EUA survey on sustainability and greening at higher education institutions

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1. Introduction

Through this survey, the European University Association (EUA) aims to capture a wide range of perceptions and approaches among higher education institutions. As such, you are kindly invited to share information on the state of sustainability and greening at your institution, regarding strategies and actions, education, research and innovation, the third mission and institutional organisation.

In this context, *greening* is defined as increasing awareness and taking concrete action towards a green, environmentally-friendly and resource-efficient university. This may or may not be part of a broader approach to address the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the Agenda 2030.

The online questionnaire is open to all higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and EU partner countries in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood (former Tempus countries) from **28 March to 23 May 2025**.

Only one response per higher education institution should be submitted, preferably by a person in charge of/involved in the institution's greening activities.

The survey will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

Throughout the survey, **terms highlighted in bold and in blue** are defined in the Glossary.

Confidentiality and privacy policy

Data gathered in the course of the survey will be handled according to the [EUA privacy policy, in full compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).](#)

This means that your participation in this study is confidential, as responses provided in this survey will be anonymised and aggregated, and all information that could directly or indirectly identify your institution will be removed.

Neither you nor your institution will be identified in any publication from this study without your prior and explicit consent. Should you wish your institution to be listed as contributor, you can indicate this at the end of the survey.

Published findings will be made available in open access via a trusted repository.

Do you agree with the Confidentiality and Privacy Policy?
- Yes
- No

[If no:] Thank you for your interest in EUA's survey on greening in higher education institutions. In order to participate, it is necessary to accept EUA's confidentiality and privacy policy. If you would like to revise your response, please click previous. Click next to end the survey.

Glossary

Active approaches: Project-based learning, authentic learning (i.e. learning with a link to reality/making an impact in real life), such as hackathons, entrepreneurship etc.

Carbon-intensive industries: Automotive, chemical, metallurgical.

Gamification: Process of enhancing activities through the integration of game design elements and principles in non-game contexts to nudge participation, e.g. using points, badges and leaderboards.

Green skills: Green skills are the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society. They are the skills needed to support the green transition.

Greening of the campus: Making the campus and the facilities more sustainable and better use of resources, reducing consumption and waste on campus, greening the landscape.

Knowledge valorisation: Patenting, technology transfer, start-up creation, promoting green solutions to partners in the innovation ecosystem.

Living labs: Using buildings/sites for energy/environment-related research as testbeds for sustainable solutions/technologies.

MSCA Green Charter: https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-green-charter

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC): For further information see here https://unfccc.int/NDCREG

Overarching priorities: E+ programme 2020-27 Inclusion and Diversity · Digital Transformation · Environment and fight against climate change · Participation in democratic life.

Reducing the environmental footprint of laboratory research: Substituting hazardous materials with less- or non-hazardous alternatives, limiting the environmental impact of cold storage.

Shared research infrastructures: Major scientific equipment or instruments, computing systems, communication networks, archives or collections.

Solutions via EU initiatives: Digital Innovation Hubs, Knowledge and Innovation Communities of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

Strategic priorities: Horizon strategic plan 2025-27: (i) climate change; (ii) pollution; (iii) the loss of biodiversity; (iv) the digital transition; and (v) an ageing population.

Sustainable commuting: Measures to change the travel habits of employees by reducing their reliance on private cars in daily commuting and to persuade the use of alternative, sustainable means of transportation, such as public transport, car-pooling, car sharing etc.

Sustainable construction / renovation: Insulation or energy efficiency for new buildings and refurbishment.

Sustainable procurement: Food, materials and products - choice of low carbon, environment friendly products and materials.

Sustainable transportation: Replacing university owned cars by electric, provision of charging facilities for electric cars etc.

Whole life-cycle costing: Whole life-cycle costing includes the costs that will be incurred during the lifetime of the product, work or service and may include the cost of greenhouse gas emissions:

- Purchase price and all associated costs (delivery, installation, insurance, etc.)
- Operating costs, including energy, fuel and water use, spares, and maintenance
- End-of-life costs (such as decommissioning or disposal) or residual value

2. Background

1. Please select the profile of the person filling in the questionnaire on behalf of the institution. *Please select your main position.*
   - Executive head (rector, president, vice-chancellor)
   - Adviser to the rector / rector's cabinet
   - Vice-rector, vice-president, deputy vice-chancellor
   - Senior administrative staff at institutional level
   - Other - please specify:

2. Please select your country / higher education system and institution from the drop-down list below.
   In case your institution is not listed, please select your country and other.
   In case your country is not listed, please select other under country.

Country	
Institution	

2.1 If other, please indicate your country and the name of your institution.

Country	
Institution	

3. What type of institution do you work at? *Please select one option.*
   - Comprehensive (multidisciplinary) university
   - Specialised university
   - University of applied sciences / university college
   - Technical university
   - Open university

4. Can EUA contact you to...? *Please select all applicable.*
   - inform you about further activities on this topic, such as events, publications etc.
   - ask you follow-up questions

   4.1 If yes, please indicate your name and email address, or those of the person to be contacted.

Name, Surname	
Email	

3. Sustainability and greening activities

5. Does your institution have any measures in place that address sustainability or greening? *Please select one option.*
   - Yes, we have measures in place across the institution
   - Yes, but measures are driven by individual faculties or departments.
   - No, but we would be interested in establishing them
   - No
   - I do not know

[If not yet/No/I do not know: Thank you for your interest in EUA's survey on greening in higher education institutions. Unfortunately, the following set of questions asks about details of measures already in place at the participating institutions. You have indicated that no such measures are currently in place at your institution. If you would like to revise your response, please click previous. Click next to end the survey.]

6. Which of the following activities and measures take place at your institution? *Please select all that apply in the following categories. If an option does not apply, you may skip it.*

   6.1 Green / sustainable campus

	Specific policy or process	Some activities
Physical **greening of the campus**		
Sustainable construction / renovation		
Prioritising of sustainable, renewable energy sources		
Minimising the use of energy, water, or other resources		
Recycling and waste management		
Reducing the use of single-use plastics and other disposable items		
Reducing (harmful) emissions		
Sustainable procurement across the institution		
Whole life-cycle costing		
Sustainable transportation		
Offering healthy, eco-responsible, local and ethical food		
Data collection on carbon footprint and a time-bound plan to reduce it or achieve carbon neutrality		
Other, please specify:		

6.2 Internal communication and engagement

	Specific policy or process	Some activities
Sustainability training and capacity-building for staff		
Recognition of staff's sustainability efforts in career progression, promotion, or remuneration		
Recognition of students' sustainability efforts through ECTS, awards, badges etc. (e.g. community engagement...)		
Awareness-raising and communication initiatives		
Seed funding to support internal sustainability initiatives		
Institution-wide sustainability targets integrated into faculty and departmental objectives		
Gamification strategies and tools to encourage participation and engagement		
Other, please specify:		

6.3 Outreach

	Specific policy or process	Some activities
Community engagement and outreach activities on sustainability / greening		
Partnerships with employers / enterprises		
Partnerships with NGOs		
Partnerships with student groups / organisations		
Partnerships with other higher education institutions		

Contribution to local policy initiatives and debates		
Contribution to national policy initiatives and debates		
Advocacy and lobbying activities		
Other, please specify:		

6.4 Mobility

	Standard and / or compulsory	Incentivised	Encouraged
Low carbon forms of transportation for student mobility			
Low carbon forms of transportation for staff mobility and meetings			
Virtual mobility / exchanges as to replace some physical mobility for students			
Virtual mobility / exchanges to replace some physical mobility for staff			
Carbon footprint monitoring / offsetting for business trips			
Carbon footprint monitoring for all business trips			
Sustainable commuting			
Teleconferencing and hybrid conferencing instead of business trips and face-to-face events			
Other, please specify:			

6.5 Learning and teaching

	Green skills	SDGs
Topic in all / most study programmes		
Topic in some study programmes or disciplines		
Dedicated study programmes at bachelor's degree level		
Dedicated study programmes at master's degree level		
Compulsory modules for all or most students		
Elective modules for all / most students		
More **active approaches** to learning		
Student entrepreneurship		
Extra-curricular activities		
Short courses, micro-credentials		
Considered in curriculum reform		
Courses for staff development in teaching		
Initial training and / or continued professional development for schoolteachers		

Open courses for all ages		
Other, please specify:		

6.6 Research and innovation

	Specific policy or process	**Some activities**
Reducing the environmental footprint of laboratory research		
Sustainability training for doctoral candidates or early career researchers		
Fostering green use of own or **shared research infrastructures**		
Auditing research collaborations with **carbon-intensive industries**		
Research and innovation on greening through **living labs**		
Incentives / specific funding for thematic research and innovation activities on greening		
Dedicated institutes / departments for interdisciplinary research and innovation on sustainability / SDGs		
Knowledge valorisation activities related to greening		
Seeking support for applied greening **solutions via EU initiatives** or responding to EU calls for projects		
Supporting researchers with compliance checks for greening requirements in EU-funded R&I projects		
Other, please specify:		

6.7 Internationalisation

	Specific policy or process	**Some activities**
SDGs considered in international exchange and collaboration		
Curricula that integrate global perspectives on sustainability		
Learning opportunities, such as study abroad programmes, focused on sustainable development		
Cross-cultural dialogue		
International collaboration with other higher education institutions		
Global research partnerships and networks		
Global engagement, through community projects, collaboration with NGO, etc.		
Other, please specify:		

6.8 if your institution provides any other activities, please indicate these here.

7 How would you rate your institution's activities and performance in the following sustainability and greening areas? *Please select one option per activity field.*

	Good	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Not addressed at my institution
Green / sustainable campus				
Internal communication and engagement				
Outreach and engagement				
Mobility				
Learning and teaching				
Research and innovation				
Internationalisation				

8 Please provide examples of the most successful greening activities / measures at your institution, including links to additional online information, if applicable. *(400 characters max)*

9 Is your institution part of any networks or working groups specifically dedicated to sustainability and greening in higher education and research? *Please select all that apply*.
- Yes, a national network
- Yes, an international network
- Yes, a European Universities Alliance with a specific focus on sustainability and/or greening
- Yes, an international project with a specific focus on sustainability and greening
- No
- Other, please elaborate here:

9.1 If yes, please provide the name(s) of the network(s) or project(s) and, if applicable, please share relevant website links.

4. Strategies, governance and implementation

10 Does your institution have a strategy or a similar document that refers to sustainability and/or greening explicitly? *Please select one option.*
- Yes, as part of the overarching institutional strategy
- Yes, as part of a specific strategy for sustainable development
- No, but faculties have their own strategies
- No, but this is currently under preparation
- No
- I do not know

    10.1   If yes, please share a link to the document, if it is publicly available.

    10.2   If yes [strategy], does your strategy explicitly relate to any of the following? *Please select all that apply.*
- The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- The UN's Paris Agreement on climate change and your country's **Nationally Determined Contribution** (NDC) to greenhouse gas reduction
- EU Green Deal/Decarbonisation
- National policies and initiatives, please indicate here:

- European policies and initiatives, please indicate here:

- Other, please indicate here:

- None of the above

11 Does your institution's work on sustainability and greening include concrete goals, targets, indicators and/or timelines?
- Yes
- No
- I do not know

    11.1   If yes [targets], how are they measured? *Please select all that apply.*
- Measuring carbon emissions and consumption
- Impact audit
- Annual greening report
- Part of the internal QA process
- Part of the external QA process
- Other, please specify:

- I do not know

    11.2   If yes [targets], please share some examples of indicators and processes *(400 characters max).*

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12 Who is in charge of the governance and steering of your institution's sustainability and greening measures? *Please select all that apply.*
- Mostly central leadership
- Dedicated portfolio in the leadership team (vice-rector, dean or similar)
- Governing body (senate, board)
- Dedicated sustainability committee
- Dedicated central office / team
- Dedicated faculty office(s) / team(s)
- Advisory board with external experts
- Other, please specify here:

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- No concrete governance and steering responsibilities
- I do not know

13 (display if 6.1 Sustainable procurement across the institution Specific policy or process or some activities is selected) How does your institution integrate sustainability into its procurement processes? *Please select all that apply.*

- Dedicated policy or guidelines
- Dedicated criteria included in tendering processes
- Preference to suppliers with certified sustainability standards
- Priority to locally sourced or circular economy products
- Procurement decisions consider life-cycle costs, including energy efficiency and waste reduction
- Staff training on sustainable purchasing practices
- Collaboration with suppliers to improve their sustainability performance
- Collaboration with partners (other universities, national procurement processes)
- Other, please specify:

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14 Please rate the importance of the following funding sources for your sustainability activities:

	Not important	Very important	Important	Not available	I do not know
Specific sustainability related indicator in your national block grant funding					
Inclusion in performance contract					
Targeted national funding to support sustainability					
National competitive funding related to environmental sustainability					
Competitive European funding					

Internal funds set up to support sustainability initiatives					
Funding through partnerships					
Other, please specify:					

15 Does your institution engage in sustainability reporting?
- Yes
- No
- I do not know

15.1 (If yes,) Why has your institution implemented sustainability reporting? *Please select all that apply.*
- Required by the state
- Required by the funder
- Required by the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)
- Institutional strategy and internal decision making
- Transparency and communication with stakeholders
- Performance benchmarking and rankings, please specify

- Other, please specify:

15.2 (If yes,) Which framework(s) or standard(s) does your institution use for sustainability reporting? *Please select all that apply.*
- European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) under the CSRD
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
- Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS)
- Impact Rankings criteria (Times Higher or other)
- Own framework based on the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)
- Own framework based on internal criteria
- Other, please specify:

15.2.1 (If European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) under CSRD,) your institution engages in sustainability reporting under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), what is the scope of application? *Please select all that apply.*
- The university as a whole is subject to the CSRD.
- Specific legal entities (spin-off or university owned companies) within the university are subject to the CSRD.
- The university is required to report sustainability data to comply with a providers obligation.
- The university voluntarily follows CSRD guidelines without legal obligation.
- I do not know

15.3 (If no sustainability reporting,) what are the main reasons? *Please select all that apply*.
- Lack of legal requirements.
- Limited internal capacity or resources.
- Lack of demand from stakeholders.
- Limited knowledge about relevant frameworks and standards
- Other, please specify

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1. Drivers

16 Please rate how important the following aspects are in advancing your institution's engagement in sustainability and greening?

	Very important	Important	Not important	Not applicable/ I do not know
Our institutional values				
The institution's third mission and its wider community				
Leadership engagement				
Student engagement / initiatives				
Staff engagement				
Efficiency across the institution				
Local and regional context				
Collaboration with industry				
System-level policies and guidelines				
System-level benchmarking or use of indicators				
Targeted public funding				
European funding				
European policy objectives / guidelines				
International treaties				
Other, please specify				

16.1 If system level / national policies, or public funding have been selected above as (very) important, please elaborate here, and share online links to additional information, if applicable.

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16.2 (If European policy objectives / guidelines as (very) important) please indicate which policy objectives / guidelines. *Please select all that apply*.

- Erasmus+ **overarching priorities**
- Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)
- Horizon Europe **strategic priorities**
- **MSCA Green Charter**
- Green Deal/decarbonisation
- Other, please specify:

16.3 If European funding has been selected above as (very) important, please elaborate here, and share the name and weblinks, to your project, if applicable.

2. Benefits, obstacles and enablers

17 How would you rate the impact / benefits from your institution's sustainability and greening activities? *The activities have ...*

	strongly	to some extent	not yet, but are expected to	not	I do not know
improved quality of life on campus					
helped create 'real-life' learning opportunities for students					
stimulated research and innovation					
contributed to having more science-based policies at local / regional level					
made our institution more attractive and helped to recruit staff and students					
enhanced awareness and changed behaviour of students					
enhanced awareness and changed behaviour of staff					
had a positive impact on our surrounding community (outside of the institution)					
had a positive impact on some of our partnerships					
helped to build our reputation as a leader through example					
had economic benefits, saving some costs					

increased our chances of receiving funding in grant applications					
Other, please specify:					

18 Which barriers does the implementation of sustainability and greening measures face at your institution? P*lease select up to five barriers*.
- General underfunding
- Lack of specific funding incentives
- Insufficient staff resources
- Only few staff engage
- Only few students engage
- Leadership is not supportive (enough)
- No real offer of engagement opportunities for students / staff
- No/not enough clearly defined targets and monitoring
- There are activities, but they are not sufficiently strategized
- Coordination issues across the institution
- Lack of interested partners
- Lack of national policy support
- Institutional frameworks and regulations are not supportive. Please elaborate:

- National higher education frameworks and regulations are not supportive. Please elaborate:

- Other:

19 What would be helpful for the future advancement of sustainability and greening activities at your institution? *Please select up to five enablers*.
- More attention from institutional leadership
- More engagement from staff
- More engagement from students
- Peer learning and exchange with other institutions
- National guidelines on specific aspects
- European guidelines on specific aspects
- Enhanced national funding support
- Enhanced European funding support
- Supportive national higher education frameworks and regulations
- Participation in a dedicated network
- More and/or better connection with wider society
- Other, please specify:

19.1 (If European or national guidelines), which formats would be most useful?
Please select all that apply.
- Infographics
- Short narrative documents
- Longer narrative documents
- Tables & checklists
- Other

19.2 (If European or national guidelines), what should these guidelines cover? *Please select all that apply.*
- Explain why your institution should care (what is at stake)
- Outline the typical costs and benefits of a greening/sustainability initiative
- Describe common challenges and how to overcome them
- List good practice examples and success stories
- Explain tools and standards (e.g. on how to measure footprint)
- Other

3. Sustainable Development Goals

20 Which of the SDGs do your institution's strategies and activities address <u>explicitly</u> – including and beyond environmental sustainability? *Please select all that apply.*

SDG	In learning and teaching	In research and innovation	In outreach and community engagement
SDG 1. No poverty			
SDG 2. Zero hunger			
SDG 3. Good health and well-being			
SDG 4. Quality education			
SDG 5. Gender equality			
SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation			
SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy			
SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth			
SDG 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure			
SDG 10. Reduced inequalities			
SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities			

SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production			
SDG 13. Climate action			
SDG 14. Life below water			
SDG 15. Life on land			
SDG 16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions			
SDG 17. Partnerships for the SDGs			

20.1   Please provide some examples of your institution's activities in addressing the SDGs *(600 characters max.)*

21 How do you assess the engagement of your institution toward the SDGs? *Please select one option per statement.*
"The SDGs...

	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	I do not know
provide a useful and engaging framework for all our missions				
are amongst our key strategic priorities				
are problematic to operationalise in our day-to-day work - practically everything can be tagged as SDGs related				
are difficult to assess and monitor				
enable fruitful inter-institutional exchanges				
are a key priority for our government in all areas including higher education and research				
are difficult to address at the national level, due to the lack of links between the higher education sector and the different relevant ministries				

22 How has your institution's situation changed over the past 5 years? *Please select one option per statement.*

	Has increased	Remained stable	Has decreased	I do not know
Our institution's commitment and activity for SDGs/ greening				

Attention to SGS/greening at local regional level				
National attention & commitment to SDGs/greening				

23 For the next 5 years, how do you see the following to develop regarding the SDGs? *Please select one option per statement.*

	Will increase	Will remain stable	Will decrease	I do not know
Our institute's commitment & activities				
Funding & resources that our institution can commit				
Collaboration with local/ regional municipalities				
Collaboration national authorities				
Collaboration with industry				
International collaboration				

8 End of survey

24 Please share here any additional information you would like to provide, e.g. your institution's concept of sustainability and greening, on your projects, upcoming activities, website links etc.

25 As previously indicated, all survey results will be evaluated and published in an anonymous and aggregate fashion. Please indicate below, whether you would like your institution to be listed as one of the contributors to this survey in an annex to the published results.
   - Yes
   - No

26 Please click next to submit and download a summary of your responses.