



Kanton Bern
Canton de Berne



Bern Economic Development Agency

Appendix to
annual report
Hardship Program
Canton of Bern



90 percent of the applications were approved

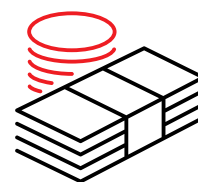
The cantonal hardship measures were in principle open to any business that was forced to close for at least 40 days as a result of an official order or that saw its turnover drop by more than 40 percent due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Businesses meeting all the eligibility criteria received a non-repayable grant to cover their fixed costs, funded largely by the federal government



4242 applications
submitted



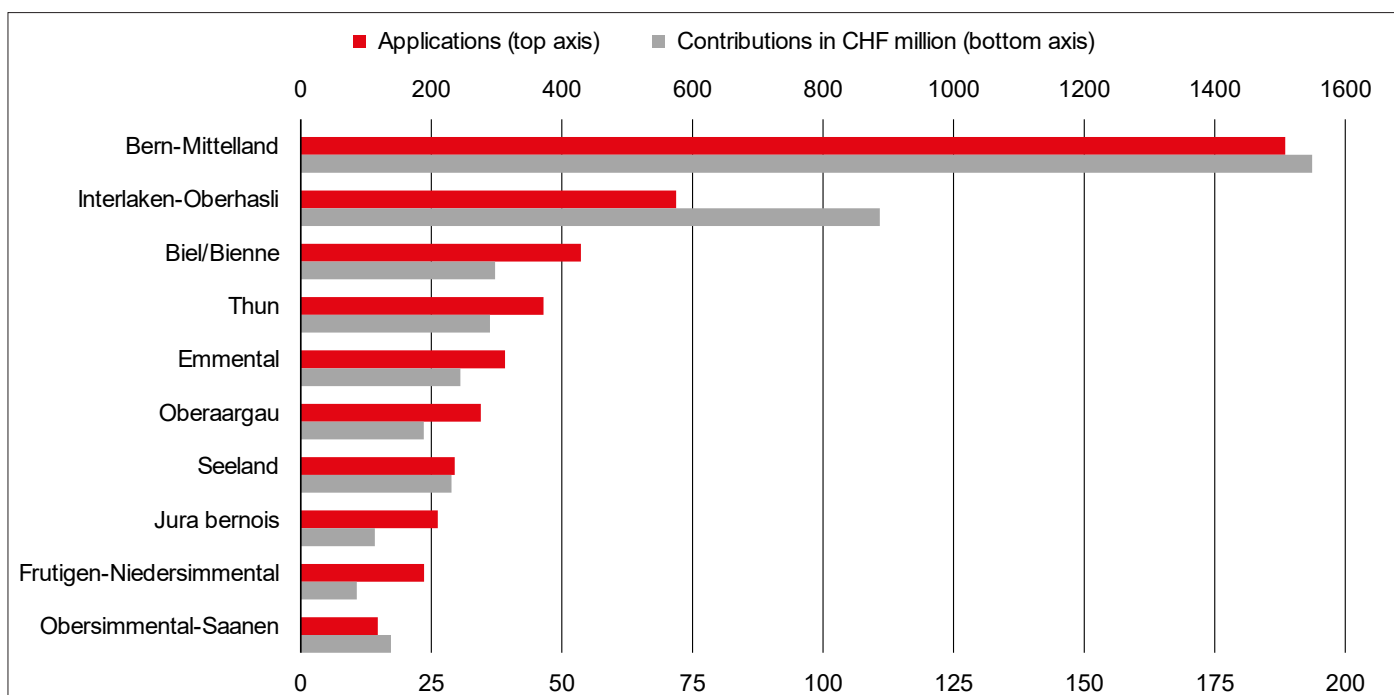
3826 applications
approved



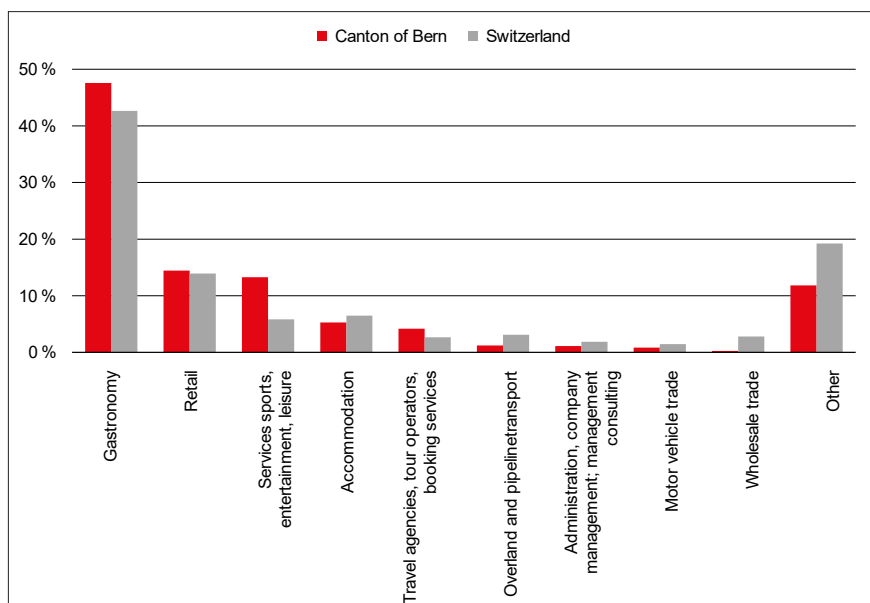
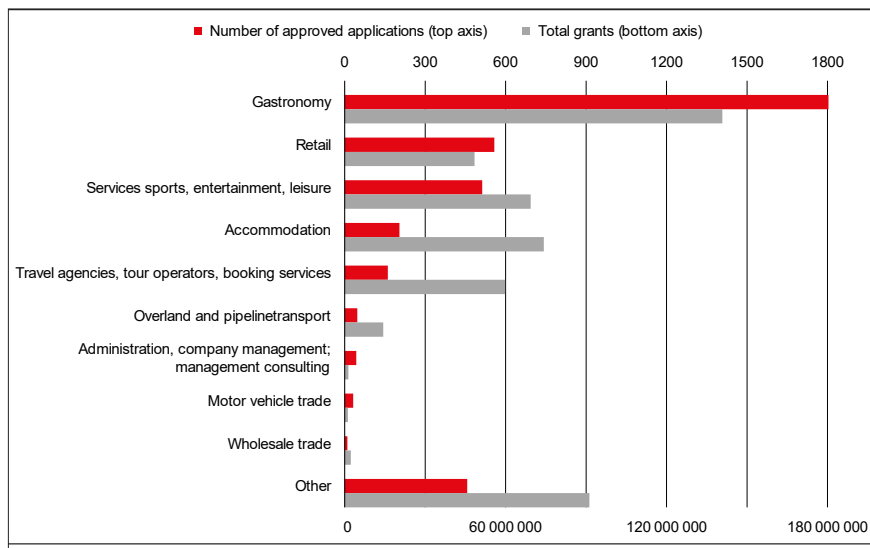
CHF 500.6 million
paid out, of which CHF 74.7 million
funded by the Canton of Bern

Tourism regions disproportionately affected

Unsurprisingly, most applications in Bern came from our largest administrative district, Bern-Mittelland, where 40 percent of Bernese businesses are based. Of note were the large number of applications from the administrative district of Interlaken-Oberhasli with its many tourist destinations.



Half of applications from food and drink



As the industry breakdown shows, 85 percent of the applications received came from the food and drink, retail, sports and leisure, events, travel, and accommodation sectors. The food and drink sector alone – which features prominently in the Canton and was particularly badly affected by the pandemic – accounted for half of all applications. The picture is much the same throughout the whole of Switzerland.

Around three quarters of businesses in the food and drink and travel sectors applied for a hardship grant, along with one in eight retailers.

The hardship program distinguishes between small and large businesses. The maximum grant available to a small business is CHF 1 million (or CHF 1.5 million in exceptional cases). The maximum grant a large business can apply for is CHF 5 million (or CHF 10 million in exceptional cases). The Canton of Bern contributes 30 percent of the small business grants, while the remaining 70 percent is funded by the federal government. Grants to large businesses are fully funded by the federal government. The total amount spent on grants by the Canton of Bern was CHF 74.7 million.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to you for enabling us to get through this difficult phase and to return with a truly great edition of SIAMS in 2022.

Raymond Stauffer, Chairman of the Board, FAJI SA

Thank you so much [...] for all your hard work. We know how stressful and difficult this has been for you too.

Marc Born, owner, Kurt & Kurt SATT GastroTainment AG

I would like to extend my personal thanks to the Canton and in particular to the hardship support team for your support. Compared with other countries, I am proud and grateful to be part of this society in which policymakers and businesses not only talk the talk but also walk the walk. Thank you!

Michael Herzig, owner and CEO, Hofer Schriften + Grafik

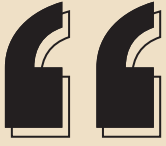
We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Canton of Bern's Office of Economic Affairs for your prompt and constructive support.

**Dr. Fritz Rothenbühler, Chairman of the Board
Stephan Hirt, Chairman of the Executive Board, GL Schwob AG**

Thank you for making it so quick and easy to apply, and for keeping your eyes and ears open to help companies hit hard by the pandemic.

**André Lüthi
President, Globetrotter Group AG**

Merci



The Covid-19 pandemic and the measures taken to control it are threatening the livelihoods of many companies. To prevent bankruptcies and preserve jobs, the Bernese government decided on November 19, 2020, to take part in the federal hardship program for businesses. The Canton of Bern's hardship program was launched at the beginning of 2021. After undergoing several modifications, the regular parts finally came to an end in August 2021, followed by the Federal Council reserve part at the end of October 2021.

This appendix provides an overview of the results of the first cantonal hardship program. Although no full conclusions can be drawn as yet, any corrections are likely to be very minor, and the current key indicators are of substantial informative value.

Jean-Philippe Devaux
Bern Economic Development Agency, Vice-President berninvest



Implementing the 2021 hardship program was a genuine tour de force on the part of those involved. It was put in place largely digitally with the help of dedicated software developed by a partner company in Biel/Bienne. A core team consisting of management representatives of the Office of Economic Affairs, the Bern Economic Development Agency and the Finance, Law and Communication departments at the WEU General Secretariat was set up under my leadership to implement the program in a daily and weekly rhythm following a management cockpit. In the implementation process itself, the cantonal administration staff were supported by a large team of temporary external resources. Altogether, more than 100 people (70 FTEs) were involved, with more than 70 people (44 FTEs) working on the multi-staged decision-making process alone.

On the operational side, providing a hotline for companies and separating the decision-making process from the two-stage appeals procedure made a substantial difference. Additionally, the abuse concept was drawn up in close consultation with the cantonal and federal audit offices.



André Nietlisbach, General Secretary
Department of Economic Affairs, Energy and Environment (WEU)

The Covid-19 pandemic and the measures taken to control it have led to a historic downturn in the global economy. However, the negative impact on Swiss and Bernese businesses was significantly mitigated with the help of various government support programs. Alongside short-time work compensation, which has probably been the most important instrument, the hardship measures we introduced have played a substantial role in avoiding bankruptcies.



The purpose of these measures, which was to help sectors and businesses with activities that have been particularly badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, has largely been achieved.

Fortunately, not all the funds earmarked for the hardship measures have had to be used – thanks on the one hand to the rapid economic recovery and, on the other, to the resilience of Bernese businesses.

Dr. Sebastian Friess Head of the Office of Economic Affairs

