

## Media release

# Old Festhalle donates its steel girders for new construction projects

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**The old Festhalle on the BERNEXPO site is history. But parts of it live on sustainably. Instead of melting down the large and heavy steel girders, they are reused for new construction projects. A pilot project in Bern makes this possible.**

Around two thirds of the waste generated in Switzerland is recycled directly by the construction industry. Even though a great deal of this waste is already being recycled for other construction projects, the potential is still considerable. Especially steel profiles are particularly suitable for being used for new projects, as there are relatively few different types, and they are easy to categorize. Moreover, reuse does not require melting down or reforming. For example, the massive steel girders of the old Festhalle are ideally suited to be used directly in another project, thus keeping them in an economic cycle.

## Four parties advocate for cycle

The BERNEXPO GROUPE, together with öbu (ecological, conscious, environmentally friendly – association for sustainable business), HRS (Swiss real estate service provider) and Kästli Bau AG (committed to sustainable construction), has ensured that the steel girders of the old Festhalle can now be used in other construction projects.

In the Bern pilot project, more than 55 tons of steel girders were reused, resulting in a saving of 22 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. BERNEXPO GROUPE was inspired by the circular economy project “Re-Use of Steel Sections”, which is being carried out at öbu. HRS, in turn, supported the project by giving the green light for the reuse of the steel girders. Lastly, Kästli Bau AG ensured the actual implementation at the construction site at its own expense.

## **Sustainability as a focus topic**

The fact that the steel girders of the old Festhalle have now found a new home fits in with the sustainability philosophy of the BERNEXPO GROUPE and the building owner Messepark Bern AG. “We are tremendously pleased that the steel beams of the old Festhalle will now live on in other projects. This sustainable circular economy is not just an extremely sensible idea, but also fits in with the idea of sustainability that we at BERNEXPO pursue intensively and implement in various projects,” says Tom Winter, CEO BERNEXPO AG.

The BERNEXPO GROUPE has also recently become part of the Swisstainable sustainability programme, where it has been ranked directly at the highest level from the outset. In addition to our participation in the Swisstainable project and the successful award of ISO-20121 certification, the Bernese company is already involved in many other areas and associations and is targeting participation in additional projects. For example, the BERNEXPO GROUPE is a member of the Energy Saving Alliance and is also part of Sustainable Switzerland. In addition, the Bernese company is involved in the Climate Platform.

## **More components will emerge**

The steel girders are not the only raw material from the old Festhalle that will be reused: before the venerable building disappeared completely, other components from it were saved, which will reappear at a later date on the BERNEXPO site. “Among other things, we are storing various wooden elements from the old Festhalle, which we will present for a special event at the inauguration of the new multifunctional congress and event venue in spring 2025,” says Tom Winter. In addition, the large legendary Halle 4 number sign on the façade of the old Festhalle will be converted into a round conference table at a specific location and will definitely be a topic of conversation afterwards. BERNEXPO GROUPE will communicate where exactly the well-known number four will appear at a later date.

### **Please address any questions to:**

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## **About BERNEXPO GROUPE**

BERNEXPO GROUPE stages more than 30 proprietary and guest exhibitions, over 300 congresses trade shows and other events of all sizes. For almost 70 years, the Bernese company has been creating moments and emotions for eternity. As a host, BERNEXPO GROUPE brings together people from a wide variety of backgrounds and provides intensive experiences via live communication at various venues – regardless of location, time and space. The BERNEXPO site is one of the largest event premises in Switzerland. Six generous halls in two building complexes have a total of around 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> of event space and 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor areas. The multifunctional congress and event building, which will open its doors in spring 2025 for up to 9,000 people, will complement and expand the range of events offered by the BERNEXPO GROUPE in the Swiss capital. The Bernese company employs a team of around 120 people and is an important economic driver for the city and region of Bern with appeal throughout Switzerland.