



## Ground-breaking

On Thursday, 14 March 2024, a symbolic ground-breaking ceremony attended by around twenty guests was held to mark the start of the renovation work on the headquarters of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in Berne.

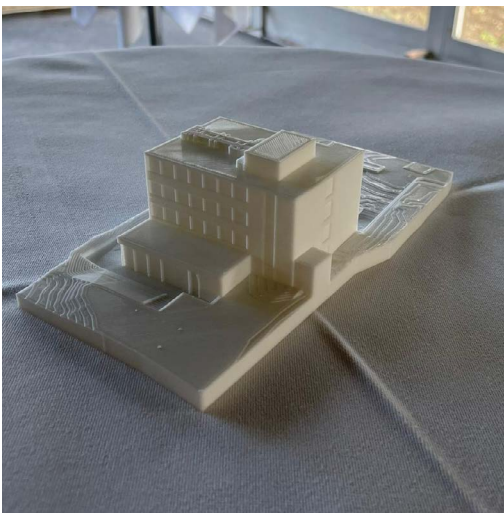
The Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Wolfgang Küpper, welcomed those invited. He went on to explain that renovation of the headquarters building in Berne was an obvious choice, bearing in mind the Organisation's history and its roots in Berne and Switzerland. Lastly, he warmly thanked the Swiss authorities for their unfailing support.

Other speakers included Mr Alec von Graffenried, mayor of Berne, Ms Dominique Bühler, First Vice-President of the Grand Council of the Canton of Berne, Mr Peter Füglistaler, Director of the Federal Office of Transport, and Mr Ueli Gfeller, Managing Director of BauSpektrum.

Among other things, they underlined the importance of OTIF's historic presence in Berne for the last 130 years and welcomed the ambition to equip itself with a modern, energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly renovated building.

Also taking part were Mr Gilles Mugnier, Secretary General of the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), Mr Masahiko Metoki, Director General of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), Mr Thierry Merle, member of the FIPOI Management Committee, and Ms Berta Fernandez-Alfaro, Chief of Mission at the IOM Coordination Office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

To close the first part of the ceremony, Ms Lunesterline Andriamahatahity, who leads the renovation project and who is the Head of OTIF's Administration and Finance Department, gave an overview of the project. She emphasised that the fact that the project was now taking shape was thanks to the determination of OTIF's Secretary General, Mr Wolfgang Küpper, the support of OTIF's Member States and the support of the host State.



## The headquarters building

The OTIF headquarters building was built in the 1960s and opened in 1966. There has been no major renovation to the building for more than 50 years.

In summer 2023, the entire Secretariat team moved to temporary offices in order to enable the project to go ahead under the best conditions possible.

The renovation of the OTIF headquarters includes two major innovations: the extension of the meeting room to allow simultaneous interpretation at meetings, and Minergie Eco certification. Among other things, this implies a significant reduction in energy consumption in future years and the use of materials that are environmentally friendly and free from harmful substances.

The renovation work should be completed in the first quarter of 2025.

