# Sustainability research at BI Norwegian Business School

2019





# Introduction

"At BI, students, academics and business professionals co-create a more sustainable future"

#### - The BI mission for 2025

Responsibility is one of our core values. It means that we contribute to sustainability and corporate responsibility by working in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) by integrating them into our research, teaching, operations and collaboration with stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

BI is a research-based business school. This makes us well-positioned for contributing to the sustainability agenda through relevant research. Research plays a pivotal role in providing us with the knowledge we need to change practices and find better ways to organize and do things. Be it business models that allow for greater value creation and reduced waste, better health care management and collaborations, reduction of white-collar crime and corruption or macroeconomic modelling and forecasting to predict and prevent crises.

## About this report

This report gives a summary of publications at BI classified as relevant to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDGs were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.<sup>2</sup>

Each SDG has a number of sub-goals. For example, goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production includes sub-goal 12.5 "By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse". Thus, we define SDG-relevant research as research that is relevant to reaching at least one SDG sub-goal.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See the BI Strategy 2025: https://www.bi.edu/globalassets/om-bi/strategi/strategy-2025\_v2.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See the UN SDGs: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

We use the Current Research Information System in Norway (CRISTIN) to gain an overview over all research published by BI-affiliated researchers for 2019, and subsequently assess each publication as stated above on the basis of SDG sub-targets. We aim to do this annually.

The following report gives an overview of BIs research related to the SDGs as a whole, and breaks it down by departments, research centers and research projects. We also provide examples and discuss academic impact. To illustrate how our research contributes to the sustainability goals and give an overview over all sustainability relevant publications, we show cases from each of the departments. The cases are selected based on the quality of the publications (ABS ranking<sup>3</sup> and JIF score<sup>4</sup>) and their societal impact (coverage in social media and policy documents). A reference list, attached to the report, gives an overview over publications published in channels that are classified as Level 2<sup>5</sup>, articles published by BI faculty in journal with ABS ranking 3 and 4, as well as articles with impact presented in this report.

We find that research at BI has a clear contribution to SDGs, and that the number of sustainability top publications is increasing. In particular, in 2019

- 20% of all publications at BI contributed to at least one SDG.
- 30 % of BI faculty published on topics related to sustainability.
- All eight departments at BI contributed with publications relevant to the SDGs.
- 80% of the publications relevant to the SDGs are journal articles, 40% of these are at ABS rank 3 or higher
- BI researchers have publications relevant to all seventeen SDGs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Academic Journal Guide prepared by the Association of Business Schools (ABS) is a guide to the range and quality of journals in which business and management academics publish their research. The list of journals grouped by sub-fields and ranked from 4\* (highest) to 1 (lowest). The AJG is based upon peer review, editorial and expert judgements following from the evaluation of publications.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Journal Impact Factor (JIF) of an academic journal is a scientometric index that reflects the yearly average number of citations that articles published in the last two years in a given journal received. The journals are categorized according to their percentile ranking within their relevant subject categories. The ranking is divided into the top decile (D1), the top quartile (Q1) that falls outside the top decile and 75th percentile (Q2+Q3+Q4). <sup>5</sup> The Norwegian Scientific Index divides journals and publishers considered to meet scientific quality criteria into "Level 1" and "Level 2," where "Level 2" is superior than "Level 1" and it is reserved for the internationally most prestigious journals and publishers

The top three SDGs BI's academic work contributes to are:

- SDG 3 Good health and well-being
  - Research topics include childhood heart problems, radiation, mental health literacy, and education and mortality.
- SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
  - Research topics include tax and accounting regulations, white-collar crime, political rents and voter information, corruption, and political coups.
- SDG 17 Partnership for the goals.
  - Research topics include civilizing business enterprises, ESG and Socially Responsible Investment, bank lending rates and monetary policy.

We are proud of the breadth of our sustainability relevant research, while recognizing the monumental challenges posed by the 2030 agenda. We will continue to develop our research to provide a relevant knowledge base in order to respond to the global challenges.

Hilde C. Bjørnland Craig Aaen-Stockdale Knut Myrum Næss Julia Zhulanova

Oslo, November 16, 2020

## 1. BI's strategy, Sustainability and Research

BI's mission states that BI should "engage students, academics and business professionals in co-creating a more sustainable future". As a part of our sustainability effort, BI has committed in to help achieve the SDGs.



Working in alignment with these commitments means that BI has to implement and create impact in four areas of operation: on research, on programs and student learning, on campus operations, and on student engagement and social interaction.

The focus of this report is how the research at BI contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goals.

While research always has been important at BI, we have over the last decade been through a transformation into an increasingly research focused business school. BI has encouraged research by initiating an international publishing strategy, systematically recruiting international top faculty, focusing on attracting external funding, increasing investments in the PhD program and focusing on a few dedicated research centers.

By delivering high-quality research in these fields BI can help shape policy making and the public debate and be an important player in international academic knowledge development. Most importantly, BI can ensure that our students will have the necessary knowledge to contribute to a more sustainable world.

# 2. Overview over sustainability related research at BI

Sustainability is an important part of the academic output of BI and almost 20% of all publications at BI in 2019 were related to the SDGs. Moreover, more than 25% of BI faculty members publishing in this period, have published in topics related to sustainability.

While these numbers include all type of scientific publications, such as journal articles, book chapters, books and monographs, 80% of the publications are journal articles. As shown in Figure 2, 40% of the journal publications are classified as highly regarded (ABS rank 3 or higher). In 2019, faculty at BI published nine sustainability related articles in journals with the highest ABS rank, 4/4\*. This is markedly higher than previous years, as shown in Figure 2. Figure 3, illustrates the distribution of publications according to SDGs published in 2019.

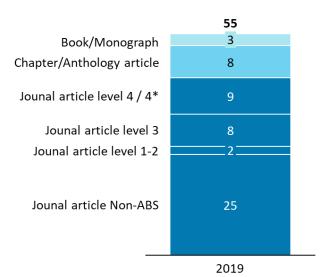


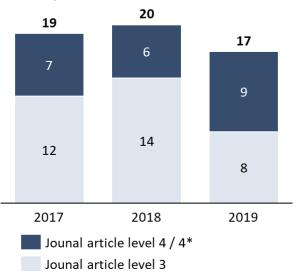
Figure 1: Sustainable Publications by Type

As illustrated by the figure, BI in 2019 had

publications relevant to all 17 SDGs. The SDGs most commonly addressed by BI researchers remain SDG 16, SDG 3 and SDG 17. Seven of eight departments have contributed to at least one of these three goals. Later in the report, we will demonstrate that departments often overlap in terms of the SDGs their publications address, and bring their various knowledge and frameworks to contribute to the research from different angles.

SDG 16-Peace, justice and strong institutions, remains the top SDG for publications at BI, as it





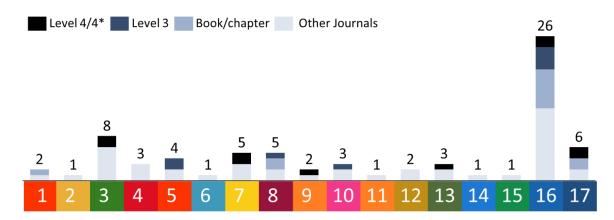
was in 2017-2018. Almost 50% of all within publications sustainability are classified as relevant for this goal. It is also the most addressed SDG if one only takes into account articles published in top journals. Publications related to this goal include a broad range of topics such as tax and accounting regulations, white-collar crime, and voter information, political rents corruption, and political coups. Five of the departments have contributed with publications that are relevant for this SDG.

In second place for number of publications is SDG 3 - *Good health and well-being*.

Four of the departments have delivered research relevant for this goal. Example of research topics associated with SDG 3 are childhood heart problems, emergent coordination and situated learning, mental health literacy, and education and mortality

Finally, civilizing business enterprises; environmental, social and corporate governance; socially responsible investment; bank lending rates and monetary policy are examples of subjects addressed by five different departments in various publications related to SDG 17-*Partnership for the goals* that remains in third place.

In total, these three SDGs make up 75% of all sustainability publications at BI in 2019.



#### Figure 3: SDGs Publications at BI 2019

According to BI's strategy 2025, SDG 4- *Quality education*, SDG 5- *Gender equality* and SDG 13- *Climate action*, are our three prioritized goals. BI's is committed to realizing SDG 4 through offering quality education to our students, while SDG 5 and SDG 13 receive a special focus in our operations, including employment, running facilities, supply chain management and consumption. In addition, the faculty at BI has contributed with publications that address all three SDGs. In 2019, there have been ten different studies relevant to at least one of these goals. The studies addressed issues related to, among others, support in children's learning, women and multiple board memberships, and compliance technology.

# 3. Overview over sustainable research at BI's Departments

# **3.1 Department of Accounting, Auditing and Business Analytics (AA),** Department of Economics (EC) and Department of Finance (FI)

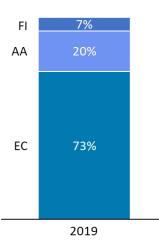
Department of Accounting, Auditing and Business Analytics (AA), Department of Economics (EC) and Department of Finance (FI) are quantitatively oriented, and a substantial part of research is based on advanced mathematical/statistical methods. In addition, all three departments contribute to the discipline of business

economics.

The departments provide research-based teaching and knowledge development in financial management, business economics, accounting and auditing, all areas of finance, international macroeconomics, industrial economics, competition policy, monetary and financial policy, mathematics, statistics and econometrics. Their faculty publish regularly in recognized international academic journals and serve on editorial boards.

More than 20% of all publications in this group of the departments in 2019 are classified to be relevant for SDGs. The Department of Economics continues to contribute with the largest amount of SDG related publications, and in fact,

# Figure 4: Publications by Department



has the largest share of sustainable publications at department level at 30%. In total, there

Peace Justice and Strong Institutions: Ethnically Biased? Experimental Evidence from Kenya

Simon Galle(BI) et al, 2019

Journal of the European Economic Association

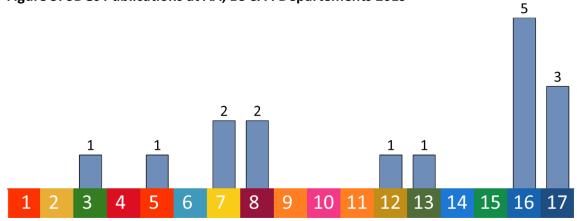
The authors employ a rich research design involving a large sample of 1300 participants from Nairobi, Kenya; the collection of multiple rounds of experimental data with varying proximity to national elections. The results of this paper serve to crystallize and generalize the finding that coethnic bias in preferences in African societies is often less pronounced than is widely believed

ABS level: 4 Citations: 1 Level : 2 Tweeters: 35 Mendeley: 26

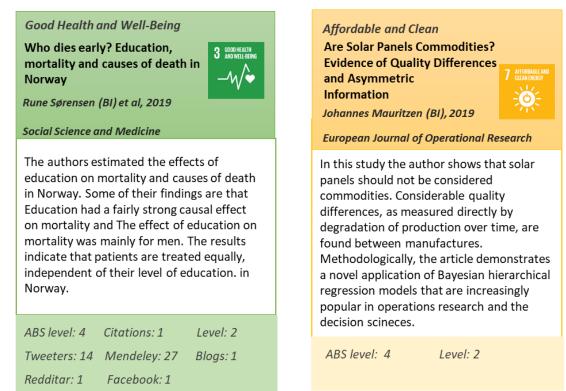
Case 1: SDG 16

have been 15 scientific publications in 2019. One of them is a chapter/monograph, while the others were published in scientific journals. 11 of journal publications are at level 2 and 13 were published in journals from ABS list. More than 90% of these are publications at ABS level 3 or higher and more than a half are at ABS level 4. The distribution of publications between departments is shown in Figure 4.

The publications cover a broad range of different topics and contribute to eight different SDGs, see Figure 5. While seven of these were addressed by this group of departments also in 2017 and 2018, SDG 5 is new. SDG 16 Peace Justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 Partnership for the goals continue to be the most addressed SDGs within this group of departments – accounting more than 50% of publications. Some examples of issues that have been addressed are Solar Panels as Commodities, Growth and Happiness, Political Donations and the Allocation of Public Procurement Contracts.



#### Figure 5: SDGs Publications at AA, EC & FI Departements 2019





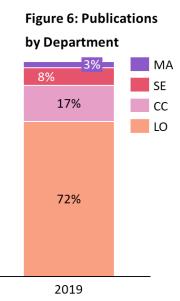
Case 3: SDG 7

#### Summary

A substantial part of research activities in Department of Accounting, Auditing and Business Analytics (AA), Department of Economics (EC) and Department of Finance (FI) is related to sustainability. Most of these publications are published in top journals with a high impact factor. SDG *16 Peace Justice and strong institutions* and SDG 17 *Partnership for the goals* were, as in previous years, addressed in more than a half of the sustainability publications.

# **3.2 Department of Marketing (MA), Department of Communication and Culture (CC), Department of Leadership and Organizational Behavior (LO), and Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship (SE)**

Department of Marketing (MA), Department of Communication and Culture (CC), Department of Leadership and Organizational Behavior (LO), and Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship (SE) are considered to be more qualitatively oriented than the first group of departments (AA, EC and FI), although they also have some quantitative studies. All four departments are oriented towards the management field and hence share some common disciplines. The departments collaborate with a number of businesses, and their research focuses on creating solutions for companies and covers a wide variety of challenges managers meet in the modern market. Their faculty publish regularly in recognized international academic journals and serve on editorial boards.



#### **Gender Equality**

Women and multiple board memberships: Social capital and institutional pressure



Morten Huse (BI) et al, 2019

#### Jounal of Business Ethics

The authors show unintended consequences of quota regulations to get women on boards and argue that different types of societal pressure to get women on boards have an influence on the social capital characteristics of the women getting multi-ple board memberships. The study has implications for the ongoing international debate about women and diversity on boards, and we propose developing a pressure theory for getting women on boards

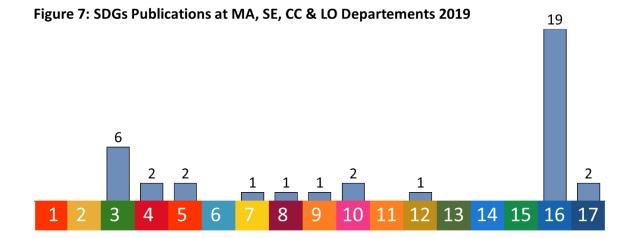
ABS level: 3Citations: 3Level:2Tweeters: 3Mendeley: 16Facebook: 1Financial Times publication

#### Case 4: SDG 5

20% of all publications in the second group of departments are classified to be relevant for SDGs. At departmental level the LO has the largest number of publications at the whole BI. The department group in total had 36 scientific sustainability publications in 2019, 28 of which were journal publications, 2 books/monographs, and 6 chapters. Two of the publications were published in journals listed on Financial Times (FT) list. The distribution of publications between departments is shown in Figure 6. Further, the distribution of publications according to the 10 SDGs addressed by this group of departments is presented in Figure 7. As the figure shows, SDG 3 and SDG 16 continue to be the most addressed goals and contain more than 2/3 of all sustainability publications within this group.

Emerging coordination and situated learning in a

Hybrid OR (Case 5) and Mental health literacy (Case 6) are examples of the issues studied in this group of research. Other examples of subjects relevant for SDGs are Women and multiple board membership (Case 4), Green innovation in recycling, White-Collar Crime, Gender diversity and innovation performance, Policing and Prosecution of Cybercrime, and many others.



Good Health and Well-Being Emergent coordination and situated learning in a Hybrid OR: The mixed blessing of using radiation Bjørn Erik Mørk (BI) et al, 2019 Social Science and Medicine	Good Health and Well-Being Mental health literacy of maternal and paternal postnatal (postpartum) depression in British adults Adrian Furnham (BI) et al (2019) Journal of Mental Health
In this study the authors address how learning occurs during the introduction of new technology requiring the expertise of several CoPs to coordinate their activities. Drawing upon a longitudinal, qualitative study of a Hybrid OR in Sweden, they illustrate how the staff with different expertise must coordinate their practices, and learn how to safely use the technology.	The present study examined the mental health literacy of maternal and paternal postnatal depression in a sample of British adults, which was operationalised through the use of symptom recognition in case vignettes. The authors show that there is a gender binary in symptom recognition of postnatal depression, which highlights the need for greater awareness of paternal postnatal depression.
ABS level: 4Level: 2Tweeters: 6Mendeley: 10Facebook: 1Redditar: 1	ABS level: Non-ABSLevel: 1Tweeters: 19Mendeley: 34Blogs: 1Redditar: 1Facebook: 2News Outlets: 19
Case 5: SDG 3	Case 6: SDG 3

#### Summary

Department of Marketing (MA), Department of Communication and Culture (CC), Department of Leadership and Organizational Behavior (LO), and Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship (SE) have contributed with more than 60 % of all sustainability publications at BI. While most articles in this group of departments addressed SDG 16, the group continuous to stand for most of publications related to the SDG 3, which comes on the second place of the most addressed SDGs at BI.

# 3.3 Department of Law and Governance

The Department of Law and Governance has one of Norway's largest academic communities within business law as well as a strong team of experts in corporate social responsibility, banking and insurance, political economy and climate strategy. The department of law and governance also includes the Centre for Sustainability, CSR and Energy, Centre for Economic History, and Centre for International Political Economy and Political Science. Research areas include trusts and foundations, corporate law, tax law, accounting law, intellectual property, banking and securities law, European politics, energy policy and climate strategies.

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In 2019 the has published 5 sustainability relevant publications: 3 journal publications, 1 book and 1 book chapter/anthology articles. The share of SDG publications relative to the total number of publications in the departments was just under 20%.

While none of studies were published in journals from ABS list, it is clear that the ABS system is not well suited for the Department of Law and Governance. Many law problems are inherently national by nature, and publishing in national journals is both necessary and relevant. Indeed, according to the BIRA-report<sup>6</sup> the department has a large impact in Norwegian business society.

One of the publications in this department has been especially relevant to sustainability and addressed all 17 SDGs (Case 7). The



Achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals within 9 planetary boundaries

Jorgen Randers (BI), Per-Espen Stoknes (BI), Ulrich Goluke (BI) et al, 2019

In this paper the authors have created a simple model, Earth3, to measure how much environmental damage follows from achievement of the 14 socio-economic goals, and propose an index to track effects on people's wellbeing. The authors conclude that extraordinary efforts will be needed to achieve all SDGs within planetary boundaries.

needed to achieve all SDGs within planetary boundaries. ABS level: Non-ABS Level: 1 Citations: 8 Tweeters: 24 Mendeley: 51

Case 7: SDG All

other four publications addressed goals SDG1, SDG 7, SDG 8 and SDG 13, and SDG 16. The topics of these studies were biofuel policy and industrial transition, democratic backsliding in the European Union, environmental change, and green growth.

#### Summary

A substantial part of sustainability publications at the Department of Law and Governance are non-journal articles and are either books/book chapters or articles published in anthologies. Despite a relatively small number of faculty, LO Department has contributed to a broad range of SDGs, including SDG7 - *Affordable and clean energy*, SDG13 – *Climate Actions* and SDG16 - *Peace, justice and strong institutions. In addition, one of departments' publications addressed all 17 SDGs.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The BI Research Assessment (BIRA) report is a part of BIRA process that helps to provide a comprehensive overview of BI's past and current research activities.

# 4. Major ongoing initiatives at BI relevant for SDGs

To ensure continued research development within selected sectors and subjects, BI Norwegian Business School has several research centers where businesses actively engage as stakeholders.

Four of eight Research Centers at BI are relevant to reaching the SGDs. These are as follows:

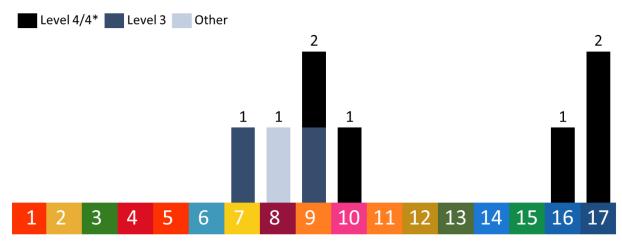
- BI Research **Centre for the Construction Industry** works with sustainability and climate questions pertaining to the construction industry, and is therefore relevant to reaching SDG 9 *Industry, innovation and infrastructure,* and SDG 13 *Climate action.* The research at this center is oriented towards value creation and streamlining of processes, with particular focus on collaboration, organization and change processes, as well as innovation.
- BI Research **Centre for Health Care Management** is relevant to reaching SDG 3 *Good health and well-being*.
- BI Research **Centre for applied macroeconomics and commodity prices** works with macroeconomic stability, forecasting and crisis prevention and is relevant for reaching SDG 17 *Partnership for the goals*.
- BI Research **Centre for Internet and Society** works with questions related to digital inequality and social and labour characteristics of the sharing economy and is relevant for reaching SDG 10 *Reduced inequalities*.

In addition, BI has a number of externally financed research projects relevant to reaching the SGDs:

- **Centre for Connected Care** (C3), is a project connected to Research Centre for Health Care Management, established to accelerate the adoption of integrated patientcentric services to create health value for municipalities, hospitals and companies, and reduce health care costs. The ongoing research at the center is relevant to SDG 3 *Good health and well-being*. The project is affiliated with C3, a research center for future health at Oslo University Hospital (OUS) and is carried out in a Norwegian-Chinese collaboration where BI is a key research partner.
- Spatial Inference on Oil and Economic Development is a project that studies how oil and gas activity affects economic, social, and demographic outcomes, across space and time, and is relevant to SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth and SDG 17 Partnership for the goals. The project is funded by The Research Council of Norway. The team consists of researchers within economics, political science, and geography from top universities in the U.S., the U.K., Denmark, Finland, and Sweden.
- **Future Ways of Working in the Digital Economy** is a four-year research project funded by the Research Council of Norway and is connected to BI Research Centre for Internet and Society. The project aims to understand how individual digital workers can create a sense of belonging, meaningfulness, and mattering in the increasingly remote, decontextualized, and fragmented digital economy and is relevant to SDG *10 Reduced inequalities*.

 BI is an academic partner in the Climate 2050 project, financed by the Research Council of Norway and the consortium partners. The projects is connected to the Centre for Construction Industry and enables long-term research in close collaboration with trade and industry, as well as other research partners aiming to strengthen Norway's innovation ability and competitiveness within climate adaptation

In 2019, BI's Research Centers and Projects contributed with seven SDG-relevant journal publications, addressing SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 16 and SDG17. As can be seen from Figure 8, most of the scientific works were published in top journals. The addressed include digital labor, digital inequalities, toxic collaborations, Dutch disease, oil and political coups, financial and housing shocks, and heterogeneous bank lending rates.



#### Figure 8: SDGs Publications at BI Research Centers/Projects 2019

## Forthcoming (2020)

In 2020 BI has started 2 new research projects:

- Measures for Improved Availability of Medicines and Vaccines, is a new project headed by the BIs researcher. The primary objective of this project is to help key stakeholders make evidence-based decisions that sustainably reduce medicine and vaccine shortages, addressing a key societal challenge to ensure future health and care services. The project is supported by the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, INSEAD Business School, Lancaster University, Rotterdam School of Management, Jimma University, Institute of Health and St.Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical Colleges. The future research conducted by this project will address SDG 3 Good health and well-being.
- H2020 project **Artsformation** is the EU-funded project that explores how the arts can contribute towards a more sustainable and inclusive digital future in Europe. More

specifically, the project aspires to boost Europe's ability to use the arts in tackling complex technological transformations, such as data ethics and quality, artificial intelligence, unequal participation opportunities in the digital economy, and more. Through research on the transformational capabilities of the arts, and by involving actors from many different sectors of society, the project intends to mobilise the arts towards a better and more participatory digital world. The project is connected to the BI Research Centre for Internet and Society and is relevant to SDG 10 Reduced inequalities.

More information about these two research projects and their research activities will follow in the next Sustainability Report.

# Conclusion

Research at BI has a clear contribution to the SDGs. In 2019, 20% of all publications at BI contributed to at least one SDG. The findings presented above give a strong indication of our academic strengths and the focus of each work area.



The top three goals BI's academic work contributes remain the same as they were in previous years:

- SDG 3 Good health and well-being
- SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
- SDG 17 Partnership for the goals.

The most addressed goals are also where BI has the highest number of top publications.

Our research activities develop a foundation required in order to respond to the global challenges. We are proud of the part we play in creating a sustainable future.

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