



# First Announcement **SILVA Network Annual Conference** 18. – 20. May, 2026

Länggasse 85 | 3052 Zollikofen | Bern, Switzerland

**Co-operation in higher forest education  
– from open educational materials to  
joint curricula and degrees**

# Draft Program

Monday 18.05.2026	
11:00 – 12:00	Conference Registration & Welcome Venue: Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL, Länggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen
12:00 – 13:45	<i>Lunch at HAFL</i>
Opening Session	
13:45 – 14:00	Conference Opening: Prof. Dr. Ute Seeling
14:00 – 14:30	Introduction of forestry and forest education in Switzerland: Prof. Dr. Bernhard Pauli
<b>First session (Focus tbd)</b> Moderation: tbd	
14:30 – 16:00	Keynotes incl. discussion
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee</i>
<b>Second session (Focus tbd)</b> Moderation: tbd	
16:30 – 18:30	Keynotes incl. discussion
18:30	<i>Dinner at the Dormitory of HAFL</i>
Tuesday 19.05.2026	
<b>Third session (Focus tbd)</b> Moderation: tbd	
9.00 – 9:15	<b>Warp-up of Day 1</b>
9.15 – 10:45	Keynotes incl. discussion
10:45 – 11:15	<i>Coffee</i>
11:15 – 12:30	Keynotes incl. discussion (cont.)
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch at HAFL</i>
14:00 – 15:30	Workshop
15:30 – 17:00	General Assembly of the SILVA Network
18:30	<i>Conference Dinner</i>
Wednesday 20.05.2026	
8:00 – 16:00	<i>Field trip on the topic of mountain forestry in the Bernese Oberland</i>

## TOPIC AND CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

# Co-operation in higher forest education – from open educational materials to joint curricula and degrees

Higher education in forestry is undergoing a period of rapid transformation, driven by global sustainability challenges, changing labour market demands and the growing interdisciplinary nature of forest-related professions. In response to demands for climate-smart forestry, biodiversity conservation, bioeconomy development and digital innovation, universities are recognising the importance of deeper cooperation in teaching across institutions. Such collaborative approaches facilitate the sharing of expertise, the development of complementary strengths, and the creation of learning pathways that better prepare graduates to tackle complex, transboundary issues.

New developments in higher education such as European Degrees, joint degrees, microcredentials, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are reshaping the academic landscape in Europe. European and joint degrees strengthen cross-border collaboration and enhance student mobility, fostering a more integrated European Higher Education Area. Microcredentials and MOOCs, in turn, support more flexible, modular, and lifelong learning opportunities beyond traditional degree structures. Moreover, Open Educational Resources (OER) have recently emerged as powerful as a powerful foundation for collaboration. By promoting transparency, accessibility, and adaptability, OER facilitate the co-creation of teaching resources, reduce duplication of effort, and support harmonised quality standards across programmes. Building on these open resources, universities are increasingly exploring joint curriculum development and establishing shared or double degrees that offer students richer and more diverse academic experiences. Together, these innovations are expected to significantly influence the structures and processes of higher education in Europe by promoting greater flexibility, internationalization, and accessibility.

Thus, the SILVA Network Annual Conference 2026 brings together educators, researchers, and institutional leaders to explore new pathways for collaboration in teaching in higher forest education. The event focuses on strengthening cooperation through open educational resources, innovative teaching practices, and the development of joint curricula and degree programs.

We look forward to contributions from students, teachers, and administrative staff regarding:

- Success stories, challenges, and future perspectives of horizontal and/or vertical collaborative forest education
- Designing, using, and sharing open educational materials in forestry and related fields
- Cross-institutional teaching models and digital learning environments
- Strategies for co-creating joint curricula, courses, micro-credentials and MOOCs
- Governance, accreditation, and quality assurance in joint degree programs

### Participants are invited to submit their abstract by February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

Please e-mail your abstract (max 300 words) to Miriam Hug ([miriam.hug@bfh.ch](mailto:miriam.hug@bfh.ch)). The SILVA board will decide on contributions (oral presentations / posters) and all applicants will be informed as soon as possible after the deadline. Confirmed abstracts will be published in the Conference proceedings (SILVA Network Publications).

## Venue

The conference will be hosted by the Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL at Länggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen (near Bern), Switzerland. The campus is located near the city of Bern but is situated among fields and forests. Here, you'll find general information about Bern and its surroundings: <https://bern.com/en/home>.

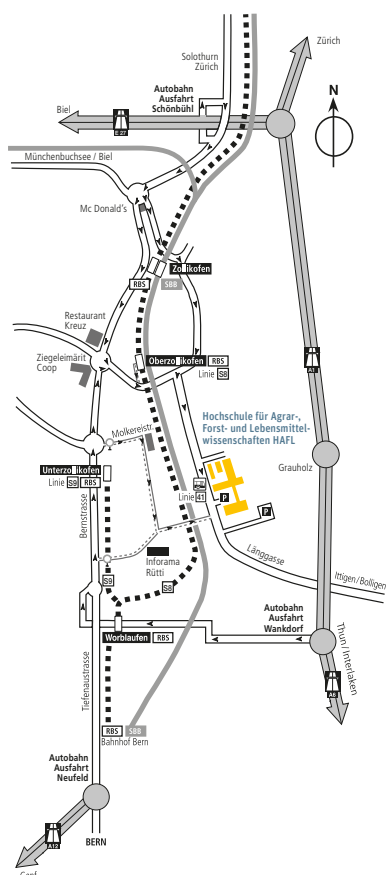
### Arriving by public transport

As parking spaces are limited at the campus of HAFL, we recommend you travel by public transport. You can easily reach HAFL by train. From Bern railway station, take RBS regional transport line S8 towards Jegenstorf. Trains leave every 15 minutes. Leave the train at Oberzollikofen, cross the tracks via the underpass, and follow signs to 'BFH HAFL' (around 10 minutes on foot).

During commuter hours, you can travel right to our main entrance by public transport. Take RBS bus number 41 (Breitenrain–Zollikofen) and alight at the 'Rütti Hochschule' stop.

### Arriving by car

If you are travelling from western Switzerland, exit the motorway at Bern-Neufeld. Anyone travelling from the Bernese Oberland should leave the motorway at Bern-Wankdorf. From Bern, you can reach us in 10 minutes by following Worblaufen–Zollikofen or Wankdorf–Ittigen–Zollikofen. Take the Zurich–Basel A1, exit the motorway at Schönbühl, and drive via Moosseedorf to Zollikofen.





## Accommodation

Participants must make their own accommodation arrangements at their cost. Here, you'll find a list of hotels and hostels in Bern and surroundings: <https://bern.com/en/inform/accommodations/>

The following are examples of accommodation:

- Novotel Bern Expo lies close to the train station Bern Wankdorf:  
<https://bern.com/en/inform/accommodations/hotels/hotel-novotel-bern-expo>
- Bern Youth Hostel is in the old town and very close to the idyllic river Aare.  
<https://bern.com/en/inform/accommodations/hostels/bern-youth-hostel>.



## Travel Arrangements

Participants make their own travel arrangements at their own cost. You can reach the campus of HAFL in Zollikofen via Bern (see above). There are several possibilities to get to Bern.

- **By train** to Bern train station. For more information about train tickets and connections see: <https://www.sbb.ch/en>. For more information about special train tickets for tourists see here: <https://www.sbb.ch/en/tickets-offers/tickets/guests-abroad.html>.
- **By car** directly to Bern and then to the campus of HAFL in Zollikofen (see above).
- **By plane** to EuroAirport Basel ([www.euroairport.com/en](http://www.euroairport.com/en)), Zurich airport ([www.flughafen-zuerich.ch/en/passengers](http://www.flughafen-zuerich.ch/en/passengers)) or Geneva airport (<https://www.gva.ch/en/>). From the airport take the train to Bern and then public transport to the campus of HAFL (see above).

## Registration and Fees

The early bird registration fee is €200; this applies up until March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026 after which, a fee of €250 applies. There is a student rate of €150. Registration includes coffee, lunches, the conference dinner, and the field trip. Registration must be paid in advance (details to follow in coming days).

## Organization and Local Organizers Contacts

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Pauli, [bernhard.pauli@bfh.ch](mailto:bernhard.pauli@bfh.ch)

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