



**Bern University of Applied Sciences**  
Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering  
Communication

Solothurnstrasse 102  
2500 Biel

Tel. +41 32 321 62 65

melanie.nellen@bfh.ch  
bfh.ch/ahb

## REPORT

### 4th International Conference on Timber Bridges (ICTB)

Biel/Bienne, May 2022

**Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH, in collaboration with Empa (Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research), hosted the 4th International Conference on Timber Bridges ICTB 2021<sup>PLUS</sup>, which took place from 9–12 May 2022 in Biel as well as online. More than 80 delegates in person and around 40 online participants from all over the world came together to discuss the topic of wooden bridges.**

The conference kicked off on Monday, 9 May 2022, with a full-day bridge tour that took delegates from Biel to Fribourg, over the Jaun Pass into the Simmental valley, and then back towards Bern and Biel. From new builds to antique, heritage-protected wooden bridges for road traffic, the tour covered a wide range of engineering structures. The delegates had the opportunity to inspect each of the bridges from close up and to exchange views on the different construction methods and details. Of course the tour wouldn't have been complete without a visit to the famous Cailler chocolate factory.

Back in Biel, the next highlight of the conference came in the early evening. In the context of ICTB 2021<sup>PLUS</sup>, a first working model of a heavy-duty wooden bridge module was inaugurated at BFH in Biel in the presence of Erich von Siebenthal, a member of the Swiss National Council. The Council of States and the National Council have adopted the motion "Research and innovation on timber for use in infrastructure construction as a contribution to decarbonisation", which was submitted by Jakob Stark. The objective is to replace reinforced concrete in infrastructure construction with CO<sub>2</sub>-absorbing materials such as wood. Working with TS3 and other business partners, the Bern University of Applied Sciences has developed a research strategy and a working model of a future bridge cross-section. At the end of the first day, the international delegates enjoyed a traditional cheese fondue in the courtyard of the BFH in almost summery temperatures, bringing the day to a pleasant close.

On Tuesday, 10 May 2022, the conference got underway in the BFH's large lecture hall. The more than 80 delegates present and the 40 or so online participants from all over the world were officially welcomed by Bern University of Applied Sciences, the Federal Office for the Environment and the organisers. Over the following three days, keynote presentations alternated with 20-minute technical presentations on the topic of timber bridges. Delegates both at the venue and online had the opportunity to put their questions to the speakers, who contributed a total of 40 talks between them.

The programme was interspersed and supplemented by the real-world exhibition, for which various companies presented their products and services in the adjacent foyer during the coffee and lunch breaks. This allowed the delegates to network in a relaxed setting. Additionally, two half-hour slots in the afternoon offered the exhibiting companies the chance to present themselves to the national and international audience with a pitch both to the attendees present and those online.

On Wednesday evening, the conference dinner was held at the Omega Museum in Biel. The delegates were able to visit the interesting exhibitions of Omega and Swatch watches beforehand. The evening drew to a relaxed close in almost summery temperatures on nearby

Schüss Island. The conference ended on Friday, 13 May 2022, with a visit to the first two wooden wildlife bridges in Rynetel and Neuenkirch.

The organisers would like to thank the donors SNSF and FOEN Wood Action Plan for their financial support for the conference and the sponsors<sup>PLUS</sup> and other sponsors for their active organisation of the conference.

## International Conference on Timber Bridges

ICTB 2021<sup>PLUS</sup> is an international gathering of engineers, architects, experts and scientists from all over the world. The focus is on road, cycle and pedestrian bridges made of wood. After successful conferences in Norway in 2010, the USA in 2013 and Sweden in 2017, Switzerland was the venue chosen for 2022. In the supporting specialist exhibition, around 10 companies present their products and services.

For further information: [bfh.ch/ictb](https://bfh.ch/ictb)

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## Contact

Dr. Bettina Franke, Organisation ICTB 2021<sup>PLUS</sup>, Bern University of Applied Sciences, [bet-tina.franke@bfh.ch](mailto:bet-tina.franke@bfh.ch), +41 32 344 03 08

Melanie Nellen, Communication, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering, [melanie.nellen@bfh.ch](mailto:melanie.nellen@bfh.ch), +41 32 321 62 65

**Photos**



Key visual of the event:  
Neumatt Bridge, Burgdorf  
Photo: Bern University of Applied Sciences



Thanks to the provision of technical support, it was possible to stream all talks nationally and internationally.



ICTB 2021<sup>PLUS</sup>: View of the full hall with around 80 delegates in Biel and 40 online.



Nearly 10 companies present their products and services in the associated specialist exhibition.



The group headed across to the Omega Museum in Biel in beautiful weather.



The heavy-duty timber bridge module inaugurated at the ICTB on 9 May 2022 can still be admired in Biel.

For more pictures, visit our photo gallery: [bfh.ch/ictb](https://bfh.ch/ictb)