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ZHAW Sustainability Strategy

Introduction

It is an essential task and the shared responsibility of universities to conduct research on the topic of Sustainable Development and to share the knowledge gained from these activities. It is also crucial that universities guide their students to shape the present and future in such a way that today's society as well as future generations will be able to responsibly and reflectively cope with social, economic and ecological challenges.

ZHAW's proven and recognized expertise in all relevant fields and performance areas enables the university to advocate for the future of society and the preservation of natural resources. It researches and develops forward-thinking solutions, educates students and promotes their awareness of the challenges of Sustainable Development.

The long-term goal of Sustainable Development is to promote inter- and intra-generational social and economic justice while respecting the ecological limits of natural resources. This cross-sectional task requires reflection, negotiation and smart compromise on all levels of decision-making and action. A core principle of Sustainable Development is therefore participation.

In this endeavor, ZHAW is guided by the 2030 Agenda and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals take into account the social, ecological and economic dimensions of Sustainable Development (➲ Explanations). Beyond this common framework, each individual field has its own reference system (such as relative sustainability, the triple bottom line or strong sustainability).

Sustainable Development at ZHAW requires cultural, organizational, infrastructural, curricular and didactic development, as well as skills development and behavioral adjustments on the part of employees and students. With this Sustainability Strategy, ZHAW addresses the issues of education, research, knowledge transfer, services, the campus, operations and governance. The Sustainability Strategy builds on previous achievements, as well as on the university strategy 2015-2025. In the latter, ZHAW defines three strategic goals, each with four strategic directions. The strategic goal of being "transformative" aims at Sustainable Development and the social, ecological and economic sustainability of our society. The Sustainability Strategy was designed with the intention of being long term and participatory in nature. It combines top-down and bottom-up initiatives. The measures to be taken are evidence-based.

With the Sustainability Strategy, ZHAW increases its appeal to responsible students, teachers, researchers and partners and makes a contribution to the Sustainable Development of our society, the environment and the economy. For ZHAW, Sustainable Development is not only a strategy on paper, but rather a way of life that must be lived and breathed, which bears responsibility for its stakeholders.

1. Vision

ZHAW promotes education for Sustainable Development

ZHAW educates students who are committed to both Sustainable Development and the preservation of livelihoods. Sustainable Development is firmly rooted in the Bachelor and Master programs. ZHAW uses internal synergies in the development, elaboration and implementation of corresponding teaching and learning content.

At ZHAW, teaching and learning strive to have a sustainable impact

Teaching at ZHAW is designed in such a way that it enables students to shape the world sustainably now and in the future and to learn to do so in a lasting way. It conveys the methodological and technical basics as well as joy and enthusiasm about making a difference. For this purpose, ZHAW uses relevant findings from cognitive, developmental and educational psychology.

ZHAW carries out extensive sustainability research

ZHAW promotes sustainability research and leverages synergies with other universities. It conducts research with many partners, preferably with those who also believe Sustainable Development is an essential concern. It is involved in the area of knowledge transfer and makes its skills and knowledge available to administrative, political, commercial and public organizations. Through its research, ZHAW generates scientific, social and technical knowledge for Sustainable Development.

ZHAW pursues connections between its Schools, nationally, and internationally

The different Schools of ZHAW pool their skills internally and ZHAW is an active member of national and international networks (e.g. "International Sustainable Campus Network", "International Alliance of Research Universities", "Climate KIC", "UN PRME" etc.).

ZHAW sees itself as a real-world laboratory for Sustainable Development

ZHAW is a real-world laboratory in which sustainable solutions are developed and implemented. Students, employees and, where necessary, representatives from the professional world come together to develop and test scientifically and socially sound solutions which shape the ZHAW campus. This real-world campus-wide laboratory reflects the needs of current real-world issues and is directly connected with the environment of the actors involved, and it provides a transformative educational setting for the students.

ZHAW sets sustainability goals for itself and verifies their achievement

Sustainable Development is anchored in ZHAW's university strategy. ZHAW works steadily to improve its performance in the field of Sustainable Development. It continuously sets goals for itself and regularly verifies the achievement of these goals – student involvement included. If necessary, improvement measures are taken.

ZHAW's operations are run sustainably

Involving important stakeholder groups, ZHAW defines the key fields of action for sustainable operations, sets concrete, measurable and timed goals for these fields and makes them publicly available. ZHAW's active cooperation and continuous dialogue with its stakeholders help to incorporate Sustainable Development into the university's operations.

The projects for Sustainable Development are made visible internally and externally

ZHAW's employees make their projects and experiences surrounding Sustainable Development accessible to each other and use shared experiences (including lessons learned from failed projects) as a basis for their own projects and developments, as well as to inspire their own behavior. They are supported by Marketing and Communications, who help them to define the message that they want to communicate.

2. Intended effects

Graduates are educated on Sustainable Development

ZHAW graduates recognize the interdependent complexity of social and material living conditions and how they are linked in a global context. Issues can be analyzed and evaluated with respect to all dimensions of sustainability and this knowledge can be used when planning and implementing projects.

Employees are aware of Sustainable Development and apply it to their work

Sustainable Development is an important concern to ZHAW employees. They have knowledge and skills in the field of Sustainable Development, know how to apply it, support each other in doing so and systematically share knowledge. The employees are aware of their responsibility and are able to convey the importance of sustainability in a competent and motivating manner.

ZHAW is a sought-after partner for continuing education in Sustainable Development

ZHAW is an important partner for the development of continuing education offers in the field of Sustainable Development, because it can quickly design offers that are tailor-made in terms of content, methodology and didactics, and it knows how to market its offers successfully.

ZHAW's sustainability expertise has an external impact

Through its sustainability research and its range of services, ZHAW makes a contribution to the future of society. Through its research, it adds to the scientific, social and technical knowledge for Sustainable Development and makes its skills available to administrative, political, commercial and public organizations.

ZHAW's operations are run sustainably

ZHAW has verifiably evolved sustainably in its operations in the defined areas.

3. Outcomes

3.1 Governance

Anchored in the Executive Board as well as the Schools

The president appoints a member of the Executive Board as a Head of Sustainable Development. He or she leads the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy and utilizes the expertise and skills available in the Schools in the form of an expert committee. Together with the committee, the appointee observes and anticipates national and international developments and facilitates the exchange of information internally and externally. He or she advocates a context-related and innovation-driven approach to Sustainable Development at ZHAW.

Sustainability Cockpit

ZHAW is developing a sustainability cockpit as a basis for reviewing, discussing and improving the achievement of its goals. It is part of the university's existing information system and allows for systematic control of achievements in the field of Sustainable Development. Moreover, it provides a link to internationally relevant key figure systems.

Communication concept and sustainability communication

ZHAW continuously adapts its communication concept. The activities in teaching, research and transfer in the field of Sustainable Development are presented in appealing ways via centralized communication channels.

Sustainability Report

ZHAW regularly communicates its performance and achievement of goals in the area of Sustainable Development in the form of a sustainability report.

Indexing

ZHAW indexes its directories and databases for teaching and research (e.g. module directories, the Digital Collection, the project database, competence databases) by using keywords (meta-tags) in order to make Sustainable Development easier to find and see.

3.2 Education

General competences

Course content and graduate skills at ZHAW are continuously adapted to the needs of Sustainable Development. A generic competence profile (➲ Explanations) serves each School as a basis for the more subject-specific development of their own courses.

Sustainable School ZHAW

ZHAW plans to offer students the opportunity to engage with sustainability-related topics both in theory and practice as part of an interdisciplinary Sustainable School (or as part of another elective module). The Sustainable School (or another elective module) enables students to use science to shape a sustainable future.

ZHAW Sustainable Impact Program

ZHAW has a program to support excellent initiatives for Sustainable Development from students and lecturers. It promotes practice-oriented, innovative projects to support Sustainable Development with an impact at ZHAW or in the region.

ZHAW real-world laboratory

The Schools use existing problems and challenges at the university to allow the students to carry out real experiments with the participation of all relevant parties. Real-world laboratories take real-world problems at ZHAW as their starting point, thereby making a contribution to Sustainable Development at the university as well as to the generation of new knowledge in terms of context-specific systems, objectives and transformations. The focus is on learning in an experimental environment.

Consolidated continuing education portfolio in Sustainable Development

ZHAW has an attractive and consolidated portfolio of advanced training in the field of Sustainable Development, which is coordinated across Schools and made centrally accessible.

3.3 Research and Innovation

Competence Center for Applied Sustainability

ZHAW will create a university-wide competence center for applied Sustainable Development and promotes practice-oriented research, knowledge and technology transfer. Wherever possible, it cooperates with universities and offers a doctoral program on the topic of Sustainable Development in order to attract young academics, research and innovation in this field in the long-term.

ZHAW Market Place for Applied Sustainability

ZHAW will develop a platform to provide its expertise in Sustainable Development to the professional world. Professionals, in turn, can use the platform to send inquiries to employees in this field. In this way, the platform promotes institutionalized exchange as well as an immediate application of results.

Framework for research in social responsibility

ZHAW will support critical reflection on the research process applied by its researchers in a new series of workshops and lunch meetings. They focus on the question of how ethical and socially relevant aspects can be taken into account when planning, implementing and disseminating research results (e.g. how research is carried out, with whom and for whom).

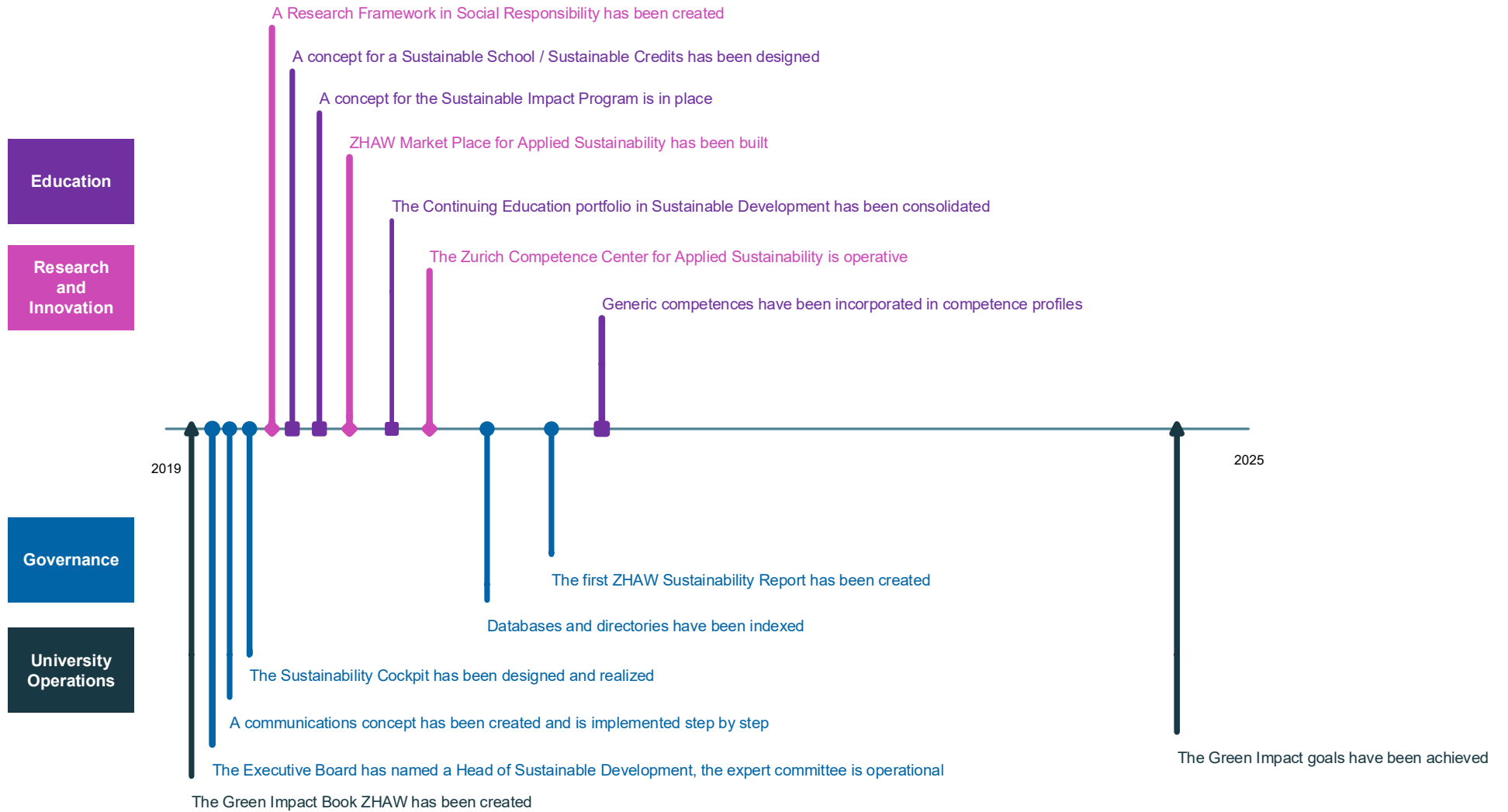## 3.4 University operations

Green Impact Book ZHAW

ZHAW has developed a Green Impact Book for sustainable university operations (➲ Explanations). It sets sustainability goals for the organization and lists basic measures to achieve these goals.

4. Summary

1 Vision	2 Intended Effects
› ZHAW promotes education for Sustainable Development › At ZHAW, teaching and learning strive to have a sustainable impact › ZHAW carries out extensive sustainability research › ZHAW pursues connections between its Schools, nationally, and internationally › ZHAW sees itself as a real-world laboratory for Sustainable Development › ZHAW sets sustainability goals for itself and verifies their achievement › ZHAW's operations are run sustainably › The projects for Sustainable Development are made visible internally and externally	› Graduates are educated on Sustainable Development › Employees are aware of Sustainable Development and apply it to their work › ZHAW is a sought-after partner for continuing education in Sustainable Development › ZHAW's sustainability expertise has an external impact › ZHAW's operations are run sustainably

3 Outcomes			
3.1 Governance	3.2 Education	3.3 Research & Innovation	3.4 University Operations
› Anchored in Executive Board and Schools › Sustainability Cockpit › Communication concept and sustainability communication › Sustainability Report › Indexing	› General competences › Sustainable School / Sustainable Credits › Sustainable Impact Program › ZHAW real-world laboratory › Consolidated continuing education portfolio in Sustainable Development	› Competence Center for Applied Sustainability › Market Place for Applied Sustainability › Framework for research in social responsibility	› Green Impact Book

5. Rough Masterplan 2019 to 2025

A Research Framework in Social Responsibility has been created

A concept for a Sustainable School / Sustainable Credits has been designed

A concept for the Sustainable Impact Program is in place

ZHAW Market Place for Applied Sustainability has been built

The Continuing Education portfolio in Sustainable Development has been consolidated

The Zurich Competence Center for Applied Sustainability is operative

Generic competences have been incorporated in competence profiles

Education

Research and Innovation

Governance

University Operations

2019

2025

The first ZHAW Sustainability Report has been created

Databases and directories have been indexed

The Sustainability Cockpit has been designed and realized

A communications concept has been created and is implemented step by step

The Executive Board has named a Head of Sustainable Development, the expert committee is operational

The Green Impact Book ZHAW has been created

The Green Impact goals have been achieved

Explanations

Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are to be achieved globally and by all UN member states by the year 2030. This means that all states are equally called upon to jointly solve the world's most pressing challenges. Switzerland, too, is called upon to implement the goals on a national scale. Incentives are to be created so that non-state actors will increasingly make active contributions to Sustainable Development. These seventeen goals are: 1) To end poverty in all its forms everywhere; 2) To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; 3) To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; 4) To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; 5) To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; 6) To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; 7) To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; 8) To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; 9) To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; 10) To reduce inequality within and among countries; 11) To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; 12) To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; 13) To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; 14) To conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for Sustainable Development; 15) To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; 16) To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for Sustainable Development, provide access to justice for all and build efficient, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; 17) To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

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Competence profile for Sustainable Development

As a guide for teachers, UNESCO has compiled the following core competences that currently reflect the international discourse and explicitly list the competencies that a) are particularly important for Sustainable Development, and b) have not yet been the focus of institutionalized education:

Systemic thinking: the ability to recognize and understand relationships, analyze complex systems, perceive the ways in which systems are embedded in different domains and scales, and be able to deal with uncertainty

Foresight: the ability to understand and evaluate multiple futures – possible, probable, and desirable – and to create your own visions for the future; to apply the precautionary principle; evaluate the consequences of actions and be able to deal with risks and changes.

Normative competence: the ability to understand and reflect on the norms and values on which one's actions are based; to be able to negotiate sustainability-related values, principles and goals in the context of conflicts of interest and necessary compromises, uncertain knowledge and contradictions.

Strategic competence: the ability to jointly develop and implement innovative actions that advance sustainability at local and larger scales.

Collaborative competence: the ability to learn from others; to understand and reflect on the needs, perspectives and actions of others (empathy); to understand others, relate to and be receptive to others (empathic guidance); to deal with conflicts in groups and make collaborative, participative problem solving possible.

Critical thinking: the ability to question norms, practices and opinions; to reflect on one's own values, perceptions and actions; to be able to take a position in the sustainability discourse.

Self-awareness skills: the ability to reflect on one's role in local communities and global society; to continuously assess one's own actions and motivate oneself; to be able to deal with one's own feelings and wishes.

Integrated problem-solving skills: the overarching ability to apply different problem-solving approaches to complex sustainability problems and to develop viable, inclusive and equitable solutions that promote Sustainable Development. All above-mentioned competences should be integrated.

The Hoch^N project proposes the following competences from other contexts:

Diversity, intercultural and equity competence: the ability to accept differences in people and cultures and to approach them with openness; to understand one's own socio-cultural situation; to recognize socio-ecological injustice and prevent unequal treatment (including ecological disadvantage) of people because of their group membership or to take action against it.

Democratic competence: the ability to understand democracy as a value and concept; to use opportunities for democratic participation and to specifically participate in processes of social transformation; to understand and help shape institutions, interest groups and political processes in Sustainable Development.

Global competence: the ability to understand the Earth as an overall system with cross-border ecological and social interactions; to understand the historically and politically grown inequalities with regard to unSustainable Development and their effects; and to include both in your own thinking and actions.

Affinity for all life: the ability to identify with other forms of life (and people), to appreciate biodiversity and evolutionary processes in life; to perceive one's own species as one of many and dependent on others; and to meet the diversity and complexity of life on Earth with humility and wonder.

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Teaching and learning with lasting effects

Sustainable learning means learning using concrete examples and based on authentic problems, learning in multiple contexts, learning from multiple perspectives, learning in social contexts and learning with instructional support. These principles are implemented, for example, in problem-based learning (PBL), project-based learning (PjBL), case-based learning (FBL) and research-based learning (FL) environments. Support is provided by the [Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in University Teaching](#) guide.

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Green Impact Book

The Green Impact Book focuses on ecological sustainability in the operations of ZHAW. Measures in the area of social sustainability (equal opportunities, diversity, promotion of health, personnel development, etc.) are developed, implemented and managed through other instruments and other units (HR, Diversity unit).

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6. Regulation documentation

The original German version of the document can be found here: [Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie ZHAW](#)

6.1 Regulation metadata

Concerning	Details
issued by	LeiterIn ZHAW sustainable
decided by	HSL
version	1.0.3
valid from	01.07.2019