

ETH Board requests further proposals for the strategic field of environment and sustainability

At its meeting on 13/14 May 2020, the ETH Board discussed the results of the internal consultation on its plans to create a federal research institute for the environment and sustainability by uniting WSL and Eawag. It decided to conduct an in-depth analysis and is requesting the ETH Domain institutions to put forward further solution proposals. The ETH Board also took note of the report on the implementation of equal opportunities. The positive trend of recent years is continuing.

Zurich/Bern, 15 May 2020

In recent months an internal consultation was held to consider the ETH Board's plans to create a federal research institute for the environment and sustainability by amalgamating WSL and Eawag. The results show that all the institutions of the ETH Domain support the ETH Board's objective of focusing their activities to an even greater extent on two urgent social issues: the impact of climate change on the environment and society, and the sustainable use of natural resources. The majority of the institutions express reservations about the planned amalgamation of WSL and Eawag, raising questions in particular about the cost-benefit ratio and the value added by the proposed merger. Furthermore, they feel that merely amalgamating WSL and Eawag would bring together only some of the types of expertise available in the ETH Domain.

At its meeting, the ETH Board discussed the results of this internal consultation. It welcomes the broad support it has received for the aim of strengthening the range of environmental and sustainability-related activities. It proposes that the mode of achieving this aim be the subject of close investigation over the next few months. The ETH Board is therefore deploying a working group, composed of representatives from all ETH Domain institutions, to work out further solution proposals that would accomplish the objective. In the meantime, the Board is deferring preparations of a preliminary draft for a parliamentary ordinance.

Positive trend in the implementation of equal opportunities

The promotion of equal opportunities in the ETH Domain continues to build on the progress seen in recent years. As the current gender monitoring system shows, the proportion of female students, including doctoral students, and the proportion of associate and full professorships held by women, again increased slightly at ETH Zurich and EPFL. Over the medium term, however, there was a slight downward trend in the proportion of women holding assistant professorships, although this remained at much the same level as in the previous three years. This largely positive development was evident not only at the two Federal Institutes of Technology, but throughout the ETH Domain. In 2018 and 2019 there was another significant increase in the resources allocated to the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women at ETH Zurich, EPFL and the four research institutes. The objective of using 0.4% of the federal government's total annual contribution on measures in this area was clearly exceeded during the two years, at 0.67% and 0.77% (CHF 17 million and CHF 20 million) respectively.

ETH Board takes note of the ETH Appeals Commission's Activity Report for 2019

The ETH Appeals Commission is an internal appeals committee which decides on appeals against

rulings made by the six institutions of the ETH Domain. Appeals mainly relate to personnel and university law issues. Appeals against the rulings of the ETH Appeals Commission can be made to the Swiss Federal Administrative Court. According to the Activity Report, 44 appeals were submitted last year (2018: 58). In total, 46 cases were concluded in 2019. The Activity Report is available (in German and French) on the ETH Domain's website.

Enquiries

Gian-Andri Casutt, Head of Communications

Tel. +41 58 632 86 06

gian.casutt@ethrat.ch

ETH Board, Haldeliweg 15, 8092 Zurich, www.ethrat.ch

The ETH Board is the strategic management and supervisory body of the ETH Domain. The ETH Domain is made up of the two Federal Institutes of Technology, i.e. ETH Zurich and EPFL, as well as the four federal research institutes PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag. The members of the ETH Board are appointed by the Swiss Federal Council. The ETH Board supervises the development plans of the institutions, is responsible for strategic management accounting and ensures coordination. It draws up the budget and the financial statements of the ETH Domain and coordinates the value maintenance and continued functionality of the properties. It is the authority responsible for appointments and represents the ETH Domain before the federal authorities. A staff unit assists the ETH Board in the preparation and implementation of its business.