Bonn – a Center for International Cooperation, Sustainable Development, and Innovation
“I warmly congratulate the UN Campus in Bonn on its 25th anniversary! Numerous United Nations agencies, civil society actors, and scientific and academic institutions are working here to protect the resources on which humanity depends. In the years since its founding, Bonn has become a UN hub for sustainable development. Events such as the UN Climate Change Conference or the Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development are having an impact all around the world. In 2020 alone, three new UN organizations have opened offices in Bonn. This is a sign of success, and it shows that the UN Campus in Bonn is well poised to flourish in the future.”

Heiko Maas,
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
Bonn: a global player for sustainable development

The UN Campus in Bonn was founded in 1996 with the move into Haus Carstanjen by the United Nations Volunteers programme, and was expanded in 2006 when the Tall Eugen office building was added. In the space of 25 years, Bonn has grown into a center where global challenges of the future are addressed, into a powerhouse of sustainability, centered on the UN. The UN Campus in the former parliamentary quarter on the banks of the Rhine is a visible symbol of this growth. The UN organizations working here are embedded in a network of federal ministries, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations, scientific institutions, and businesses. In line with the motto of the United Nations in Bonn – “shaping a sustainable future” – they all join forces in a unique culture of creativity and cooperation.

“In Bonn, climate and sustainability policies are being made for the global level and implemented at the local level.” (Dr. Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development)

Bonn plays an active role in sustainable cities networks and also benefits from a major university and an outstanding local science and research community. The city has adopted the tagline “Sustainable Bonn” and makes a point of involving its inhabitants in numerous initiatives aimed at the business community and society at large. Notable examples are the Bonn Climate Ambassadors or the local network for sustainable business Ökoprofit Club. In 2010 Bonn was declared a FairTrade Town and became a part of the global movement of the same name. In May 2016 Bonn became one of four so-called Sustainability Hubs (“Netzstelle Nachhaltigkeit”) nationwide. In cooperation with countries of the Global South, Bonn also participates in a number of municipal development projects.

“In Bonn, climate and sustainability policies are being made for the global level and implemented at the local level.” (Dr. Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development)
In addition to the federal ministries, numerous other federal government offices – such as the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food, and the Bundesrechnungshof (German SAI) – are located in Bonn. The German Commission for UNESCO has its head office in Bonn, and Bonn is one of two seats of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, which provides international cooperation services for sustainable development. Moreover, the Federal City of Bonn still hosts a number of diplomatic and consular missions. Following the relocation of the German government and parliament to Berlin, Bonn has developed a unique profile as a center of excellence for international cooperation and sustainable development. Approx. 1,000 staff members of 24 UN agencies work at the UN Campus, located adjacent to the Rhine river promenade and with a view of the Siebengebirge nature park. They are closely connected to numerous players in the sustainability sector, including international organizations such as the Global Crop Diversity

The Federal City of Bonn: creating synergies for a global future

Bonn looks back on five decades as the seat of the parliament and government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 1994 it enjoys the status of Federal City, making it the country’s second political center.

The primary seats of six federal ministries, including the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building, and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), are still located in Bonn, while other federal ministries have a second base in the city. Part of the Bonn base of the Federal Foreign Office is also a liaison office acting as the focal point for international organizations in Germany, thus underscoring the importance the Federal Government attaches to Bonn as Germany’s UN city. The liaison office deals with the coordination of all matters related to the UN Campus and with all questions in connection with the establishment and status of international organizations in Germany. It also serves as a contact point for the staff members of those organizations and their families.
Trust, the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC) and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (IUCN-ELC), as well as 150 national and international non-governmental organizations. A number of scientific and academic institutions and innovative businesses complement the international environment.

Another asset for the UN and other Bonn-based international organizations: Bonn also plays an important role in the context of today’s globalized media. Germany’s international broadcaster Deutsche Welle has its head office in the immediate vicinity of the UN Campus and sustainability-related topics are one of its focus areas. Deutsche Welle produces TV programs and disseminates online information in 30 languages, reaching 118 million people around the globe. The public broadcasters Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) and Phoenix, a Bonn-based current affairs and documentation channel, regularly report on UN activities.

international.bonn.de
www.unbonn.org
www.dw.com
www.phoenix.de
www.wdr.de
An international conference location, with a focus on sustainability

The city of Bonn is one of Germany’s top-ranked conference cities. Since the opening of its main building in June 2015, the World Conference Center Bonn (WorldCCBonn) has become established as one of the most modern congress centers in Europe and has increasingly attracted conferences and meetings of all kinds. The conference center can accommodate up to 7,000 people.

The biggest intergovernmental conference to be held in Germany to date, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23), attended by 22,000 delegates and visitors, took place in the WorldCCBonn and specially erected temporary buildings in 2017. The UN SDG Action Campaign’s Global Campaign Center uses the WorldCCBonn’s conference facilities, located right next to the UN Campus, to host the yearly Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development. Numerous other events in the conference center in Bonn have been devoted to global issues, including the G20 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in February 2017, the Global Landscapes Forum in December 2017, the yearly meeting of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, and the annual Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Biodiversity Network Bonn (BION) also use the conference facilities, as does ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of cities that is based here and that organizes the Resilient Cities conference series. North Rhine-Westphalia, which – like the Federation – does a lot to promote Germany’s UN City, also regularly organizes international conferences in Bonn.

And sustainability is not just the subject of conferences taking place in Bonn. The concept is also embraced by conference organizers throughout the city. Since 2006, numerous hotels, caterers, and event venues in Bonn have joined the network “Sustainable Bonn – Konferenzort der Nachhaltigkeit” and continually review the sustainability of their activities. COP23 was the first UN Climate Change Conference to be officially classified as environmentally friendly, gaining official EMAS (European Union Eco Management and Audit Scheme) certification for eco friendly performance.

international.bonn.de/international-profile/international-location/international-conferences.php
www.worldccbonn.com
www.bonn-region.de
Bonn – a city of science and research: where tradition meets innovation

No other part of Europe offers as dense a concentration of research institutions and technology companies as the region of North Rhine-Westphalia comprising the cities of Cologne, Bonn, and Aachen, all of which boast outstanding universities. Bonn, where the primary seat of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is located, is an international science and research hub that contributes to promoting sustainable development the world over. The Bonn-based scientific institutions, international organizations and the University of Bonn, which has 35,000 students from 142 countries, cooperate in numerous ways to address future-oriented issues such as human security, climate and water research, biodiversity, and food security. In May 2014, the City of Bonn and the University of Bonn signed a memorandum of cooperation. It aims to better showcase Bonn’s unique selling point (a strong UN presence complemented by a sustainability cluster) by establishing and enhancing strategic partnerships between scientific and non-scientific actors and presenting them through innovative events.

The University of Bonn, not least its traditionally strong faculty of agriculture, its noted institute of geography, its renowned botanical gardens, and the Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig, conduct sustainability-related research in a variety of disciplines. A joint MSc program entitled “Geography of Environmental Risk and Human Security” has been successfully launched by the University of Bonn and the United Nations University (UNU). It offers the first Master’s degree to be jointly conferred by UNU and another university. “By promoting the UN University and the Innovation Campus Bonn (ICB), we are underscoring our commitment to Bonn as an international center of science and research. Bonn is an outstanding place to pursue global research projects in a practice-oriented and interdisciplinary way,” notes Prof. Lukas, State Secretary at the BMBF.
The Innovation Campus Bonn (ICB) was established by the Bonn Alliance for Sustainability Research, an association established in 2017 that comprises institutes from the University of Bonn, the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), the BICC, the German Development Institute (Deutsches Institut für EntwicklungsPolitik - DIE), and the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. ICB aims to bundle and drive research in the field of sustainable development and global change.

Sustainability is one of the thematic focus areas of the Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg, University of Applied Sciences (H-BRS), which offers a CSR and NGO program. And the German Development Institute (DIE) has become one of the world’s leading think tanks.

The Biodiversity Network Bonn (BION) is another example of well-coordinated cooperation by a wide range of actors. It now counts nearly 60 member institutions and works to establish links between various scientific disciplines and renowned international, national, and regional institutions. Bonn is home to six Fraunhofer Institutes and to the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). Thanks to its research and development activities in the fields of aeronautics, space, energy, transport, digitalization, and security, DLR Space Administration, Germany’s national space and aeronautics research center, makes important contributions to tackling social challenges and helps to ensure sustainable development worldwide. As a public research institution, the German Aerospace Center (DLR) is the space agency and project executing agency for various ministries, including the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and therefore has close ties with Bonn and the UN institutions.
In the heart of Europe: a city of short distances

Bonn is located in the heart of Europe, within easy reach of major European cities such as Brussels, London, and Paris. And mobility is an important location factor for Bonn as a UN city. Three international airports (Cologne/Bonn, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt) connect Bonn to the rest of the world. Cologne/Bonn airport is only 22 kilometers from the city center and reachable in less than half an hour by public transport. Berlin, Brussels, and Paris are accessible by high-speed trains such as the ICE or the Thalys. Bonn is also linked to a dense highway network, which makes the major European cities easy to reach.

The city of Bonn itself offers a well-connected public transport system comprising streetcars, subways, commuter trains, buses, and several ferries across the Rhine. The UN Campus is easily accessible by public transport within Bonn, service frequency is high. A dedicated “Bonn UN Campus” train station began operating in 2017.

The dense system of cycle paths is much used. After all, Bonn is a city of short distances and you are never more than about twenty minutes away from any given point in the city. This contributes to the high quality of life in Bonn.

www.koeln-bonn-airport.de
www.dus.com
www.frankfurt-airport.com
www.bahn.de
www.vrs.de
www.nextbike.de/en/bonn/
www.carsharing-news.de/carsharing-bonn
A lovable, green city: a great place to live

Despite being so densely populated, Bonn, located in the southern part of North Rhine-Westphalia, offers an excellent living environment. This city has a total area of 141 square kilometers and 330,000 inhabitants. Bonn is very green, with a high proportion of parks, forests, and protected areas. A modern city of manageable proportions and with a strong urban character, Bonn is among the cities with the highest quality of life in Germany. The liberal Rhenish way of life, outstanding infrastructure, and a wide array of cultural and leisure activities, as well as high environmental standards all combine to make Bonn a great place to live.

Due to these qualities, Bonn attracts a highly qualified workforce, service providers and young university graduates. The cost of living is moderate compared to other cities worldwide, all types of services and shopping facilities are readily available, including those catering to environment-minded consumers. In Bonn you will find low-priced everyday goods, luxury items and products from all parts of the world.

The Bonn real estate market offers high-quality housing at relatively affordable prices. Offers range from the sophisticated Wilhelminian style buildings in Bonn’s Südstadt district to single-family homes in leafy suburban neighborhoods. In residential areas, plenty of nature, safe playgrounds, sports facilities and public swimming pools, as well as numerous cultural opportunities geared to the needs of families create a family-friendly environment.

The former German capital and present-day Federal City of Bonn is a multicultural city with an international feel where people from around the world are welcome and quickly feel at home, surrounded by a multitude of languages and cultures. The population
of Bonn is traditionally multicultural, educated and cosmopolitan. Bonn is the German city with the highest proportion of university graduates. Some 25 percent of the 165,000 people gainfully employed in Bonn hold a university degree. People from 180 nations live together in Bonn, making the city highly diverse in cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic terms. One out of seven inhabitants has a non-German passport. Yet Bonn is more than just a good place to work. It is Beethoven's birthplace and home to the world-famous annual Beethoven Festival, as well as the cross-genre Schumann Festival. People also flock to the attractive Museum Mile and numerous other museums, which altogether make the city a popular destination for tourists, with a cumulative 1.5 million overnight stays per year.

The city is also an international leader in health care and modern medicine. The city’s medical facilities include over 20 hospitals, specialized outpatient services and clinics, and Bonn University Hospital, which has more than 30 clinical departments and 20 research departments. Some 2,700 doctors representing 40 medical fields work in doctor’s offices and hospitals across Bonn. 24,700 people in Bonn are employed in the healthcare sector.

www.beethovenfest.de
www.bthvn2020.de
www.bonn-region.de
www.nrw-tourismus.de
www.museumsmeilebonn.de
www.botgart.uni-bonn.de/o_inter/engl01.php
City of learning: international and multicultural

Bonn is a city of learning that offers a wide variety of schools and other educational institutions. There are several international schools, such as the Bonn International School (BIS) and the Independent Bonn International School (IBIS). International bilingual schools and kindergartens look back on a long tradition and cater to the educational needs of expat children. Tuition fees are low compared to other cities worldwide. There are 50 all-day schools and 100 general and vocational secondary schools. Municipal and private kindergartens are available for the very young. In the immediate vicinity of the UN Campus there is an international daycare center for children of UN staff members that admits children from the age of 4 months up to school age.

Starting in elementary school, a number of options for additional instruction in children’s first language are available in Bonn. Besides the German high school diploma (Abitur), students in Bonn can obtain the international baccalaureate (IB) or the French “Bac.” The city also offers second chance education and special multicultural educational profiles. Schools in Bonn engage in constructive cooperation with the University of Bonn and offer ample opportunity to spark children’s fascination for science.

www.bonn.de
international.bonn.de/services/Education-and-profession/index.php
www.bonn-is.de
www.ibis-school.com
www.awo-bonn-rhein-sieg.de/angebote/kitas/einrichtungen/kitas/internationale-kita-bonn.html
UN institutions in Bonn
www.unbonn.org

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
www.unccd.int

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – Bonn Office
www.undrr.org/about-undrr-where-we-work/bonn

Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
www.cms.int

Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds
www.unep-aewa.org

Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas
www.ascobans.org

Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats
www.eurobats.org

UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
www.unevoc.unesco.org

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
www.unfccc.int

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS – Habitat)/Secretariat of the Global Water Operators’ Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)
www.gwopa.org
United Nations Industrial Development Organization – Investment and Technology Promotion Office
www.itpo-germany.org/itpo-germany

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
www.ipbes.net

United Nations Institute for Training and Research
unitar.org

United Nations Global Center for Human Resources Services (OneHR)
www.unbonn.org/OneHR

United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response
www.un-sheep.org

United Nations Office for Project Services / Secretariat of the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (UNOPS/ICAT)
www.unbonn.org/ICAT

United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe – German Liaison Office
www.unric.org/en

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
www.unrisd.org

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Action Campaign
www.sdgoalsactioncampaign.org

United Nations System Staff College, Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development
www.unissc.org/featured-themes/unissc-knowledge-centre-sustainable-development/

United Nations University Vice Rectorate in Europe
www.vie.unu.edu

United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security
www.ehs.unu.edu

United Nations University Vice Rectorate in Europe – Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE)
ehs.unu.edu/vice-rectorate/sustainable-cycles-scycle

UN Volunteers programme
www.unv.org

World Health Organization – Regional Office for Europe, European Centre for Environment and Health
www.euro.who.int/envhealth

Other Bonn-based international organizations include:

The Global Crop Diversity Trust
www.croptrust.org

European Forest Institute
www.efi.int

IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre
www.irena.org

IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC)
www.iucn.org
The United Nations in Bonn: a brief chronology

1951 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) establishes a liaison office in Bonn.

1979 The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), also known as the Bonn Convention, is adopted and opened for signature in Bonn.

1984 The UNEP/CMS Secretariat is established in Bonn.

1990 Following German unification and the decision of the German Parliament to relocate parts of the Federal Government and parliament to Berlin, the Federal Government, the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the City of Bonn step up their joint efforts to establish and develop Bonn as a UN city.

1994 The Act for the implementation of the enactment of the German Bundestag of 20 June 1991 for the completion of the German unity (Berlin-Bonn Act) enters into force. It enshrines Bonn’s role as a center of development policy and as a host city for national, international and supranational institutions.

1996 The UN flag is hoisted outside of Haus Carstanjen. UNV, UNFCCC, UNIC (now UNRIC) are the first UN agencies to move into the historic buildings, followed by CMS and Eurobats.

1998 to 2000 ASCOBANS, UNCCD and AEWA move into Haus Carstanjen.

2001 The European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH) of the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for Europe is set up at Langer Eugen (named after Eugen Gerstenmeier, a former president of the German Bundestag).

2002 Berlin: In the presence of UN Secretary General Annan and Federal President Rau, the Federation, Land North Rhine Westphalia and the City of Bonn sign the agreement on developing Bonn as a UN City and on the establishment of a World Conference Center (Bellevue Agreement).

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training opens at Langer Eugen.


2006  Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel hands over the new UN premises, situated on historic ground, to then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan. From now on, the UN flag flies in front of the “Langer Eugen” office tower on the banks of the Rhine. The UNWTO Consulting Unit on Biodiversity and Tourism for Tsunami-affected countries is set up at the UN Campus.

2007  The Vice Rectorate in Europe of the United Nations University (UNU-ViE) and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER) open their offices at the UN Campus, as do the International Human Dimension Programme on Global Environmental Change (UNU-IHDP) and the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) (the latter two programs ended in 2014 and 2015, respectively).

2010  UNU-ISP (now UNU-SCYCLE) moves to the UN Campus.

2013  The UN move into a further building on the UN Campus, the so-called “Altes Abgeordnetenhochhaus,” which houses parts of UNFCCC. On the initiative of the Federal Government the building was refurbished and expanded so as to meet exemplary ecological standards.

2014  The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) opens its office at the UN Campus.

2015  The new conference space of the WorldCCBonn is inaugurated in the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

2016  The UNSSC Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals Action Campaign move into Haus Carstanjen. The cornerstone of a new building for the UN Campus is laid. The office tower, which will be certified in accordance with the most stringent ecological standards, will provide additional office space. The modernisation works include the former waterworks on the UN Campus, which will be used as additional space for conferences.

2017  The United Nations Industrial Development Organization sets up an Investment and Technology Promotion Office in Bonn.

2018  The UN Global Human Resources Services Center (OneHR) begins work in Bonn.


2020  The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the Secretariat of the Global Water Operators’ Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA), and UNITAR, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research open their offices in Bonn.

2021  25th anniversary of the UN Campus in Bonn. Completion of, and move into, the new 17-storey building on the UN Campus in Bonn.

Outlook

The Federal Government, Land North Rhine-Westphalia and the City of Bonn remain committed to further developing Bonn as a UN location. This engagement includes efforts to attract further United Nations institutions, as well as to provide support for UN conferences in the city and for individual UN projects.