Module Title	**Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Business**
Module Code	MCLs035
Module	AF-13
Degree Programme	Master of Science in Life Sciences (MSLS)
ECTS Credits	5
Workload	150 h: Contact 65 h; Self-study 85 h
Module Coordinator	**Name** Dr Evelyn Markoni **Phone** +41 31 910 22 37 **Email** evelyn.markoni@bfh.ch **Address** Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, Länggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen
Lecturers	• Dr Franziska Götze • Dr Deane Harder • Dr Evelyn Markoni • Ashley Allemann-Young • The module is highly practice-oriented. We invite guest lecturers and experts from the field: e.g. corporate social responsibility managers, purpose-driven and socially innovative startups, founders and sustainable entrepreneurs
Entry Requirements	None
Learning Outcomes and Competencies	After completing the module, students will be able to: • reflect upon the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) for local, national and global value chains and recommend tools and methods to promote and control CSR in the fields of agriculture, food and forestry; • critically reflect upon the role of corporations in contributing to sustainable development and understand the relationship between business and society (business ethics); • understand the concept of purpose-driven business innovation and sustainable business in practice; • analyse organisational change processes and apply systemic thinking to identify leverage points for sustainable transformation; • develop strategies for stakeholder engagement and communication to overcome resistance and embed purpose-driven business innovation within organisations; • manage and improve existing production and management processes, and to design new ones in a more sustainable way; • evaluate business and policy initiatives (e.g., BSCI, UN Global Compact) and apply standards and regulations for CSR reporting (e.g., GRI, Integrated Reporting (IR), OR 964a, VSoTr, TCFD, CSRD, CSDDD, SDGs); • and recommend different certification and labelling tools adapted to specific contexts.
Module Content	The key contents of the module are based on: • societal transformation (e.g. caused by new technologies, changes in a political system) and subsequent challenges for the principles of CSR; • the responsibility of businesses to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), e.g. SDG12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”, the relationship between CSR and business ethics, corporate citizenship, corporate governance and sustainability management; • sustainable business and purpose-driven business innovation; • foundations of organisational change and change management approaches,

	including systemic thinking, stakeholder engagement and strategies for embedding purpose-driven innovation in organisations; • CSR reporting and certification systems such as organic and Fairtrade labels, and environmental and social standards (e.g., ISO 14000, AA1000, SA8000, ISO 26000); • controlling and monitoring tools in CSR. Students will gain an overview of the involved interest groups and organisations and their different stakes (e.g. certification bodies, customer companies, NGOs). The theoretical content of the module will be applied to a comparative case study on CSR, purpose-driven business and organisational change management along different value chains in the fields of agriculture, food and forestry. Students will systematically analyse cases comparing companies within the same industry and present their results, working on a concrete real-world case from practice. Additionally, practitioners from the field will be invited to share insights from their daily work, giving students direct exposure to real-world perspectives and current industry challenges. Through this strong emphasis on applying concepts to real organisational settings, the module ensures a highly practice-oriented learning experience that equips students with skills directly relevant for their future professional contexts.
Teaching and Learning Methods	• Inputs by lecturers and guest lecturers (purpose-driven and socially innovative startups, founders and sustainable entrepreneurs) • “Sustainability Walk” in Bern • Exercises and case studies • Innovative methods, e.g. design thinking • Use of media and AI to motivate discussion • Group work and self-study • Presentations by students
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	1) Presentation of a comparative case study (written report and oral presentation, 24% of these 70% are graded as group work) (70%) 2) Written exam (open book) (30%)
Bibliography	Blowfield M, Murray A, 2019. Corporate social responsibility. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 432 p. Kotter John P, 2016. Our iceberg is melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions. Penguin Random House. 176 p. Kotter John P, 2014. Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World. Harvard Business Review Press. 224 p. Dathe, T et al., 2022. Corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability and environmental social governance (ESG): approaches to ethical management. Springer, Cham. 213 p. Visser, W, Courtice, P, 2020. Sustainability Leadership: Linking Theory and Practice. IUP Publications, Hyderabad. pp. 26–39. Further book chapters and papers will be published on Moodle.
Language	English
Comments	All necessary reading materials will be made available on Moodle. The following sequences are compulsory for students: guest lectures, exercises and case study presentations. Details of the compulsory sequences can be found in the detailed schedule, which will be uploaded to Moodle four weeks before the start of the module.
Last Update	14.01.2026