)	
	Scope and ambition of sustainability goals	Strategische Verankerung (question 2)	
	Stakeholder's involvement in the dev. of strat. principles	Mitwirkung	
Verifiable goals and measures	Teaching		New system based on the five university dimensions: teaching, research, transfer, governance, campus
	Research and Development		
	Services & Transfer		
	Governance		
	Campus & Operations		
Reporting and monitoring	Reporting	Reporting- und Controlling-Prozesse (questions 1-2)	
	Internal Quality Assurance	Reporting- und Controlling-Prozesse (question 3), Mitwirkung	
Sustainability office/Team	Existence and integration level	Integrationsebene	
	Responsibility accross the university	Integrationsebene	
	Staff resources	Personalressourcen	
Sustainability Commission/Committee	Existence and frequency of meetings	Existenz	
	Faculties/departments/schools represented	Breite der Mitwirkung (question 2)	
	Stakeholders represented	Breite der Mitwirkung (question 1)	
	Competences	Kompetenzen	
Leadership engagement	Responsibility within the leadership	Verantwortlichkeit und Vision (question 1)	
	Carbon neutrality	Verantwortlichkeit und Vision (question 3)	

	Participation in networks and initiatives	Vernetzung und Engagement	
Student engagement	Curriculum Change		New indicator
	Co-curricular activities	Förderung des studentischen Engagements (question 3)	
	Student sustainability initiative support	Förderung des studentischen Engagements (question 2)	
	Students-Management Dialogue	Dialog mit Student*innen (questions 1-2)	
Staff engagement	Academic Staff Development and Training in ESD		New criterion
	Non-academic Staff Development and Training		New criterion
	Consultation with regard to sustainability issues		New criterion
Extra-academic stakeholders	Permanent structures for collaborations	Partnerschaftliche Projekte	
	Non permanent structures for collaborations	Partnerschaftliche Projekte	
Output Teaching	Introductory module on sustainability/ESD		New criterion
	Undergraduate programme		New criterion
	Graduate programme		New criterion
	Continuing education programme		New criterion
	Sustainability Literacy Assessment		New criterion
	Living Labs		New criterion

D) Rating matrix

The ideal of a sustainable university is operationalized within the rating matrix. For each indicator, a level of requirement has been defined, against which universities are evaluated. This process ensures a clear benchmark while recognizing that not all criteria are applicable to every institution's context.

Strategy	Performance mandate	Definition of sustainability in the performance mandate		All institutions bound to one or more sponsors by a performance	Have a performance mandate that details sustainability objectives that are in line with the donut model.
		Scope and ambition of sustainability goals (university areas) in the performance mandate		All institutions bound to one or more sponsors by a performance mandate	The performance mandate covers all 5 university areas.
	Strategic principles	Definition of sustainability in the strategic principles		All institutions.	The institution's strategic fundamentals contain a concept of sustainability that is in line with the donut model. The university's role and contribution to sustainability are clearly highlighted.
		Scope and ambition of sustainability goals (university areas) in the strategic principles		All institutions.	The strategic fundamentals cover all 5 university areas.
		Stakeholder's involvement in the development of the strategic principles with regard to sustainability		All institutions.	All stakeholder groups are involved in the sustainability strategy development.
Process	Verifiable goals and measures	Teaching	Sustainability-related Academic Courses	All institutions.	Conduct an inventory to identify sustainability course offerings.
			Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	All institutions.	ESD benefits from institutional support aimed at all stakeholders.
			Interdisciplinary centre for promoting sustainability	All institutions.	An interdisciplinary center for promoting sustainabilitiy in Teaching is established.
			Incentives for Developing Sustainability-related Courses	All institutions.	Have an ongoing program that offers incentives for academic staff to develop new sustainability courses and/or incorporate sustainability into existing courses or departments.
		Research	Sustainability-related Research projects	Institutions where research is considered in employee promotion or tenure decisions.	Conduct an inventory to identify the institution's sustainability research.
			Support for Sustainability Research	Institutions where research is considered in employee promotion or tenure decisions.	Have programs to promote and/or support sustainability research.
			Excellence in Sustainability Research	Institutions where research is considered in employee promotion or tenure decisions.	Award for excellence in sustainability research.
			Animal Testing	Institutions where research is considered in employee promotion or tenure decisions.	Have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure that the 3R principles are respected in all research activities involving animals.
			Involvement of faculties/departments/schools in Sustainability Research	Institutions where research is considered in employee promotion or tenure decisions.	One third of the university faculties are involved in research institutes specifically focused on sustainability.
		Services & Transfer	Outreach Materials and Publications	All institutions.	Produce outreach materials and/or publications that foster sustainability learning and knowledge.
			Open University	All institutions.	Hold public lectures on sustainability issues.
			Assessing Sustainability Culture	All institutions.	Conduct an assessment of campus sustainability culture that focuses on sustainability values, behaviors and beliefs.
			Sustainability-related Continuing Education	Institutions that have formal continuing	Offer continuing education courses that have at least one sustainability-themed certificate programme through a continuing education.
			Engagement in Public Policy	All institutions.	Strengthen the voice of science on sustainability issues in the political arena.

Process	Verifiable goals and measures	Governance	Third-party funding	Institutions receiving third-party funding for teaching chairs and/or research institutes.	Have mechanisms in place to assess the acceptability of third-party funding, particularly from companies of national or even international importance.
			Sustainable Investment	Institutions with invested funds.	Invest its assets according to sustainability criteria such as an exclusion policy, selection (impact investing) and/or engagement (by exercising its rights as a shareholder to require the investment fund holding the assets to invest according to sustainable criteria).
			Investment and funding disclosure	Institutions that have an investment pool and/or receive third-	Report publicly on their investment holdings and third-party funding on at least an annual basis.
			Assessing Diversity and Equity	All institutions.	Have engaged in a structured assessment process to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus.
			Support for Underrepresented Groups	All institutions.	Have policies, programs or initiatives to support underrepresented groups and foster a more diverse and inclusive campus community.
			Affordability and Accessibility	All institutions.	Have implemented measures to support students in financial difficulty.
			Mental health support	All institutions.	Support the mental health of students, including doctoral candidates, and raise awareness about psychological distress on campuses.
		Campus and Operations	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	All institutions.	Have completed an inventory to quantify the institution's Scope 1 (direct emissions) and Scope 2 or 3 (indirect emissions) greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
			Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	All institutions.	Have introduced measures to reduce energy consumption and produce renewable energy on site.
			Sustainable Food and Catering	All institutions.	Have programs and initiatives to support sustainable and local food systems.
			Biodiversity	All institutions.	Monitor and publish an overview of the institution's overall impact on biodiversity (e.g. linked to the management of green spaces, water or nitrogen cycles linked to food).
			Sustainable Procurement	All institutions.	Have a sustainable procurement policy that includes waste minimization and electronics (recycle, reuse, and/or refurbish electronic waste).
			Digital Footprint	All institutions.	Have carried out an environmental impact analysis of their digital activities (footprint of its equipment and digital data).
			Sustainable Mobility	All institutions.	Have implemented strategies to encourage more sustainable modes of transportation and reduce the impact of student and employee commuting.
			Water Footprint	All institutions.	Have a water footprint reduction policy.
	Reporting and monitoring	Reporting	Frequency of reporting	All institutions.	Report on progress in implementing sustainability goals and measures.
			Involvement of stakeholders in	All institutions.	Involve various stakeholders across the institution in the reporting process.
		Internal Quality Assurance	Tracking system	All institutions.	Have integrated sustainability into the internal quality assurance system.
				All institutions.	
			Integration into internal quality assurance system	All institutions.	Sustainability is well embedded in the internal quality assurance system. All areas are subject to quality control.
			Integration of ESD into internal quality assurance system	All institutions.	Have integrated ESD into the internal quality assurance system.
				All institutions.	ESD is carefully monitored, also at the level of faculties/departments/schools
Function	Sustainability office/Team (day-to-day)	Existence of Sustainability office/team		All institutions.	The university has a sustainability office/team.
		Integration level		All institutions.	The sustainability office/team is in the direct responsibility of a member of the Executive Board.
		Responsibility accross the university		All institutions.	The sustainability office/team is in charge of all university areas.
		Staff resources		All institutions.	The Sustainability Office has staff resources of more than 1.5 FTE per million of the institution's staff budget.
	Sustainability Commission/Committee (transversal coordination body)	Existence		All institutions	The university has a sustainability commission.
		Frequency of meetings		All institutions.	The sustainability Commission/Committee meets at least once per semester.
		University faculties/departments/schools represented		All institutions.	All departments/faculties/schools are involved in the sustainability Commission / Committee
		Stakeholders represented		All institutions.	All hierarchical levels are represented in the sustainability Commission / Committee
		Competences of the sustainability commission/committee		All institutions.	The sustainability Commission/Committee has decision-making competences.
	Leadership engagement	Responsibility within the university management		All institutions.	A member of the Executive Board is responsible for sustainability and formally represents the institution in this capacity.
		Carbon neutrality		All institutions	Have formally adopted a net zero target incl. scope 3
				All institutions.	As much direct emissions reduction possible
		Participation in networks and initiatives		All institutions.	Participate in and actively contribute to communities of practice.
Stakeholder	Student Engagement	Curriculum Change		All institutions.	Enable students to actively participate in curriculum change.
		Co-curricular activities		All institutions.	Promote co-curricular sustainability programs and initiatives.
		Student Initiative Support		All institutions.	Have set up a platform to support, either in cash or in kind.
		Dialogue between Students and University Management		All institutions.	Have an institutionalized dialogue on sustainability at the university between the university management and the student body, either in or outside the commission.
				All institutions.	
				All institutions.	
	Staff engagement	Academic Staff Development and Training in ESD		All institutions.	Promote professional development and training opportunities in ESD to academic staff.
		Non-academic Staff Development and Training in Sustainability		All institutions.	Promote professional development and training opportunities in sustainability to non-academic staff.
		Assessment of Employees needs related to Sustainability issues		All institutions.	Conduct a survey or other evaluation of work-related sustainability issues among employees.
	Extra-academic stakeholders	Collaborations with extra-academic stakeholders (private sector, public sector, civil society)		All institutions.	Has a permanent structure to engage with the local community to identify sustainability needs and co-create suitable solutions
				All institutions.	
				All institutions.	
				All institutions.	Has a non-permanent structure to engage with the local community to identify sustainability needs and co-create suitable solutions
				All institutions.	
				All institutions.	
Output	Output Teaching	Introduction module for first year students	Existence and Number of ECTS credits	All institutions.	University offers introductory module(s) on sustainability/ESD
				All institutions.	ECTs are awarded for the introductory module on sustainability
				All institutions.	The introduction module earns a minimum of 4 ECTS
			Proportion of students	All institutions.	Have introduced a mandatory module on sustainability for all 1st year students.
			Assessment	All institutions.	Students' knowledge is assessed at the end of the introduction module.
		Undergraduate programme		Institutions that have at least two undergraduate programs.	Half of all faculties,departments or schools offer at least one undergraduate-level program focused on sustainability
		Graduate programme		Institutions that have at least four graduate programs.	Half of all faculties/departments or schools offer at least one graduate-level program focused on sustainability
		Continunig Education programme		All institutions.	Half of all faculties/departments or schools offer at least one continuing education program focused on sustainability
		Sustainability Literacy Assessment		All institutions.	Conduct an assessment of the sustainability literacy of the students in a standardized manner
		Learning in living labs		All institutions.	Utilize the institution's infrastructure and operations as a living laboratory for applied student learning for sustainability.
				All institutions.	Students are broadly involved in living labs.

E) Correspondences with Other Assessment Frameworks

In this section we attempt to highlight references to other established reporting frameworks. Our goal is to help universities identify overlaps, allowing them to use existing data across multiple assessment tools, thus enhancing consistency in sustainability evaluations and reducing redundant efforts.

1. Strategy

- **Performance Mandate and Strategic Principles**
  - **GRI**: GRI 102-14 (Statement from senior decision-maker), GRI 102-16 (Values, principles, standards, and norms of behavior).
  - **PRME**: Principle 1 – **Purpose**: Develop capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 4.7 – Ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed for sustainable development.
  - **STARS**: **Institutional Characteristics** and **Planning & Administration** – Related to strategic sustainability commitments.
  - **PIR**: Focuses on **Institutional Culture** – Emphasizes alignment with societal impact (no specific section).
  - **QS**: **Governance and Strategy** – Assesses integration of sustainability in mission and planning.
  - **THE**: SDG 4 and **SDG 17.14** – Policies for long-term sustainability.

2. Teaching

- **Sustainability-Related Academic Courses & Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**
  - **GRI**: GRI 404-2 – Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs.
  - **PRME**: Principle 3 – **Method**: Create educational frameworks, materials, processes, and environments for responsible leadership.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 4.7 – Focused on promoting education that supports sustainable development.
  - **STARS**: **Academic Courses** – Measures sustainability courses offered (% of all courses).
  - **PIR**: **Curriculum Integration** – Evaluation of sustainability topics covered in academic courses (no specific section).
  - **QS**: **Education Impact** – Looks at the integration of sustainability topics in education.
  - **THE**: SDG 4.7 – Impact of teaching and learning on sustainability.

3. Research

- **Sustainability-Related Research Projects & Support for Sustainability Research**
  - **GRI**: GRI 103 – **Management Approach** to sustainability issues; GRI 305 – **Emissions** (can be applied to research focus areas).
  - **PRME**: Principle 4 – **Research**: Engage in conceptual and empirical research for sustainable value creation.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 9.5 – **Enhance scientific research**, upgrade technological capabilities of industrial sectors.
  - **STARS**: **Research and Scholarship** – Proportion of research that addresses sustainability.
  - **PIR**: Emphasizes **Impact-driven Research** (no specific section or numbering).
  - **QS**: **Innovation and Research Impact** – Measures research outputs related to sustainability.
  - **THE**: SDG 9 – Focused on fostering **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure** through research.

4. Service & Transfer

- **Outreach and Public Policy Engagement**
  - **GRI**: GRI 413-1 – **Operations with local community engagement** and impact assessments.
  - **PRME**: Principle 5 – **Partnership**: Collaborate with managers to address social and environmental responsibilities.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 17.17 – Promote **Effective Partnerships** for sustainable development.
  - **STARS**: **Community Partnerships** – Evaluates extent of outreach and engagement.
  - **PIR**: **Societal Engagement** – Measures outreach impact on society (no specific section).

- **QS**: **Social Impact** – Assesses community involvement and outreach.
- **THE**: SDG 11 – Measures contribution to **Sustainable Cities and Communities** through community projects.

5. Governance

- **Sustainable Investment, Third-Party Funding, and Support for Underrepresented Groups**
  - **GRI**: GRI 201-1 – **Economic Performance**: Financial implications related to sustainability; GRI 405-1 – **Diversity and Equal Opportunity** in governance bodies.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 10.2 – Promote **Social Inclusion** of all.
  - **STARS**: **Investment & Finance** – Measures support for sustainable initiatives; **Diversity & Affordability** – Evaluation of diversity policies.
  - **PIR**: **Governance Practices** – Evaluation of sustainability practices in governance (no specific numbering).
  - **QS**: **Governance and Institutional Leadership** – Measures leadership involvement in sustainability.
  - **THE**: SDG 10 – Focused on promoting **Reduced Inequalities** through institutional practices.

6. Campus and Operations

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Energy Efficiency, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Procurement**
  - **GRI**: GRI 302 – **Energy**; GRI 305 – **Emissions**; GRI 304 – **Biodiversity**; GRI 308 – **Supplier Environmental Assessment**.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 12 – **Responsible Consumption and Production**; SDG 13 – **Climate Action**.
  - **STARS**: **Operations** – Evaluates metrics on energy, emissions, and biodiversity.
  - **PIR**: **Environmental Performance** – Evaluation of operational sustainability.
  - **QS**: **Environmental Impact** – Metrics include emissions, energy use, and operational sustainability.
  - **THE**: SDG 12 and SDG 13 – Focused on resource management and **Climate Action**.

7. Function

- **Sustainability office and Sustainability commission/committee**
  - **GRI**: GRI 102-18 – **Governance Structure**; **GRI 102-20** – **Executive-level responsibility for economic, environmental, and social topics**.
  - **PRME**: Principle 2 – **Values**: Implementation in daily activities; Principle 6 – **Dialogue**: promoting sustainability governance across institutional and academic units.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 16.6 – **Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions**: directly supports effective governance; SDG 17.14 – **Policy coherence** for sustainable development.
  - **STARS**: **Coordination & Planning** – Evaluates if the institution has structures and capacities for advancing sustainability across campus.
  - **PIR**: **Institutional Culture and Governance** – Institutional support for sustainability, fostering culture and governance.
  - **QS**: **Governance and Leadership** – Implementation efforts.
  - **THE**: **SDG 16** – **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** – Evaluates how institutions promote inclusive decision-making, which includes the creation of commissions or committees to oversee sustainability.

8. Stakeholder

- **Student and Staff Engagement, Collaboration with Extra-Academic Stakeholders**
  - **GRI**: GRI 102-40 to GRI 102-44 – Stakeholder engagement processes.
  - **PRME**: Principle 6 – **Dialogue**: Facilitates dialogue among educators, students, and business.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 17.16 – **Enhance Global Partnerships** for sustainable development.
  - **STARS**: **Engagement** – Measures collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.
  - **PIR**: **Stakeholder Involvement** – Evaluates involvement of students and staff (no specific numbering).
  - **QS**: **Social Impact** – Stakeholder involvement in sustainability initiatives.
  - **THE**: SDG 17 – Focused on building **Partnerships for the Goals**.

9. Output

- **Sustainability Literacy, Learning in Living Labs, and Curriculum Change**
  - **GRI**: GRI 404-2 – Education and training for sustainable development.
  - **PRME**: Principle 3 – **Method**: Developing sustainability-oriented curriculum and learning processes.
  - **SDGs**: SDG 4.7 – Aims to ensure learners acquire the knowledge to support sustainable development.
  - **STARS**: **Academic Courses** – Measures literacy outcomes through sustainability-related curricula.

- **PIR**: **Student Leadership** – Focuses on enabling students to lead sustainability projects.
- **QS**: **Education Impact** – Measures experiential learning and literacy related to sustainability.
- **THE**: SDG 4 – Literacy and learning related to sustainability competencies.

F) Questionnaire

Please find the online survey under this link: ***https://wwf.ch/university-rating-survey***

G) Glossary

This glossary was sent to participating universities with the questionnaire as a survey supplement during data collection.

1. **Definition of sustainability**: Sustainability within the university context entails a comprehensive commitment to aligning institutional practices, policies, and values with the dual imperatives of respecting planetary boundaries and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It involves recognizing and respecting the finite ecological limits of the Earth's systems, as outlined by the concept of planetary boundaries, and actively working to operate within these limits to ensure the long-term viability of ecosystems and the well-being of current and future generations. Universities have a responsibility to take action on sustainability and pursue their own ecological and social transition. Their cutting-edge research on many aspects of the ecological transition, their interdisciplinarity, the civic commitment of their scientists and the training of a new generation of students will help to meet the vital challenges facing humanity today. Sustainable universities aspire to contribute to sustainability through their core missions of teaching, research, and transfer, while also serving as living laboratories for exploring and implementing innovative solutions to sustainability challenges. By fostering a culture of sustainability, universities can lead by example, inspiring and empowering students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders to become agents of positive change and contribute to shaping a future where both people and the planet thrive.

2. **Definition of strong sustainability**: According to the concept of strong sustainability, the dimensions of sustainability mentioned above cannot be substituted: Planetary boundaries must be respected and the remaining stocks of "natural capital" must be preserved. On this basis, peaceful societies that are capable of learning and adapting can develop. An environment that is as intact as possible and a functioning society are prerequisites for a sustainable economy. This understanding of the interdependence of the three dimensions, ecology, economy and society is particularly relevant in the case of conflicting goals. This emphasis on ecological and social dimensions has contributed to the fact that today more and more academics explicitly refer to the ecological and social transition.

3. **The ecological and social transition**: We refer to the ecological and social transition to distance ourselves from the traditional and now outdated vision of sustainable development as defined by the Brundtland report, which gives as much importance to the economic imperatives of development as to the ecological (planetary boundaries) and social (around notions of equity) dimensions. The ecological and social transition within the university context involves a collective commitment from universities, research institutions, and academic communities to align their operations, research agendas, and educational initiatives with principles of ecological integrity, social equity, and justice. It requires strong leadership, institutional commitment, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration both within and beyond Swiss universities. By proactively addressing ecological and social transition challenges, universities can contribute to building a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient society.

4. **University**: "University" is used in this questionnaire instead of "Higher Education Institution". University covers all the entities that are subordinate to its management and therefore generally includes all the schools, departments, faculties, interdisciplinary centers, observatories, units, etc. that are linked to the university's management. Moreover, it includes all types of higher education institutions: universities and federal institutes of technology (UNI), universities of applied sciences (UAS) as well as universities of teacher education (UTE).

5. **University management**: The term refers to the collective administrative and management functions within a university. This typically includes leadership positions such as the rector/president/director, vice-rector/vice-president/director/pro-rector, general secretary, financial director, etc.

The functions within university leadership vary depending on the specific structure and size of the university, but they generally entail the following responsibilities:

- Strategic Leadership: University leadership is responsible for defining the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the university. They develop long-term strategic plans for the university's development and guide their implementation.
- Academic Management: They oversee the academic activities of the university, including teaching and research programs. This includes defining study programs, recruiting and promoting faculty, and supervising research activities.
- Administrative and Financial Management: University leadership is responsible for managing the human, financial, and material resources of the university. This includes budgeting, infrastructure management, management of administrative staff, etc.
- External Relations and Partnerships: They maintain relationships with external stakeholders such as government authorities, businesses, research funding organizations, professional organizations, etc. They also develop strategic partnerships with other academic institutions and organizations.
- Institutional Representation: University leadership represents the university to government bodies, media, the public, and other institutions. They advocate for the university's interests and communicate its achievements, initiatives, and positions on relevant issues.

6. **Performance mandates**: Sometimes referred to as ‘performance contracts’ or ‘target agreements’ (in German usually called "Leistungsvereinbarung", in French "contrat de prestations" or "mandat d'objectifs" and in Italian "contratti di prestazioni”). These are strategic plans developed by the university and validated by cantonal/federal political bodies and authorities.

7. **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**: Education is essential for sustainable development. The concept of education for sustainable development (ESD) includes not only topics and content, but also and foremost teaching/learning approaches and learning methods with which sustainability-relevant skills are promoted - at all levels of education and also in university teaching.

8. **Distinction between sustainability and education for sustainable development (ESD)**: While the teaching of sustainable development follows a thematic approach, encouraging the acquisition of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge related to sustainability issues, the teaching of education for sustainable development follows a didactic approach, referring primarily to the methods used and the skills and values developed with sustainability issues as the context. We consider these two approaches to be equally important and complementary.

9. **3R-framework in research**: The principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) were developed over 50 years ago providing a framework for performing more humane animal research. Since then, they have been integrated in national and international legislation and regulations on the use of animals in scientific procedures, as well as in the policies of organizations that fund or conduct animal research.

10. **Co-curricular activities**: Co-curricular activities are activities that take place outside the classroom but reinforce or supplement classroom curriculum in some way. Generally speaking co-curricular activities are an extension of the formal learning experiences in a course or academic program, while extracurricular activities may be offered or coordinated by a school but may not be explicitly connected to academic learning.

11. **Third mission**: The ‘third mission’ is often seen as complementary to the traditional missions of teaching and research, hence the name 'third mission'. In relation to sustainability, it refers to the activities of universities that go beyond traditional teaching and research, such as engaging with society and making a positive contribution to socio-economic development. Insofar as the definition and contours of what the 'third mission' encompasses vary greatly depending on the context and type of university, in this study we will refer explicitly to the notion of “transfer”.

12. **Transfer:** This is the main component of the 'third mission'. In relation to sustainability, transfer takes on particular importance in promoting the dissemination and application of knowledge and innovations to meet environmental, social and economic challenges. Here are some of the ways in which transfer from universities can contribute to sustainability:

- Sustainable technology transfer: Universities can transfer technologies and innovations that promote environmental sustainability, such as renewable energies, clean technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, waste management solutions, etc., to businesses and organisations to support the transition to a greener economy.
- Knowledge transfer for sustainable policies: The results of university research can inform the development of public policies and regulations aimed at promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability. The transfer of knowledge from universities to policy-makers can contribute to the adoption of effective measures to combat climate change, protect biodiversity, promote social equity and so on.

- Transfer of sustainable practices: Universities can transfer best practices and sustainability models developed through research projects and academic initiatives to businesses, community organizations and public institutions. This can include sustainable production methods, natural resource management strategies, sustainable urban planning solutions etc.
- Transferring skills for sustainability: Universities can transfer the cross-disciplinary skills and knowledge needed to promote sustainability in various sectors and areas of activity. This can include training in eco-design, environmental assessment, climate risk management, the circular economy, etc., to strengthen the ability of professionals to integrate sustainability considerations into their practice.
- Awareness-raising and community involvement: Universities can transfer knowledge about sustainability to the public and to local communities through awareness-raising initiatives, educational programmes, public events, etc. By encouraging participation and civic engagement, university transfer can help to strengthen collective awareness and promote sustainable behaviour.

In the context of this study this term will also include those sometimes used "service (to society)" or "dialogue (with society)".

13. **Sustainability Literacy**: Sustainability literacy is a crucial skill for addressing the sustainability challenges we face today and plays a key role in educating and empowering individuals as responsible citizens and agents of change for a more sustainable future. It refers to the ability to read, understand and interpret sustainability information, and to make informed decisions and adopt responsible behaviours in their daily, professional and civic lives. Standardised tools for assessing sustainability literacy have recently emerged, including the Sulitest, an initiative co-developed and supported by UNEP, which is gradually gaining ground in the university world.

14. **Living labs:** Living labs are collaborative spaces or environments where academic and extra-academic stakeholders come together to co-create, test, and implement innovative solutions to sustainability challenges. Living labs provide a stimulating and collaborative framework for teaching at university, enabling students to acquire practical, interdisciplinary and collaborative skills, while contributing to innovation and applied research.

15. **Introductory module for sustainability or ESD**: An introductory module for sustainability or Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for first-year university students serves as a foundational course designed to familiarize students with key concepts, principles, and challenges related to sustainability. The aim of such a module is to provide students with a broad understanding of sustainability issues, develop their critical thinking skills, and inspire them to become active agents of positive change in their personal and professional lives.

Our Mission

Together, we protect the environment and create a future worth living for generations to come.

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