Strategic and Operational Planning Document

2026–2028 Three-Year Plan

Faculty of Agricultural, Environmental and Food Sciences

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Established in March 2023, the Faculty of Agricultural, Environmental and Food Sciences is organized in three main, complementary and interactive pillars:
1. Animal and Plant Primary Production;
2. Analysis and Management of Mountain Ecosystems;
3. Food and Beverage Technologies and Fermentations.

These pillars reflect on teaching, research and third mission/social impact activities. As currently (academic year 2025/26) restructured, the teaching offer of the Faculty comprises two trilingual (German, Italian and English) bachelors in Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry in Mountain Environments (L-25) and Food and Enogastronomy Sciences (L-26), three international (English language) Masters in Environmental Management of Mountain Areas (LM-73), Food Sciences for Innovation and Authenticity (LM-70) and Smart Sustainable Agriculture Systems in Mountain Areas (LM-69), and two international (English language) PhD programs in Mountain, Environment and Agriculture, and Food Engineering and Biotechnology.

Study programs offered the whole route from bachelor to PhD, according to the three main pillars.

The research activity is structured in three Research Macro Areas (RMAs):
1. Agricultural Sciences;
2. Food Sciences;
3. Analysis and Management of Mountain Ecosystems.

All three RMAs comprises various and pertinent scientific sectors. The research laboratories are spread into three different places: Bolzano Campus, Laimburg Research Centre and Noi TechPark. Competitive and qualified research activities are developed in all three RMAs with high level capability of attracting resources from local, national (e.g., PNRR, PRIN) and international (e.g., Horizon) research projects. Research networking is promoted either within the Faculty or also establishing national and international consortia.

Three Competence Centres (CCs) affiliated to the Faculty, namely:
1. Mountain Innovation Ecosystems (implemented to support PNRR initiatives);
2. Plant Health;
3. International Centre in Food Fermentations.

Directors of the CCs are members of the Faculty, as well as numerous members of the academic staff affiliated to them. By their nature, research skills and educational offers are inevitably grounded in the territory, with a consolidated link also with the limitrophe regions and the national level. This promotes an intense and diversified third mission/social impact activity, which favours the engagement of citizens, associations, multiple stakeholders and industries.

The Faculty as a quite competitive aptitude to promote research projects commissioned by local, national and international industries, thus becoming a reference for certain tech transfer activities.

SECTION 2: FACULTY MISSION AND VISION

Although only recently (2023) established, the Faculty of Agricultural, Environmental and Food Sciences has the ambitious mission to provide excellence in student education, scientific knowledge and stakeholder cooperation in three main pillars of Animal and Plant Primary Production, Analysis and Management of Mountain Ecosystems, and Food and Beverage Technologies and Fermentations at the regional, national and international level to make the Free University of Bolzano a unique and competitive reference centre. Strongly trusting on this mission, the mid-term vision seeks to: (i) increase the number of recruited students for all offered study programs; (ii) better exploit the potential of multiple research activities attracting more national and international resources; (iii) make more robust the public engagements, also including the cooperation with various public and private stakeholders; (iv) rapidly increase its academic staff size as a pre-requisite for increasing its educational, research and third mission/social impact efficiency and competitiveness (see Appendix, note 1); and (v) soon concretize a unique, novel and attractive location at the NOI Techpark. The mid-term (2026/28) mission and vision of the Faculty markedly reflect the Strategic Plan of the University.

Before deepening the goals, indicators and actions that will be undertaken in 2026/28 according to this planning, it is important to specify some strategical and technical issues.

Strategical issues. All goals and actions for teaching, research and third mission/social impact are heavily subordinated for their efficiency and, in most cases, concrete realization to an adequate and sustainable personnel recruitment planning (2026/28). As reported in several parts of this document, the Faculty is the smallest among all Italian faculties/departments of agriculture. This is unequivocally shown in the note 1 of the Appendix with the elaboration of several data at national level. The marked efforts sustained by all the academic staff are not any more sustainable if the aim is to become a national and international reference, as it is the ambition of the Free University of Bolzano and the Province. Still dealing with this issue, it becomes also indispensable the planning of personnel recruitment on three-years basis, the minimum to allow a perspective vision.

Research management and Macro Areas (RMAs). Although not yet included in the goals of this document, the Faculty intends to restore an internal form of strategic research and governance of it by establishing a Faculty Research Board (FRB), which will monitor the research activities. FRB is expected to comprise the Vice-Dean for Research; Dean and leaders of RMA, with the possible addition of further members to be appointed by the Faculty Council. The goal is to guarantee the research freedom to all Faculty members, while maintaining consistent link with the Faculty mission and vision, and the Strategic Plan of the University. This will be achieved ensuring the consistency of the research activities with the three pillars set by the University: (i) Sustainability and Circular Innovation, (ii) Digitalisation and Intelligent Systems, and (iii) Territory and Applied Research. On a methodological basis, strategies related to such guidelines will also be applied on: (iv) praxis-based and project-oriented research to establish innovation and technology transfer; and (v) society, inclusion and wellbeing to promote strategies, including those the growth of social and collective wellbeing.

During 2026, a review of the internal organisation of the RMAs will begin to overcome some problems and disparities, which came out after the splitting of the Faculty of Science and Technology. Referring only to tenured staff, RMA1 has 24 people, while RMA2 and RMA3 have, respectively, 11 and 13 people. In some RMAs there are research activities referring to only one researcher. Given that RMAs reflect the diverse and interdisciplinary skills, which are shown by the Faculty at local, national and

international levels, it should be worthwhile to proceed with a numerical and qualitative revision. The revision should also consider the distinction between cross-cutting skills applicable to various domains (e.g., economic and engineering competences) and specific skills that focus on knowledge and research methodologies of specific domains (e.g., plant production, food sciences). This should be done keeping a balanced number of tenured staff in each RMA (e.g., 9 to 12) and guarantying that each RMA comprises topics with an adequate number of researchers. This revised structure should promote internal cooperation, including interdisciplinary activities with the aim of sharing laboratories, and increase the rate of application and success for research projects.

Technical issues. All goals, indicators and actions will have one main responsible, but in all cases, they will be applied and monitored in cooperation with the Quality Assurance model and actors, already established by the Faculty (2025) and rightly imposed by the Italian system. Goals and actions correspond to a selection of the most important to manage and improve teaching, research and third mission/social impact activities, but other initiatives are not excluded as well as eventual contingency plans. In most of the cases, starting indicators refer to 2024 both because data for 2025 are provisional (e.g., number of recruited students) or not available. When such data are still to be determined, this will be done before starting the monitoring. Furthermore, some analysed data also refer to 2022. When it was possible to disaggregated data for the agricultural area of the former Faculty of Science and Technology, we preferred to assess a triennial period instead of only two years (2023/2024).

SECTION 3: TEACHING

3.1 Analysis of the Situation

As reported in the SWOT analysis (see below), the current situation corresponds to a Faculty quite successful, with strong teaching foundations and clear external opportunities, but which faces structural, resource, and demographic challenges requiring strategic attention.

• The teaching activities benefit from several internal strengths. Current restructuring of study programmes and specialization in mountain agriculture, forestry, and high-level food sciences position the institution as a distinctive academic hub. In the academic year 2025/26, the Faculty reached the highest number of recruited students, distinguishing as a trend from the National trend for the same classes of study programmes and from the other faculties of the Free University of Bolzano. A competitive number of master's students, multilingual education, and an interdisciplinary approach further enhance its appeal. Strong province and industry partnerships, Erasmus agreements, and high student satisfaction indicate effective external engagement. The presence of qualified research supporting teaching, often facilitated by advanced laboratories, as well as international PhD programmes, reflect academic excellence. Additionally, the dedicated commitment of the faculty administration ensures smooth administrative support.

• However, notable internal weaknesses are also present. The academic staff is critically undersized, leading to a high reliance on external contracts and extra teaching loads. In some sectors, laboratory facilities and equipment are insufficient for optimal instruction. Entry language requirements and registration deadlines may deter potential students, while late provision of scholarships can create financial barriers. Limited use of hybrid teaching modes and low accommodation for working students constrain flexibility. Budget restrictions affect excursions and study trips, and there is a lack of coordinated university publicity, which may reduce visibility and outreach.

• Externally, several opportunities exist to strengthen teaching. A potential future location of the faculty at the NOI Tech Park would certainly offer well-equipped teaching rooms and laboratories if optimal conditions were ensured. Growing demand for sustainable and precision farming, food sciences, and climate change education creates new teaching opportunities. Expansion of outdoor didactic activities, international collaborations, and adoption of hybrid and part-time study programs can further enhance the institution appeal. Strengthened partnerships with industry and stakeholders, along with participation in the North-East Italian university network, or other university partnerships (e.g., Sunrise) can promote joint teaching initiatives and cooperation.

• Nonetheless, external threats pose challenges. Demographic trends and economic slowdowns may reduce student enrolment and investment in traditional education. National recruitment patterns do not always favour the university degree programmes, and competition from telematic universities is high. High living costs and inadequate affordable housing may deter potential students. Gaps in language preparation at high schools, coupled with students who possess strong language skills but insufficient scientific background, complicate recruitment. Finally, an academic calendar that does not fully align with student availability limits the institution's capacity to maximize its recruitment potential.

To note, three years ago (academic year 2022/23) the University Board together with the Province set for this Faculty the goal to increase the number of enrolled students by 10%. Data for the recruitment and enrolment in the academic year 2025/26 indicated that this target has been abundantly exceeded (increase above 20%), although the national trend for the same classes of study programs showed a consistent negative trend. This further confirms the potential of the Faculty, which, nevertheless, should be fully exploited.

Based on this point of departure, the following strategic goals and implementation actions are derived.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
S1: current restructuration of all study programmes **S2**: specialization in mountain agriculture and forestry, and high-level food sciences **S3**: competitive number of master's students **S4**: multilingual education **S5**: interdisciplinary approach **S6**: Province/industry partnerships and Erasmus agreements **S7**: student satisfaction **S8**: qualified research behind the didactic, frequently supported by advanced laboratories **S9**: international PhDs **S10**: commitment of faculty`s Secretariat	**W1**: critically undersized academic staff (note 1*) **W2**: high recourse to external contracts and extra-teaching load **W3**: insufficient laboratories and equipment for didactic in some sectors **W4**: language requirements (to entry and as deadlines to be registered) **W5**: late provision of scholarships **W6**: limited use of hybrid mode and low focus on working students **W7**: limited budget for excursions and study trips **W8**: lack of university coordination for publicity
Opportunities	**Threats**
O1: location at the NOI Tech Park provided that «optimal conditions» for teaching rooms, didactic laboratories and academic staff are guaranteed **O2**: growing need for sustainable and precision farming/food and climate change **O3**: expansion of outdoor didactic activities **O4**: international teaching collaborations **O5**: adoption of the hybrid teaching mode and part-time study programs **06**: strengthening of industry and stakeholder partnerships/collaborations **O7**: participation in the North-East Italian university network enabling joint teaching initiatives and cooperation	**T1**: demographic challenges **T2**: economic slowdown and decreased willingness to invest in traditional education **T3**: national recruitment countertrend for our degree classes **T4**: high level of competition by telematic universities **T5**: high living costs (lack of affordable housing etc.) **T6**: not sufficient language preparation by high schools **T7**: students with high language proficiency often lack of a sufficient scientific background **T8**: academic calendar unsuitable for exploiting the whole recruitment potential (note 2*)

* Notes are available in the Appendix to this document.

3.2 Strategic Goals (3 Years Span)

GOAL T1: **Improve the attractiveness of study programmes through the increase of the number of recruited students**

Description: all BSc and MSc programmes have been revised/created in 2024 and activated in the academic year 2025/26. Therefore, they need a continuous monitoring for at least three years with aim of increasing the number of recruited students by about 20% over the period 2026–2028. Already in 2025/26 (starting point for the triennial planning), an increase of more than 20% was registered with respect to 2024/25. Because the Italian trend for recruiting students in the study programmes of the same classes as those we have activated has been negative for the last three years, the threshold set for 2028 might be too ambitious and it mainly represents the intent we have of improving especially the number of students of our bachelors and those from the newly activated master in LM-69. To maintain the current number of students or slightly increasing it should be considered already a satisfactory result. Because of the satisfactory numbers of applicants, PhD programmes only need a regular monitoring, but actions are not foreseen in the mid-term.

Associated Indicator(s): early and three-years average student numbers. The reported numbers have been estimated based on: (i) historical student recruitment (5 or 3 years based on the data availability); (ii) presumptive positive effect of the restructuring; (iii) presumptive negative effect of the Italian and geographical area trend for the same classes; (iv) reference to the maximum number of students per classes, which, respectively corresponds to about 30–50%; and (v) special limitation because of the trilingual teaching requirements. Overall, we refer to the total number of students (sum of all study programmes) because making predictions for individual programmes is much more difficult due to eventual variations in the number of recruited students.

Indicator	Most recent value (2025)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Indexed value (%)	100% corresponding to 154 students	107%	114%	120%

GOAL T2: **Improve the on-time graduations**

Description: although the language peculiarities of our study programmes, the on-time graduations is a pillar for guaranteeing competitiveness of the educational offers and for ensuring a job placement of students or the continuation of studies in due time. The on-time graduations is one of the main indicators for performance assessment of national study programmes.

Associated Indicator(s): the percentage of graduates within normal course duration is the main indicator, but it also depends on the CFUs achieved in the first year with respect to the study plan and on the number of students continuing the second year, which are also used as related indicators.

Indicator	Most recent value (2023)	Goal for 2026	Goal for 2027	Goal for 2028
BSc/MSc percentage of on-time graduations (iC02)	75%	76%	78%	80%

BSc/MSc percentage of CFU achieved in the first year (iC13)	82% (2022)	83%	84%	85%
BSc/MSc percentage of students continuing the second year (iC14)	89% (2022)	90%	93%	95%

GOAL T3: **Improving the level of student satisfaction**

Description: having satisfied students corresponds to one of the main mission of lecturers. Although historically the level of satisfaction of students was quite satisfactory, it should increase having repercussions both on the attractiveness of study programmes and on on-time graduations. The level of student satisfaction is another indicator used to rank the teaching offers at national level. The aim is to achieve satisfaction levels in the range of 90–95%.

Associated Indicator(s): percentage of student satisfaction.

Indicator	Most recent value (2023)	Goal for 2026	Goal for 2027	Goal for 2028
BSc/MSc percentage of student satisfaction (iC25)	91%	93%	93%	95%

GOAL T4: **Decreasing the number of contract lecturers and extra-teaching load**

Description: historically and during the last three years the recourse to contract lecturers and extra-teaching load amounted to 29-42% of the total teaching hours offered by the Faculty. This is a non-sustainable and very exceptional situation, which does not find a national counterpart (see Appendix, note 1). Such a condition affects negatively the quality of teaching for several reasons, with repercussions on the attractiveness of the study programmes, the on-time graduations and, finally, the level of student satisfaction.

Associated Indicator(s): reduction percentage of contract lecturers and extra-teaching load

Indicator	Most recent value (2024)	Goal for 2026	Goal for 2027	Goal for 2028
BSc/MSc percentage of contract lecturers	17%	14%	11%	8%
BSc/MSc extra-teaching load	18%	15%	12%	9%

3.3 Actions and Operational Goals

GOAL T1: **Improve the attractiveness of study programmes through the increase of the number of recruited students**

Action T1.1: **Marketing activity**
Description: promotion of the BSc and MSc programmes by personal (e.g., school visits) and media (print media, radio/television, social media) communications.
Timing: the marketing activity will be yearly monitored, with eventual contingency planning. A definitive assessment of it will be possible in the mid-term (after three years).

Indicators for monitoring: marketing budget spent and numbers of school interaction activities (current budget € 15,000 per year, target level € 30,000 per year in 2028; 2024 school interaction 70, target value for 2028: 100).
Responsible: Vice-Dean for Teaching, Directors of study programs and Delegate of quality assurance.
Resources: dedicated budget for marketing activity, as provided by the university.

Action T1.2: **Student satisfaction**
Description: monitoring of the various student and graduate satisfaction.
Timing: at least once per year separately for each BSc/MSc/PhD study programme and cohort.
Indicators for monitoring: ANVUR (iC25), AlmaLaurea (graduate satisfaction), unibz-internal data (teaching evaluation of study courses). Current levels and future indicator levels see above.
Responsible: Directors of study programs and *Commissione Paritetica*.
Resources: none.

Action T1.3: **Modifications of the language requisites for the recruitment of BSc students**
Description: the current number of applications dramatically exceeds the number of recruited students. The main cause of exclusion deals with unsatisfactory language requisites. We propose the B1 language level for the second required language instead of B2, as already assessed in one pilot study programme (L-GASTR).
Timing: one year, if the above proposal will be accepted.
Indicators for monitoring: increase of the number of recruited students starting from the change of the language requisites (current indicator value: 1 BSc programme; target value for 2028 all faculty BSc programmes). The initial number of students to which we refer as staring point, we consider the one from 2024 and for the future those who are recruited with new threshold of language requisite.
Responsible: Dean and Vice-Dean for teaching.
Resources: permission by unibz management board.

GOAL T2: **Improve the on-time graduations of BSc/MSc/PhD students**

Action T2.1: **Innovative teaching methods and tools**
Description: universities face rapidly changing societal, technological, and labour market demands, which creates a strong need for innovative teaching approaches and tools (e.g., problem-based learning, challenge-based learning, cooperative learning). Such innovations can foster more active learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and critical thinking, while also accommodating diverse student needs. By integrating digital tools, experiential methods, and flexible learning formats, the faculty teaching offering can better prepare students for complex professional and personal challenges.
Timing: collection of activities at the end of each academic year with the identification of the most effective and accepted approaches by the end of the three-year monitoring period.
Indicators for monitoring: share of faculty lecturers and lecture hours using innovative teachings methods and tools, and level of student satisfaction (current indicator value to be determined; indicator values in 2028: share of lecturers: 25%, share of teaching hours: 25%).
Responsible: Directors of study programs under the coordination of the Vice-Dean for Teaching.
Resources: additional budget for acquiring required software, teaching videos etc.

Action T2.2: **Transition to flexible teaching modes**
Description: the competition by the online universities and the changed scenario for working students and those who have not the possibility of working abroad, impose the adoption of more flexible teaching models (e.g., part-time, hybrid options, micro-credentials) also for educational offers, which before were taught only under conventional teaching. This should increase the Faculty teaching attractiveness and should have a positive effect on on-time graduations.

Timing: mid-term monitoring (after three years), starting with one pilot study programme and, eventually, extending it to other teaching offers.
Indicators for monitoring: share of Faculty students who opt for the flexible teaching mode, and percentage of on-time graduations and percentage of ECTS credits achieved in first year (current number: 0; target values in 2028: share of students: 20%; percentage of on-time graduations: 80%; percentage of ECTS credits achieved in the first year: 80%).
Responsible: Directors of study program and Vice-Dean for Teaching.
Resources: none.

Action T2.3: **Tutors per number of students as defined by each study programme**
Description: student tutoring by lecturers or peers is essential to provide personalized academic support and guidance beyond traditional classroom teaching. It helps students to deepen their understanding of complex subjects, strengthen learning strategies and build confidence in their abilities. Tutoring activities can be done in various ways and tailor approaches for each study programmes are favoured by the faculty.
Timing: collection of activities at the end of each academic year with the identification of the most effective and accepted tutoring approaches by the end of the three-year monitoring period.
Indicators for monitoring: number of students taking part in tutoring either by lecturers or student peers (current level to be determined; target level in 2028 > 50% of all students)
Responsible: Directors of study programmes and Vice-Dean for teaching.
Resources: additional Faculty budget for the payment of student (peer) tutors.

GOAL T3: **Improving the level of student satisfaction**

Action T3.1: **Tutors per number of students as defined by each study programme**
Description: Student tutoring by lecturers or peers is essential to provide personalized academic support and guidance beyond traditional classroom teaching. It helps students to deepen their understanding of complex subjects, strengthen learning strategies and build confidence in their abilities. Tutoring activities can be done in various ways and tailor approaches for each study programmes are favoured by the faculty.
Timing: collection of activities at the end of each academic year with the identification of the most effective and accepted tutoring approaches by the end of the three-year monitoring period.
Indicators for monitoring: Number of students taking part in tutoring either by lecturers or student peers (current level to be determined; target level in 2028 > 50% of all students)
Responsible: Directors of study programmes and Vice-Dean for Teaching.
Resources: additional faculty budget for the payment of student (peer) tutors.

Action T3.2: **Improvement of the communication with students**
Description: regular communication between academic staff and students beyond classroom teaching is important for improving student engagement and supporting students' personal and professional development. Such interactions create opportunities for mentorship, feedback and networking that improve the overall learning experience. This can be done by organizing informal discussion sessions or office hours, involving students in research projects or academic events, and engaging with students via digital communication channels such as forums or mentorship platforms.
Timing: mid-term monitoring (after three years), starting with selected pilot activities and, eventually, extending it to the entire faculty teaching staff.
Indicators for monitoring: (current level to be determined; target level in 2028 > 50% of all students provide positive assessments in a to-be established monitoring student survey).
R*esponsible:* Directors of study programmes and Vice-Dean for teaching.
Resources: none.

GOAL T4: **Decreasing the number of contract lecturers and extra-teaching load**

Action T4.1: **triennial planning for recruiting academic staff**
Description: foresee a triennial planning recruitment to increase the size of the academic staff during the mid-term. Submit a sustainable recruitment planning to the University Board and make it aware about the important repercussion on the educational quality, student recruitment (see goal 1) and satisfaction (see goals 2 and 3).
Timing: increase of the academic staff size by ca. 50% in three years.
Indicators for monitoring: number of tenured positions recruited per year (2024 teaching staff value: 95; number in 2028: 115, while decreasing markedly the recourse to contract lecturers and extra-teaching load). The personnel recruitment plan proposed here for 2026/28 is inclusive also of the same request motivated by research issues.
Responsible: Dean and Vice-Deans.
Resources: as reported in the three-years planning under negotiation with the university board.

* Overall, for the above four goals and related actions an enhanced support by the Study and Tuition Office and Marketing Office is expected. Regarding the Faculty Secretariat staff enough personnel resources should be warranted.

SECTION 4: RESEARCH

4.1 Analysis of the Situation

The SWOT analysis dealing with Research largely reflects the analogous analysis reported in the University Strategic Plan. Without any doubt, research is one of the strengths of the Faculty, even if with some criticality. The capability of getting third-party funding from national and international (EU Horizon research projects) competitive calls, and partnerships in international consortia is quite unique within the Free University of Bolzano. Nevertheless, it is not confined to all scientific sectors, and the rate of applications should be increased, encouraging other scientific sectors to participate. Most of the researchers rank above their scientific sector averages in terms of scientific publications, which has resulted in the valuable ranking (3rd position) of the Faculty in the past (2015/19) VQR. Also in this case, however, the overall performances are quite inhomogeneous. Some senior professors have a very competitive international reputation, and, in the mid-term, this should be expected also for other members of the Faculty. The research topics, chosen after the establishment of the Faculty (March 2023), such as research smart farming and forestry, food processing, sustainability, climate change and bioeconomy seem to be quite appealing at local, national and international levels. Besides the above-mentioned unequal performances, two main criticisms emerged, one of which also heavily interferes with non-optimal performance. The academic staff of the Faculty is undersized and too small compared to all other Italian departments/faculties of agriculture (see Appendix, note 1). This has severe negative repercussions on the performances of several small scientific sectors, but also on those scientific sectors quite well performing because it undermines the ability to fully develop their research potential and the participation to international calls because of the lack of personnel to be used as cofinancing. This also prevents the establishment of solid and continuous international networks, which deserve continuous contribution and active participation. The other criticism concerns the dispersive location of the research laboratories in three distant places (Laimburg, University campus and NOI TechPark). This negatively affects the visibility of the Faculty and prevents intensive multidisciplinary cooperations. Furthermore, the laboratories of some scientific sectors are very small, and inappropriate to sustain competitive research activity. In the mid-term, the auspicious is to locate the Faculty at the NOI TechPark offering optimal laboratory and equipment conditions, as clearly highlighted as one of the major tasks of University Strategic Plan.
The expected improvements of the Faculty Research have been set with thresholds, which reflect: (i) the results already achieved , which in some cases are already well satisfactory, despite the fact that there are still differences between the various RMA; and (ii) the targets clearly suggested by the University Strategic Plan.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
S1: capability of getting third-party funding from national and international (EU Horizon research projects) competitive calls, partnerships in international consortia and rate of applications **S2:** significant number of researchers with rankings above their scientific sector averages (see VQR 2015/19) **S3:** international reputation of senior professors recruited from other universities (see comments from reviewers) (note 3) **S4:** scientific sectors open to interdisciplinary approaches **S5:** research focus on strategic topics such as smart farming and forestry, food processing, sustainability, climate change, bioeconomy (note 7) **S6:** connections with many stakeholders at local, national and international levels **S7:** advanced and unique research infrastructures, mainly located at the NOI-Techpark and for some scientific sectors	**W1:** unsatisfactory academic and research (e.g., post-doc) staff size (note 1) **W2:** low or absent critical mass for some scientific sectors (e.g. grassland management) **W3:** insufficient critical mass also for well performing scientific sectors that are unable to get funding for insufficient person-months to be accounted as cofinancing in research projects **W4:** some scientific sectors needing to recovery laboratory gaps **W5:** spreading of the laboratories in three locations (centre, NOI, and Laimburg) **W6:** Lack of communication to make stakeholders fully aware of how research results are being exploited **W7:** unsatisfactory dissemination strategies for PhD programs and related professional profiles **W8:** local regulation constraints for developing some research activities (e.g. ethical constraints on animal trials) **W9:** lack of a project manager to create networking and lobbies and to support the operational research management
Opportunities	**Threats**
O1: location of the Faculty at the NOI Tech Park under «optimal conditions» for laboratories and investment for academic staff, thus completing the program already applied for some scientific sectors **O2:** availability of a relevant budget from PNRR initiatives to strengthen research activities on topics of that are strategic for the Faculty **O3:** increasing social and economical demands for skills on climate and technological changes, with a focus on food and environmental safety **O4:** increasing demands for new forms of traceability, and process and product certification, which are inherent to in strategic areas of the Faculty	**T1:** decrease of the competitiveness because of the lack of human resources and the progressive interest of young researchers to invest their future in the academia **T2:** national regulatory framework to recruit young researchers still too uncertain **T3:** lack of suitable incentives to recruit young researchers from prestigious international centres **T4:** risk of not being able to retain the positions funded through the PNRR, thus losing valuable skills **T5:** lack of distribution of personnel resources based on research performances (note 4) **T6:** lack of infrastructures for implementing and self-managing field research sites

O5: efficient interactions with local (e.g., Laimburg and Eurac), national and international research institutions	**T7:** lack of suitable funding, which generates excessive competition between local research institutions and potentially undermines the cooperation **T8:** purchase delay compromising the timing of research development **T9:** high linguistic thresholds required for internal career progression (C1-C1-C1,) which demotivate applicants and favour other universities

* Notes are available in the Appendix to this document.

4.2 Strategic Goals (3 Years Span)

GOAL R1: **Attraction of young talents**

Description: the Faculty has the lowest academic staff size in Italy with respect to the other Departments/Faculties of Agriculture. As raised by the quite recent comment of the reviewers (Final Report Evaluation of the agricultural area of the Faculty of Science and Technology, 11.01.2022), some scientific sectors are poorly represented and those well performing are also not fully exploited with heavy repercussions on research activities and applications for national and international research projects (see Appendix, note 1). Furthermore, because the average age of several members, the Faculty needs the recruitment of new and young talents to guarantee continuity and generational turnover. According to the economically sustainable triennial planning to be submitted to the University Board, the recruitment of young talents becomes indispensable, taking care about the scientific merit (talents), scientific sector, already available teaching load, language requisite and gender balance. Two profiles of young talents are identified: (i) talents with skills on various types of post-doctoral contracts, who, based also on recent ministerial regulations, may achieve temporary positions (e.g., research contracts) without teaching obligations and with a duration of the contract of three years; and (ii) talents with higher levels of skills to be recruited with RTT tenured positions or direct calls from abroad as professors, who should have the capability of strengthening both teaching and research staff.

Associated Indicator(s): **number of young talents recruited**

Indicator	Most updated value (2025)	Goal for Year (2026)	Goal for Year (2027)	Goal for Year (2028)
Number of young tenured positions to be recruited	0*	4	3	5
Number of young talents to be recruited (Contract Researcher)	0*	5	5	5

*The number 0 refers to the current situation, where the recruitment planning 2026/28 has not already started.

GOAL R2: **Maintain the number of publications per capita, while increasing the research quality and citations**

Description: The number of publications per capita is satisfactory, although with marked differences among scientific sectors, which only partially are explained by the difference in respective ASN thresholds. This number should be at least maintained if not improved, promoting, in turn, the productivity of some scientific sectors. The research quality, as intended with reference to the quartile location of the international journals, should be maintained/improved as well as the number of citations of scientific articles. These activities are pivotal for VQR ranking and to the success of applications in competitive research calls, especially at international level. The internal monitoring system will be implemented through the contribution of each RMA and under the coordination of the FRB. The indexes for the scientific productivity of each scientific sector will be normalized considering the related median values, as reported by the official MUR tables defined for ASN2018 qualification/*abilitazione* (Threshold Value Tables for Candidates and Commissioners, Ministerial Decree no. 589/2028). This will make the scientific productivity comparable between scientific sectors. Besides the indexes already considered (publications per capita in SCOPUS; publications per capita and related quartile), also the effects on the dissemination of knowledge within the scientific community (citations) will be considered. The proposed

index will consider for each researcher the number of citations in SCOPUS over the last 10 years, divided by the number of threshold citations specified in the ASN to recruit associate professors in each specific sector. The final aggregate Faculty index will then be calculated as the average of all researchers present (the evaluation will also be carried out for each individual RMA). In the table below, made to 100 (ref. value) the average aggregate value that will be calculated for the period 2023-2025 (being the 2025 not available right now), the index values for the upcoming three-year period are indicated as a possible target range.

Associated Indicator(s):

Indicator	Most updated value	Goal for Year (2026)	Goal for Year (2027)	Goal for Year (2028)
PUB-TOT	100 (= ref. index value) (*)	95-105	100-105	100-110
PUB-Q1	100 (= ref. index value) (*)	95-105	95-105	100-110
CIT	100 (= ref. index value) (*)	95-105	100-105	100-110

(*) Index value calculated for each indicator as the average of the normalised values detectable for each academic member (100 = index value calculated for the period 2023-2025)
PUB-TOT: Number of scientific publications (excluding proceedings) found in SCOPUS for the reference period, divided by the total number of academic staff members.
PUB-Q1: As PUB-TOT but limited to publications ranked as Q1.
CIT: Number of citations, in the previous 10-year period, found in SCOPUS and normalised by dividing it by the median value of the reference sector in the MUR-ASN Table (with reference to the recruitment of associate professors), then calculated as the average of the normalised values among all academic staff members.

GOAL R3: **Reducing lacking scientific production**

Description: Generally, a researcher who does not publish scientific papers in journals over a period of several years (at least three) is considered inactive. This does not happen within the Faculty. However, the aim is to avoid the risk of such circumstances by also countering the risk of unproductivity limited to a single year. To prevent members without scientific production is a duty of the Faculty for the overall and individual interest, especially if referred to young researchers. Especially among the latter, due to inexperience, it may happen that activities focus mainly on practical and methodological aspects, even with the possibility of presenting results in conference proceedings, but without the materialisation in significant scientific publications. RMA coordinators will, therefore, have to monitor the situation internally and report by the first semester if there are researchers at risk of not publishing during the year. In such cases, auditing actions must be taken accordingly, in consultation with the scientific leaders of the sector to provide an eventual contingency plan.

Associated Indicator(s): **number of members of the Faculty without scientific production per year.**

Indicator	Most updated value (2024)	Goal for Year (2026)	Goal for Year (2027)	Goal for Year (2028)
Number of members of the Faculty without scientific production per year	4	2	0	0

GOAL R4: **Maintain the capability of getting funds from local and national research projects, and increase the rate of applications to EU call (e.g., Horizon)**

Description: the Faculty has a quite satisfactory rate of success for funding local and national research projects. This rate, if not implemented, should be maintained. On the contrary, the rate of applications, and, therefore, of success to EU calls is only limited to few several scientific sectors. Notwithstanding the initial difficulties for achieving such type of funds, the plan is to increase the rate of applications, which, alone, already shows the capability of being part of international research consortia. The status of submitted and acquired research projects will be monitored every six months by the FRB, which will also coordinate with the unibz Research Offices to keep up to date with opportunities to participate in upcoming calls.

Associated Indicator(s): **number of achieved research projects and number of applications to EU projects per year**

Indicator	Most updated value (application year 2024)	Goal for Year (2026)	Goal for Year (2027)	Goal for Year (2028)
Number of funded research projects	25	26	28	30
Number of applications to EU projects	22	25	25	28

4.3 Actions and Operational Goals

***GOAL R1*: Attraction of young talents**

***Action R1.1:* triennial planning for recruiting young talents**

Description: foresee a triennial planning recruitment to enrol young talents during the mid-term, both with temporary and tenured positions. Submit a sustainable recruitment planning to the University Board and make it aware about the important repercussion both on teaching quality (see related goals) and research productivity (see related goals).
Timing: increase of the academic staff size by ca. 50% in three years, while reinforcing also by 35% the basic research support (namely, contract researchers) in different sectors with temporary research positions. The personnel recruitment plan proposed here for 2026/28 is inclusive also of the same request motivated by research issues.
Indicators for monitoring: number of tenured positions and contract researchers recruited per year. Speaking about novel recruitment, the initial value corresponds to zero. The gender policy and recommendations established by unibz will be taken into account.
Responsible: Dean and Vice-Dean for Research.
Resources: as reported in the three-years planning under negotiation with the University Board.

***Action R1.2:* highlight the potential of some outstanding research groups and facilities.**

Description: improve, with university support, the potential of some outstanding research groups and facilities for increasing the number and scientific value of applicants and newcomers.
Timing: three years, with intermediate monitoring each year
Indicators for monitoring: number and scientific value of applicants per each call, and scientific merit (bibliometric indicators normalized for the age) of the recruited young talents. The current reference corresponds to the bibliometric indicators of each scientific sectors, which will have enrolled new talent.
Responsible: Dean, Vice Dean for Research and Leaders of RMAs.
Resources: none.

***GOAL R2:* Maintain the number of publications per capita, while increasing the research quality and citations**

***Action R3.1:* Implement the cooperation among multidisciplinary research sectors, through a coordinated action of RMAs and recommendation of FRB.**

Description: The cooperation among complementary groups should increase per se the scientific quality of the publications and, at the same time, should favour the cooperation among groups, which may serve as vehicle to stimulate the quality of the publications.
Timing: three years, with intermediate monitoring each year.
Indicators for monitoring: number of publications having complementary groups as coauthors. The starting value corresponds to data in 2025.
Responsible: Vice-Dean for Research and Coordinators of RMAs.
Resources: none.

***Action R3.2:* Benchmarking and regular feedback to scientific sectors, through a coordinated action of RMAs and recommendation of FRB**.

Description: the continuous monitoring of internal and per scientific sector scientific productivity (to be carried out within each RMA) is pivotal to achieve and/or maintain the quality. Assessment will be done with respect to homogenous scientific sector at national and international levels using consolidate website (e.g., SCOPUS) and normalization procedures to make the performances among every different areas comparable. The regular feedback to the leaders of each scientific sector acts as stimulation for consolidate or improve the quantitative and qualitative scientific production.
Timing: three years, with intermediate monitoring each year.
Indicators for monitoring: number of publications and related quartiles of each journal for each scientific sector in comparison with national and international benchmarking.
Responsible: Coordinators of RMAs in cooperation with the Library and the Faculty Secretariat.
Resources: None.

GOAL R3: **Reducing lacking scientific production**

Action R3.1: **Continuous monitoring of the scientific production of all members of the Faculty.**

Description: The Faculty should adopt an internal system of monitoring for the scientific production of all academic staff. The continuous monitoring should allow to intervene in the due time (by June), directly and/or through the supervisor (in case of young members). Apart from this monitoring, all members of the Faculty, since the beginning, should be aware about the pivotal importance to guarantee yearly scientific production as retrievable from SCOPUS database.
Timing: two years, with intermediate monitoring each six months (first monitoring to be carried by June, in each yr).
Indicators for monitoring: starting from the number of inactive people in 2024 (4), number of members of the Faculty, who resulted inactive in terms of scientific production.
Responsible: Vice-Dean for Research and coordinator of RMAs, involving the leaders of each disciplinary sector resulting interested.
Resources: None.

GOAL R4: **Maintain the capability of getting funds from local and national research projects, and increase the rate of applications to EU call (e.g., Horizon)**

Action R4.1: **Monitoring the yearly submission capability at the Faculty level.**

Description: Monitoring the situation of running and submitted projects according to a classification project scheme. The situation will be updated every 6 months. Supports and suggestions to possible applicants will be provided.
Timing: three years, with intermediate monitoring each year.
Indicators for monitoring: number of running and submitted projects, according to the classification scheme of the latter.
Responsible: FRB
Resources: No additional resource required

Action R4.2: **Fostering national and international networks**

Description: The cooperation with other national and international institution is pivotal for joining common research initiatives, which, in most of the cases, culminate with the submission of national

and international research projects. Fostering such networking should be reflect on the rate of applications and funded projects.
Timing: three years, with intermediate monitoring each year.
Indicators for monitoring: number of established consortia having the participation of one or more Faculty scientific sector.
Responsible: FRB
Resources: None.

* Overall, for the above goals and related actions and enhanced support by the Research Office is expected. Regarding the Faculty Secretariat staff enough personnel resources should be warranted.

SECTION 5: THIRD MISSION AND SOCIAL IMPACT

5.1 Analysis of the Situation

Overall, the three pillars chosen by the Faculty have all a solid link with the territory, which, inevitably support third mission/social impact activities. The number of activities and their diversification are satisfactory, with several members of the academic staff contributing primarily through publications/articles in technical magazines, newspaper interviews, and appearances on regional and national radio and television broadcasts. In accordance with the strategic plan of unibz, in general, the Faculty's Third Mission initiatives also aim to integrate the principles of environmental, social and economic sustainability in a cross-cutting manner and to promote the responsible use of digital technologies, with a view to the widespread development of advanced skills. Events dealing with citizens, society and schools are also quite frequent. This commitment is more evident among senior professors, who are also active in participation of national and international scientific and non-scientific committees, as well as in local stakeholder meetings. Certainly, the participation should be wider, also to include young researchers, who must be guided also to this relevant mission, in addition to teaching and research. At the same time, the involvement of students as testimonials, especially for the teaching activities and laboratories, should be encouraged. Relevant is also the interaction of some scientific sectors (mainly from the Food Science RMA) with industries and associations, which generates a satisfactory budget turnover with commissioned research projects. Here, some criticisms arise due to the recently unibz introduced regulation, which heavily penalizes the competitiveness with other national and international institutions, and by the null defence of the intellectual property which, if appropriately protected, may represent an important economic resource. Apart from this, the propension to commissioned research activities should be broader, involving additional scientific sectors. Overall, the main weak points concern the lack of knowledge of some academic staff about the relevance of public engagement and the lack of coordination at faculty/university level in developing such initiatives of public engagement and social impact. As already foreseen, a suitable initiative is the appointment of a delegate of the Faculty for third mission/social impact, who should be in charge, together with the Faculty Secretariat and the Central Offices, for the coordination of the third mission/social impact initiatives, the archiving of these activities (only occasionally done by single member of the academic staff) and the promotion of periodic seminars to better involve all members of the Faculty.

Strenghts	**Weaknesses**
S1: link to the territory of all three Faculty pillars **S2:** interactions of several scientific sectors with industries and associations (commissioned research projects) **S3:** roles of some academic staff in publications/articles and interviews in newspapers, and regional and national radio and television broadcasts **S4:** participation in national and international scientific and non-scientific committees, and local stakeholder meeting **S5:** organization of public engagement events and training activities for citizens to disseminate scientific knowledge and promote social impact **S6:** high school student internships	**W1:** limited visibility of the third mission activities for the non-academic audience **W2:** low interactions of some scientific sectors with industries and associations (commissioned research projects) **W3:** null defence of the intellectual properties in commissioned research projects **W4:** lack of knowledge of some academic staff about the relevance of public engagement **W5:** lack of coordination at faculty/university level for developing initiatives of public engagement and social impact **W6:** low involvement of students
Opportunities	**Threats**
O1: growing public and institutional interest in sustainability and social responsibility for all three Faculty pillars **O2:** broad industrial interest for tech transfer cooperation **O3:** availability of European and national funding for social innovation and citizen science **04:** participation to committees with local authorities and rural communities **O5:** networking with local media, politicians and stakeholders to disseminate knowledge	**T1:** impairment of competitiveness for commissioned research projects because new regulation on commissioned research projects **T2:** partial exploitation of the real potential, perception and repercussion for citizen and stakeholders **T3:** high competition from other universities and other local research centres **T4:** cultural resistance of some local communities to innovation, suitability and proactive thinking **T5:** overloading of human resources with repercussions on teaching and research activities **T6:** lack of specific central third mission area

5.2 Strategic Goals (3 Years Span)

GOAL TM1: **Increase of the number of third mission/social impact initiatives**

Description: Although generally satisfactory in terms of both number and diversification, the third mission/social impact initiatives are not carried out by all Faculty members. Some scientific sectors are less involved and such initiatives should also increase the participation of young researchers and students. A broader participation should be warranted, which should result in the increased of the number of events with the participation of Faculty members.

Associated Indicator(s): number of events

Indicator	Most updated value (average 2023/25)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Number of events	To be determined	10% more	10% more	10% more

GOAL TM2: **Increase the visibility/popularity of the Faculty among schools**

Description: As documented in third mission/social impact, the number of initiatives in 2024 among schools have been quite relevant (50). However, despite these efforts, both informal feedback and, more importantly, the number of high school graduates choosing our study programs from the Bolzano province is not satisfactory. Therefore, such guidance initiatives should be strengthened and more widely distributed within the province of Bolzano and neighbouring regions, targeting a larger number of high degree schools.

Associated Indicator(s): number of guidance initiatives among high degree schools

Indicator	Most updated value (average 2023/25)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Number of guidance initiatives among high degree schools	To be determined	10% more	10% more	10% more

GOAL TM3: **Increase the budget from commissioned research projects**

Description: Although already quite considerable, the budget turnover coming from commissioned research projects is mainly the result of few scientific sectors (mainly those of Food Science RMA). An increase of this budget should be expected in two directions, extending these activities also to other scientific sectors and expecting an increased budget by those scientific sectors already active. This activity is pivotal either for ensuring a prestigious position to the Free University of Bolzano or for strengthening the cooperation with the NOI TechPark.

Associated Indicator(s): Budget from commissioned research projects

Indicator	Most updated value (2024)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Budget from commissioned research projects	143,980.00	+ 10%	+ 20%	+ 30%

5.3 Actions and Operational Goals

GOAL TM1: **Increase of the number of third mission/social impact initiatives**

Action TM1.1: **Appointment of a Faculty delegate for third mission/social impact**

Description: to have a broader participation of Faculty members to third mission/social impact initiatives need coordination, information and promotion. In coordination with the Central Offices and the Faculty Secretariat, a Faculty delegate should fulfil such functions.

Timing: soon starting from 2026 or earlier.

Indicators for monitoring: realization of an archive of the third mission/social impact initiatives and performing periodic seminars to illustrate the importance of such initiatives. None of these activities are currently realized, the timing should concern the realization of the archive within 2026 and two seminars per year.

Responsible: Delegate for third mission/social impact

Resources: platform for monitoring different from Boris and institution, at university level, of a third mission/social impact office to support all initiatives.

Action TM1.2: **Involvement of a greater number of academic staff members**

Description: although quite relevant the number of academic staff members active with initiatives of third mission/social impact is still not satisfactory and limited to senior professors e some scientific sectors. Aiming at increasing the number of events, the number of members of the Faculty actively organizing or participating should increase.

Timing: three years, with intermediate monitoring.

Indicators for monitoring: currently ca. 70% of the faculty members are active in third mission/social impact. The expectation is to reach 90% in three years.

Responsible: Delegate for third mission/social impact

Resources: none.

GOAL TM2: **Increase the visibility/popularity of the Faculty among schools**

Action TM2.1: Predisposition of suitable materials for promoting the Faculty.

Description: the use of suitable and uniform materials for illustrating the Faculty features, mainly referring to study programs cannot be left to the preparation of individual members of the Faculty. It must be agreed and prepared with the collaboration of all involved members. Once prepared, they must be consistently used, regardless of which Faculty member is delivering the guidance initiative in secondary schools.

Timing: within 2026.

Indicators for monitoring: currently, one presentation is already available but not tailored for high degree schools. It should be revised as soon as possible.

Responsible: Delegate for third mission/social impact, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Directors of study programs.

Resources: eventual gadget to be distributed at schools.

Action TM2.2: Getting a broader participation by Faculty members.

Description: Currently, of a few members of the faculty are active on the guidance activity among high degree schools. The number should be increased, and the activity should be extended to members actively involved in teaching in all study programs.

Timing: within 2026.

Indicators for monitoring: Currently, about 5 people are actively involved in such initiatives. The expectation is to increase their number at least twice.

Responsible: Delegate for third mission/social impact, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Directors of study programs.

Resources: none.

GOAL TM3: **Increase the budget from commissioned research projects**

Action TM3.1: Promotion of this activity in and out the Faculty.

Description: Seminars within the Faculty will be promoted showing real applicative cases by those researchers, who have been successful and have a long-time cooperations. At the same, various initiatives (e.g., dedicated website, workshops with potential stakeholders, stronger interaction with the NOI TechPark) will be organized to disseminate the knowledge achieved by the Faculty for commissioned research projects.

Timing: within 2028.

Indicators for monitoring: since these activities have never been started, we expect to organize the events described above from 2026 with a frequency of two per year until 2028.

Responsible: Delegate for third mission/social impact, Vice-Dean for Research and leaders of RMAs.

Resources: dedicated budget from the University for the organization of these activities.

* Overall, for the above three goals and related actions the support of one unit of Faculty Secretariat staff is required to support and help in the monitoring all initiatives.

SECTION 6: CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

To date, the distribution of economic resources mainly uses a top (University Board)-down (Faculty) approach. The future hope is that the faculties will have higher freedom in allocating resources (once the budget amount has been defined by the University Board), obviously always with monitoring of their efficient use by the University Board.

Ex-ante criteria and modalities for individual categories of resources are as follows.

• **PhD programmes.** The number of fellowships to be destinated to single PhDs is yearly decided by the University Board as well as the individual budget for PhD students to be used for research, mobility and conference participation. Here, the Faculty has not any margin for action. Once assigned the fellowships, they are distributed within each of the two PhDs based on public calls, with an appropriate committee (yearly appointed), which selects candidates based on the scientific merit and the background pertinence to the various listed research topics. Once the two above criteria are satisfied, a turnover among scientific sectors would be warranted. The auspicious is to restore incentives for those scientific sectors, which have the capability to attract external resources for PhD fellowships.

• **Faculty members.** The personal funds attributed to academic staff member are established by the University Board. The amount of the budget varies depending on the staff position.

• **Three years award "*Premialità*".** The overall amount of the budget usable is yearly established by the University Board. Every three years, the Senate discusses a proposal for the criteria to be used to assign the three years award. The proposal is approved or modified by the University Council. Once the overall budget has established, the Dean is in charge to assess all candidates based on the selected criteria: scientific productivity, teaching student assessment, innovative tools for teaching, funding of research projects, third mission and exception leaderships roles. Before seeing the individual proposals, the Dean decides the score to assign to each contribution for each of the above criteria (e.g., the score for research project, the score for third mission activity) but respecting the maximum attributable to each criterion. The only exception is teaching student assessment, already calculated at central level. The Dean shares the proposal with Vice-Deans. Once the procedure is completed at Faculty level, the Dean proposal is further checked by the Rector and Pro-Rectors, who, in some cases, intervene and change individual and overall scores. The auspicious would be to have the overall assignment of the budget to each faculty, and then, to proceed with the assignment by Dean and Vice-Deans.

• **Budget for research.** Yearly, the University Board establishes the overall amount of the budget to be assigned to the Faculty. Usually, the negotiation of the overall amount is not allowed. Therefore, the Faculty has only the freedom to distribute this among the various items (e.g., teaching, research, didactic laboratories). Once received the information for the total budget assigned, the Dean, Vice-Dean for Research and Faculty Secretariat ask the leader of RMAs to submit proposals. Because of the limited budget available for research, the Faculty has decided to use it only for visiting scientists and series of lectures The approach that we would like to maintain in the future is that of individual self-financing of research by individual researchers, except for an incentive of research funds for young scientists, who should be more sustained by unibz.

• **Budget for teaching.** Under the same conditions described for the budget for research, the Dean, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Faculty Secretariat ask the Coordinators of study programs to submit proposals. Such proposals are, then, discussed by the Dean and Vice-Dean for Teaching and accepted or modified. Criteria used to assess the proposals are: ensure competitive didactic laboratory and excursion activities, ensure high level equipment to all didactic laboratories, differentiate among study programs based on the different need (e.g., excursions rather than laboratories), and number of students of each cohort of each study program.

• **Budget for third mission.** A dedicated budget for third mission is missing. The auspicious is to introduce also this important budget item to guarantee this not as an individual activity, but as a Faculty mission. Furthermore, the Faculty deems it essential to allocate an additional unit within the Faculty Secretariat to support initiatives related to the third mission.

• **Infrastructure and internal calls.** Here, we are speaking not about a budget dedicated to the Faculty but about competitive internal calls, which both in terms of the overall budget and selection are managed by the unibz Research Committee. Obviously, the Vice-Dean for Research is a member of the committee. In few and occasional cases, the Faculty has been only requested to select the proposals when the number of them from each faculty has been limited. What is markedly requested to avoid is the selection of the proposals at Rectorate level because skills are only available at Faculty level.
• **Personnel recruitment.** In the past, every year the Faculty submitted a proposal to the University Board. Most probably, this year and for the first time the Faculty should have the possibility of discussing a three-years planning, which is the minimum for having some suitable and sustainable programming. Apart from the position (full and associate professors, career progression and RTT), the approach of the Faculty is consolidated. The repeated informal meetings, for reaching the final agreement within the Faculty Council, consider indicators such as (i) availability of the teaching load (our Faculty has been the first one to introduce this criterion); (ii) scientific and teaching performances of the scientific sector; (iii) numerosity of the scientific sector; and (iv) language and gender balance. Positions of Contract Research and technologist are assigned based on indicators such as the scientific performances and the numerosity of the scientific sectors. Up to now, the distribution of the resources among the faculties is done by the University Board according to a process, which, probably, should deserve some more transparency. Based on this consideration, it seems that such distribution only considers the number of students per faculty. This is in a great contrast to the most common procedure used by all Italian universities, which, with an equal weight, also consider the research (mainly) and third mission activities. The auspicious is to move in that consolidated and diffuse direction.
All the resources that will be assigned to the Faculty, **ex-post** will be distributed according to the above indicators. A proof of this is already available visioning the three-years planning for personnel recruitment, which will be submitted to the University Board. As an example, a table summarizing criteria and requests for the next three years (2026/28) is reported below.

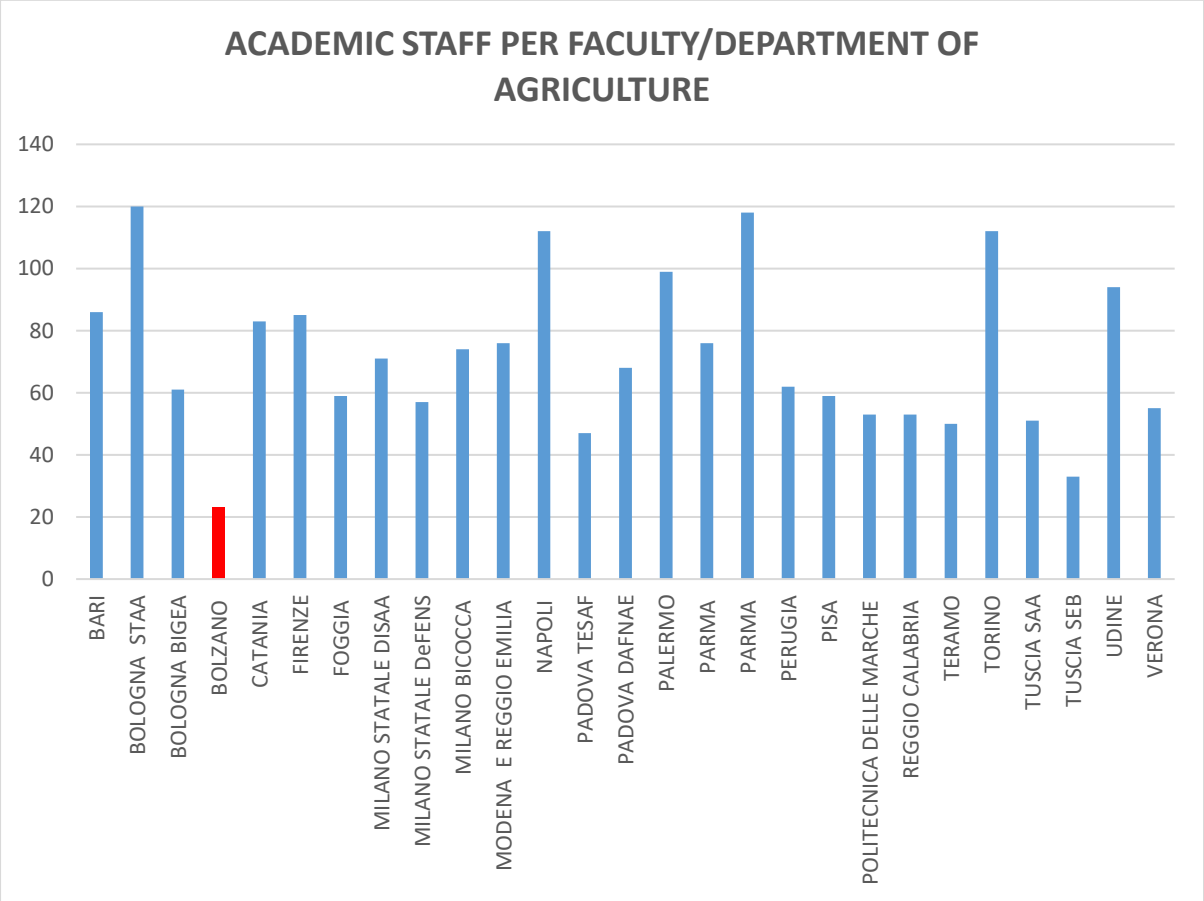
Position	Scientific sector	Teaching load	Teaching or scientific motivation	Numerosity	Language	Faculty cofinancing
2026						
PA call from abroad	AGR/17	yes	both	none	German	none
RTT	AGR/01	yes	both	very poor	German	yes
Career progression PA to PO	BIO/03	not relevant	scientific	poor	German	yes
RTT	BIO/03	yes	both	poor	to be verified	yes
RTT	AGR/15	yes	both	medium but not enough	to be verified	yes
RTT	AGR/05	yes	both	medium but not enough	to be verified	yes
Endowed Professor	to be defined	No	scientific	/	to be verified	external
2 Research Contracts (3 years)	AGR/11	/	scientific	medium	to be verified	none
3 Research Contracts (3 years)	To be assigned to the best research performing scientific sectors*					
2027						
Career progression PA to PO	AGR/03	not relevant	scientific	medium but not enough	Italian	yes
RTT	AGR/13	yes	both	medium but not enough	to be verified	yes
RTT	AGR/16	yes	both	medium but not enough	to be verified	yes
Career progression PA to PO	AGR/15	not relevant	both	medium but not enough	Italian	yes
RTT	AGR/09	yes	both	medium but not enough	German	none
5 Research Contracts (3 years)	To be assigned to the best research performing scientific sectors					
2028						
RTT	BIO/03	yes	both	medium	to be verified	yes
RTT	AGR/08	yes	scientific	poor	to be verified	yes
RTT	AGR/19	yes	both	poor	German	yes
RTT	AGR/10	yes	teaching	none	German	yes

RTT	AGR/03	yes	both	medium but not enough	to be verified	yes
5 Research Contracts (3 years)	To be assigned to the best research performing scientific sectors					

The gender balance will be considered, but it cannot be established at priori.
* Those scientific sectors receiving the Research Contract will be out from the assessment the further years.

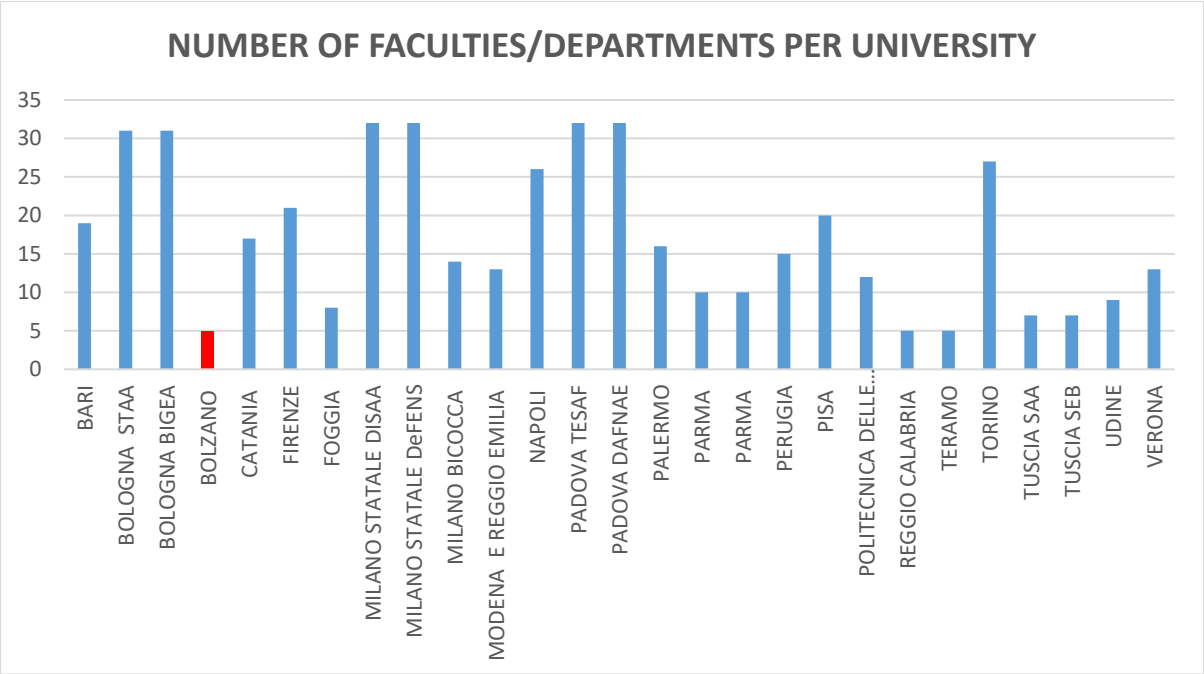
Appendix

(Note 1) Critically undersized academic staff

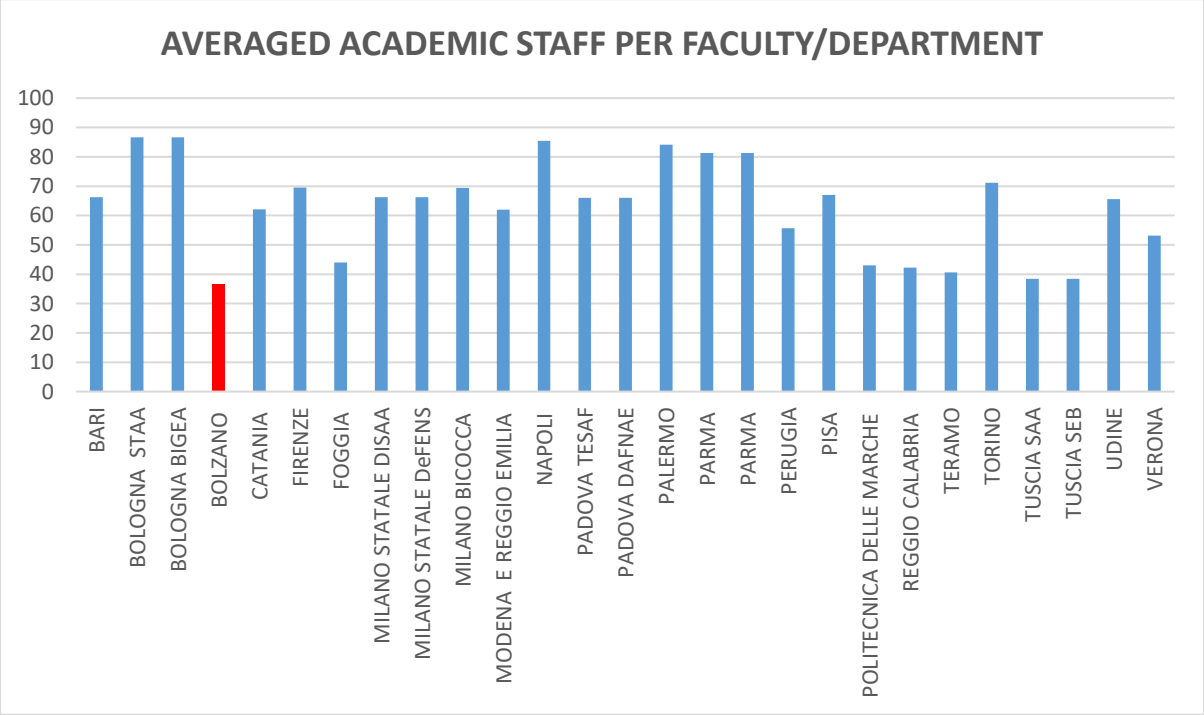


Compared to the other Italian Faculty/Department, our size is, in almost all the cases, less than half. **The need of largely increase the academic staff has been already recommended by the reviewers from the self-assessment of the Agricultural area in 2023.**

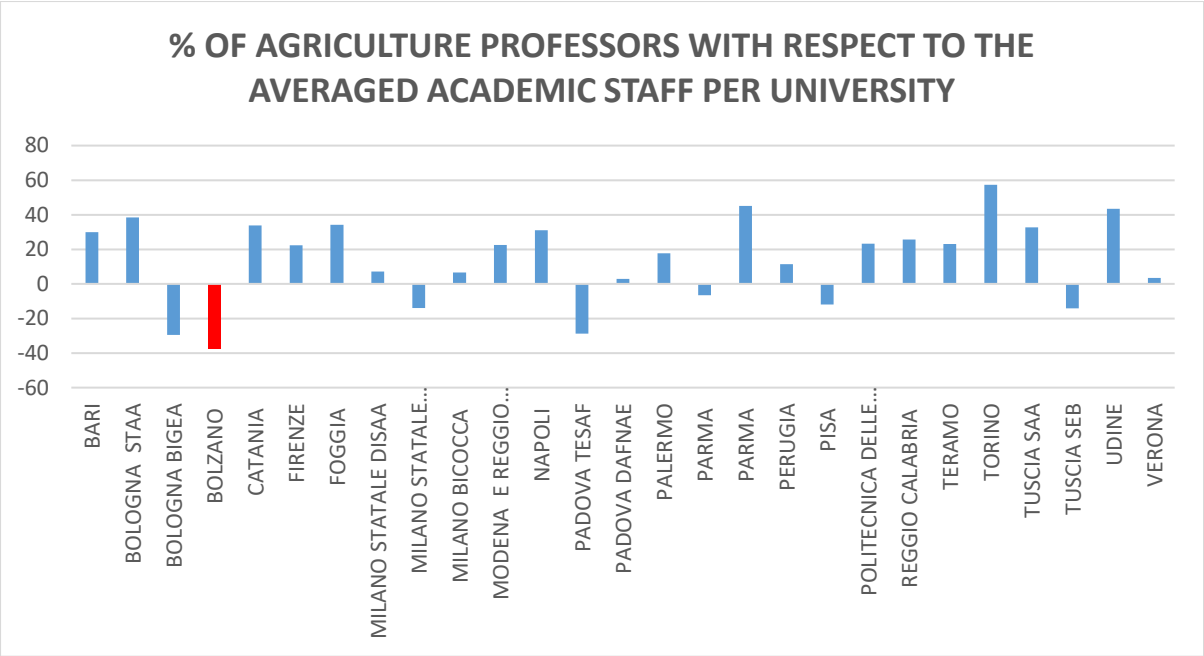
Source: https://cercauniversita.mur.gov.it/php5/docenti/cerca.php?SESSION=



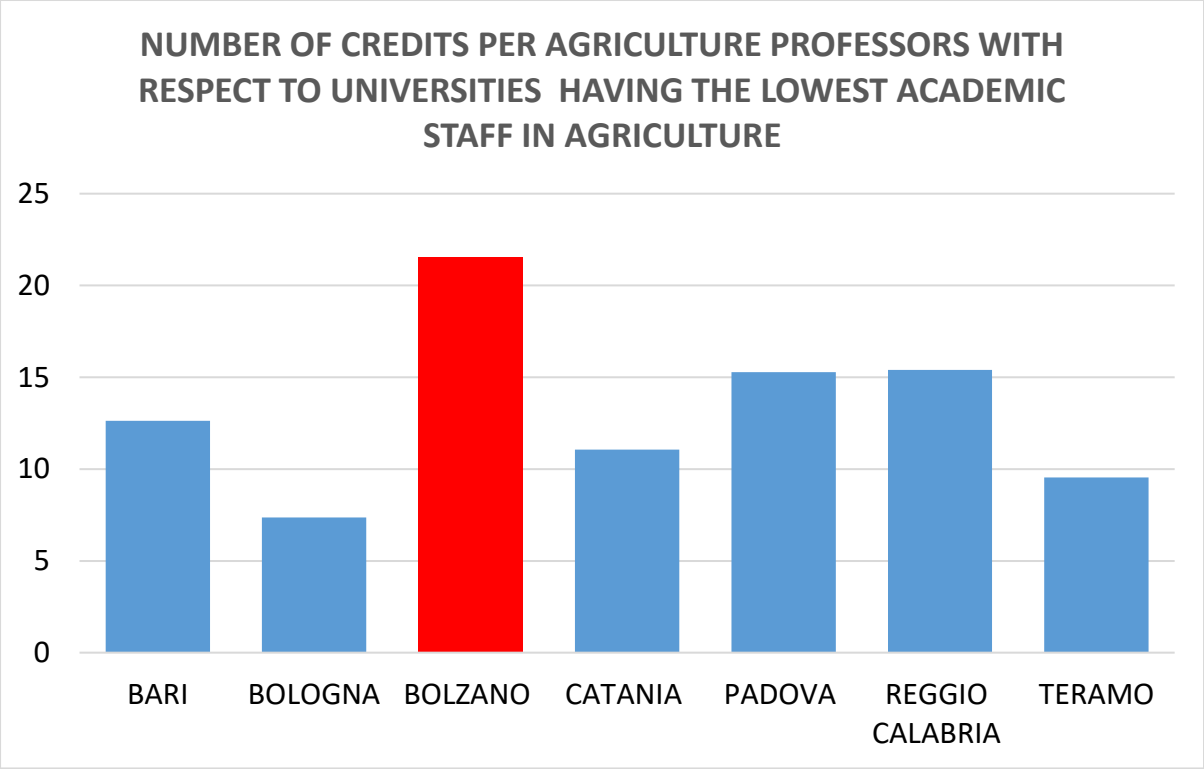
Most of the other Italian universities have a bigger size because they have much more faculties.
Source: websites of the different Universities



The normalization of the academic staff per number of faculties provides the dimension of an averaged/virtual faculty/department for each university.
Source: https://cercauniversita.mur.gov.it/php5/docenti/cerca.php?SESSION=



Considering the previous normalization and referring to a hypothetical averaged/virtual faculty/department, the comparison with our academic staff is worse than what observed just comparing numbers apart from the university size.



The low academic staff size has a heavy repercussion on the teaching load *pro-capite:* among the Italian universities having the lowest academic staff we are the one with highest teaching load *pro-capite*.

(Note 2) Academic calendar unsuitable for exploiting the whole recruitment potential

The current academic calendar with the opening and closing various sessions doesn't give the opportunity to recruit students continuously, and especially when secondary school diplomas and bachelor degrees have just been achieved. Opening a unique session from March to late September as all the other Italian universities should be recommended.

(Note 3) International reputation of senior professors recruited from other universities

The panel invited to review the self-assessment of the Agricultural area in 2023 literally reported "The best research groups appear to be those established by researchers who moved from other Universities and were able to build very effective teams".

(Note 4) Lack of distribution of personnel resources based on research performances

All worldwide universities have three main levels of activity: teaching, research and III mission. Most, if not all worldwide universities, distributed resources to faculties/departments considering all three performances and not just the number of students. A university without research and third mission cannot be called in this way, especially since effective teaching is always supported by strong research activity.