



Sustainability Report

ENLIGHT First Progress Report 2025

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Introduction

Higher education institutions shape sustainability across environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions. Their impact is inherently dual. Environmentally, universities are direct sources of greenhouse gas emissions, arising through energy consumption, mobility, procurement, and waste¹. At the same time, they are key drivers of change: by educating professionals, generating knowledge, and collaborating with industry and businesses, they enable societal transformations that build long-term resilience and strengthen collective responses to global challenges². Through research, education, and integration of sustainability practices into campus operations, universities set benchmarks of leadership in sustainable transformation, mitigating the direct environmental impact³.

Against this backdrop, outreach and collaboration are critical, as they enable universities to extend their impact beyond campus boundaries. University networks provide structured platforms for defining shared priorities, exchanging experiences, and monitoring progress⁴.

ENLIGHT exemplifies this approach. Bringing together ten universities from ten European countries, it is dedicated to fostering sustainable transformation in higher education by promoting multilingualism, intercultural awareness, interdisciplinarity, diversity and inclusion. Through challenge-based education and research-driven innovation, ENLIGHT advances sustainability while contributing to a more equitable quality of life.

ENLIGHT's Green Network brings together sustainability experts from all ten alliance universities to co-develop tools, policies, best practices, and joint projects that advance the alliance's sustainability agenda. Its value lies in the exchange of information and expertise across diverse contexts, enriching every initiative undertaken within the network. At the same time, all ENLIGHT partners remain united by a commitment to common goals.

Collaboration within ENLIGHT is structured around "tandem partnership" – a model based on mutual learning and reciprocal engagement. This approach

facilitates the exchange of best practices, practical insights into their implementation, and lessons learned, ensuring that the experiences of individual universities translate into collective progress across the alliance.

This report summarises the sustainability context of the partner universities, showcasing achievements, projects, and synergies between the partners. Monitoring progress through such reports helps identify areas where future changes could be made. It forms part of the [Sustainability Platform](#), developed jointly by all ten partners, which offers resources on sustainable travel, inclusive and environmentally conscious event management, and joint initiatives. The platform showcases sustainability policies, collaborations, awards, and best practices from across the ENLIGHT community.



ENLIGHT Green Network Meeting 2022, University of Bordeaux, Pey-Berland Campus Site.

¹ Filho, W. L., Aina, Y. A., Dinis, M. a. P., Purcell, W., & Nagy, G. J. (2023). Climate change: Why higher education matters? *The Science of the Total Environment*, 892, 164819. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2023.164819>

² Thanki, R. (1999). How do we know the value of higher education to regional development? *Regional Studies*, 33(1), 84–89. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/how-do-we-know-value-higher-education-regional/docview/208859098/se-2>

³ Hussain, T., Eskildsen, J., Edgeman, R., Ismail, M., Shoukry, A. M., & Gani, S. (2019). Imperatives of Sustainable University Excellence: A Conceptual framework. *Sustainability*, 11(19), 5242. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11195242>

⁴ Dlouhá, J., Henderson, L., Kapitulčinová, D., & Mader, C. (2018). Sustainability-oriented higher education networks: Characteristics and achievements in the context of the UN DESD. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 172, 4263–4276. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.07.239>



The Strategic Role of Sustainability Offices in the ENLIGHT Partnership: A Framework for Integrative and Collaborative Sustainability

Introduction: Sustainability as a Core Mission

Sustainability has become a defining value for universities, shaping their responsibilities within and beyond academia. To contribute meaningfully to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and to comply with European, national, and regional regulations, universities must embed sustainability structurally in education, research, and operations. As leading knowledge institutions, they have a unique responsibility to drive this transition. This responsibility requires continuous attention, a clear long-term vision, and targeted actions.

Achieving these sustainability ambitions depends on a guiding framework that provides direction for the entire university community – researchers, educators, staff, students, alumni, and external partners. Such a framework establishes a shared foundation for collective responsibility, fosters engagement and dialogue, and enables the launch of initiatives that actively contribute to sustainable progress. It also creates space for the generation of new knowledge and insights through research, policy development, and living labs. This way, universities can build a cohesive, forward-looking strategy that strengthens both their academic mission and their societal role.

Within this framework, the sustainability office emerges as a key instrument for transformation. As the university's official sustainability platform, it brings together a team of experts, usually led by a sustainability manager or coordinator and supported by students. By connecting education, research, and operations, the sustainability office activates the community to realise sustainability ambitions. Its mission is to act as an engine of change, embedding sustainability structurally and contributing to a future-proof society. To fulfil this

mission, sustainability offices must be anchored at the highest institutional level through direct links to the Executive Board or university leadership, and they require access to dedicated budgets and resources.

Positioning and Profile of a Sustainability Office

A sustainability office is most effective when it occupies a central and independent position within the university. Such positioning provides the mandate and space to address sustainability in its broadest sense, serving as a platform for continuous dialogue on sustainability, climate change, and the university's role in tackling these challenges.

The motto "one foot in policy, one foot outside" captures the dual role of a sustainability office:

- **Advisory:** Providing expertise and advice, both solicited and unsolicited, and influencing policy through preparatory work.
- **Catalytic:** Initiating and coordinating sustainability actions, experimenting with new approaches, and acting as a catalyst for sustainable transitions.
- **Policy-Shaping:** Monitoring progress, ensuring implementation of sustainability policies, and holding the university accountable.

This multi-faceted approach strengthens the sustainability transition by simultaneously informing policy and pushing the institution toward continuous improvement. A sustainability office requires access to reliable data and operational support alongside the independence to challenge policies constructively through dialogue. The establishment of a sustainability board further enhances the office's impact. Composed of internal and external stakeholders, the board enhances the legitimacy, expertise, and impact of the sustainability office.

Functions and Tasks of a Sustainability Office

A sustainability office performs a set of interrelated functions that translate its positioning into action:

- **Primary contact:** Serving as the central point of reference for all sustainability-related questions and initiatives.
- **Expertise and advice:** Providing guidance proactively and upon request to enrich sustainability policies.
- **Policy influence:** Contributing to policy development through preparatory work, coordinating sustainability actions, and driving constructive change.
- **Innovation:** Leading pilot projects and sustainable innovation, embedding lessons learned into policy and practice.
- **Monitoring and accountability:** Tracking progress to ensure the university meets its sustainability goals and remains accountable to internal and external stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Creating platforms for all sustainability actors to connect, share knowledge and amplify collective efforts.
- **Supportive framework:** Establishing supportive structures that enable individuals and groups to implement their own sustainability initiatives.

The Strategic Role of Sustainability Offices in the ENLIGHT Partnership

Within the ENLIGHT partnership, establishing well-functioning sustainability offices at each university is essential for ensuring integrative sustainability. This approach guarantees that sustainability is

structurally embedded in education, research, and operations across all partner institutions.

Why This Matters for ENLIGHT

- **Collaborative synergy:** Sustainability offices across ENLIGHT can share best practices, align strategies, and amplify their collective impact.
- **Innovation and engagement:** By integrating students and experts, universities foster creativity, ownership, and cross-generational collaboration.
- **Policy alignment:** A network of sustainability offices ensures that sustainability policies are cohesive, ambitious, and adaptable to local and regional contexts.
- **Societal leadership:** ENLIGHT universities can lead by example, demonstrating how higher education institutions drive systemic change.

By linking the strategic positioning of individual sustainability offices with a collaborative network across the partnership, ENLIGHT leverages both institutional expertise and collective capacity

Conclusion: A Call to Action for ENLIGHT

To secure integrative sustainability across the ENLIGHT partnership, it is essential that each university establishes a well-functioning sustainability office with a central and independent position. This ensures a unified approach, where sustainability is deeply embedded in education, research, and operations. By collaborating and learning from one another, ENLIGHT partners can form a resilient network that collectively advances toward a sustainable and transformative future.



Sustainability Offices of the ENLIGHT Universities

This section provides an overview of the sustainability units at each ENLIGHT partner university, detailing their organisational structures, staffing capacities, core missions, and key responsibilities. By presenting how these units are set up and operate, the section illustrates their pivotal role in driving sustainability initiatives, coordinating actions across campus, and supporting the implementation of policies and projects.

University of the Basque Country



Sustainability is a core institutional commitment at the University of the Basque Country (EHU), embedded in its [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) and its long-term vision towards 2030. The university defines itself as a public institution committed to culture, social challenges, and sustainable development through education, research, knowledge transfer, and alliances at both local and global levels.

The [EHUagenda 2030](#) provides a dedicated roadmap for aligning EHU's activities with the SDGs, complemented by a distinctive "SDG 18" addressing language and cultural diversity.

To coordinate and monitor these efforts, EHU has a [Sustainable Development and Social Engagement](#) department, which leads the implementation of sustainability policies and the environmental management system across all campuses, as well as cooperation and volunteering programmes. This office fosters innovation through initiatives such as the [Campus Bizia Lab](#), supports teaching and research projects linked to sustainability, and promotes alliances with public authorities, civil society, and international networks.

In this context, the [UnicitiES 2030](#) initiative illustrates the university's commitment to sustainability. Developed in collaboration with the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz, one of the 100 EU Mission Cities on Climate Neutrality and Adaptation, it promotes joint work between the university and local authorities through

the co-supervision of bachelor's and master's theses addressing real urban sustainability challenges.

University of Bern



Following a comparable strategy, the Executive Board of the University of Bern has incorporated sustainable development in its [mission statement](#), vision and "[Strategy 2030](#)" and defined the responsibilities of the [Vice-Rectorate Quality and Sustainable Development](#). An [Office for Sustainable Development](#) was established on June 1, 2012.

The Office for Sustainable Development consists of four staff members, including the Head of the Office for Sustainable Development, supported by one student assistant. It coordinates the development and implementation of the university's sustainability strategy and supports the integration of sustainability as a cross-cutting issue into all areas of the university (teaching, research, continuing education, public relations, and operations) by encouraging, supporting and linking sustainability activities in these areas. The Office for Sustainable Development supports projects, institutes, and individuals (or groups) that contribute to increasing sustainability at the University of Bern and raises awareness of the wide range of existing sustainability activities both internally and externally. It also manages the secretariat of the University of Bern's [Commission for Sustainable Development](#) which was established in spring 2012 and represents all faculties, the Executive Board of the University of Bern, non-professorial teaching staff, students, and the Administrative Director's Office and the Centre for Development and Environment.

The University of Bern recognises the social, economic, and environmental responsibilities across its activities and outlines the university's commitment to the principles of sustainable development in its [Mission Statement for Sustainability](#), which was agreed upon the Executive Board of the University of Bern in January 2017.

University of Bordeaux



The sustainability tasks of the University of Bordeaux are consolidated within its Institute for Transitions, a department that forms part of the Steering and Strategy Support (PAS in French). The [Institute for Transitions](#) aims to drive, accelerate, facilitate, and coordinate all of the institution's actions in favour of environmental and societal transitions across its various areas of activity (education, research and innovation, campus, and campus life) and in conjunction with its partners and local community. Its mission is to:

- Support and monitor the institution's transition strategy through dashboards and action plans at all levels of the university.
- Initiate new projects and initiatives for the institution in each area of activity, through methodological and/or financial support.
- Foster close operational collaboration with the Metropolis on transition issues.
- Monitor all transition-related projects in order to coordinate, support, and promote them.
- Coordinate transition networks (including advisors, ambassadors, etc.), which act as relays and multipliers for actions in the field.
- Inform and raise awareness among students and staff about transitions through various channels (training, webinars, conferences, etc.) in conjunction with the communications department.

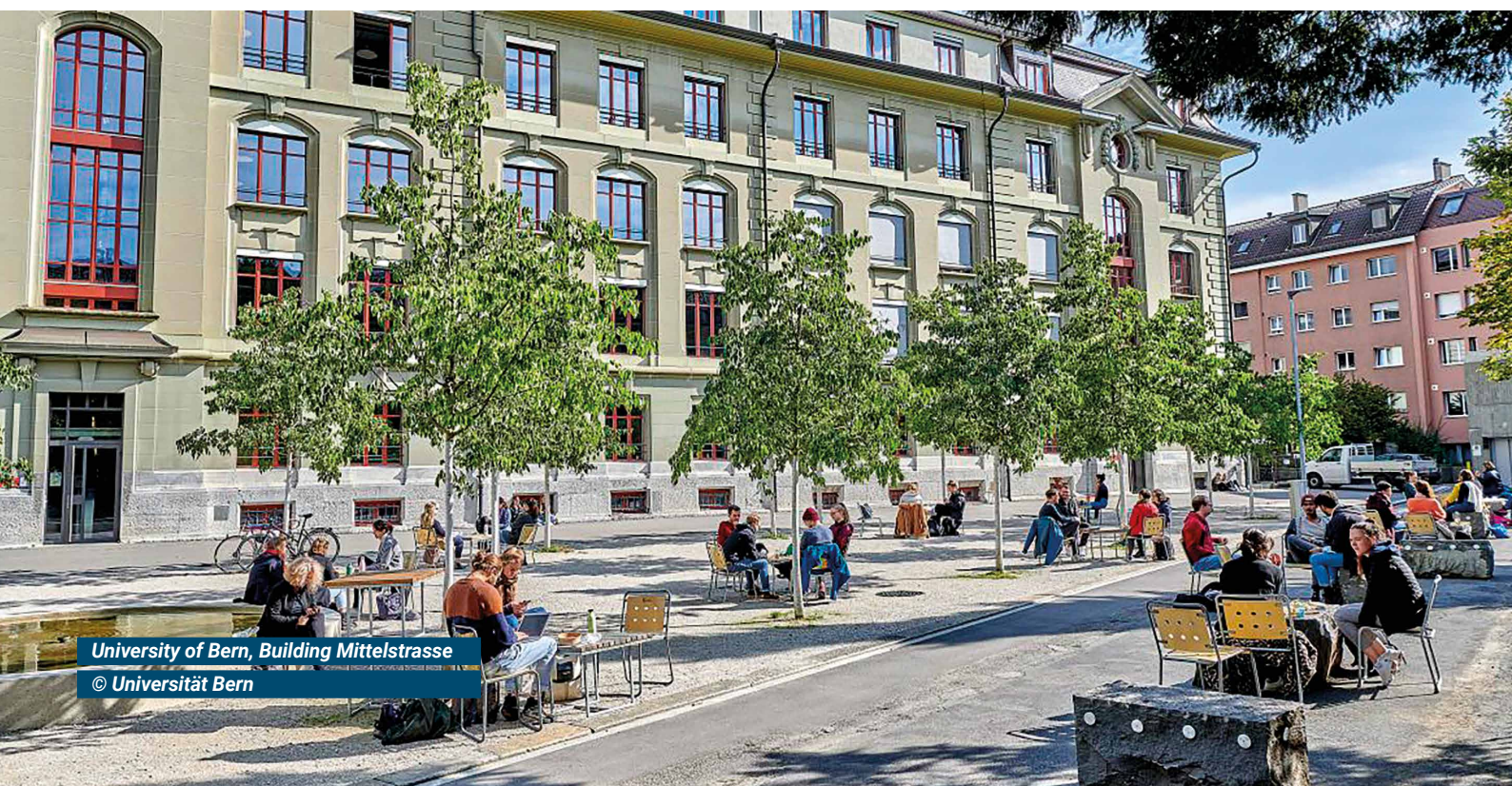
Given the highly cross-cutting nature of environmental and societal transitions, the Institute relies on an extensive team within the various departments of the University of Bordeaux and works in collaboration with intermediate-level structures (training components and research departments).

Comenius University Bratislava



At Comenius University, the Sustainability Team [Udržateľnosť na UK](#) is developing an information network across the university to collect and share activities that contribute to the achievement of the 17 SDGs. Its mission is to connect and motivate students and staff to actively integrate sustainability into education, research, and everyday life. The team's vision is to establish sustainability as an integral part of the university and to contribute to its transformation into a more resilient institution and a valuable partner in shaping a sustainable society.

The group gathers and disseminates information on the activities of individuals and communities within the university that advance the SDGs, while also supporting the sustainability agenda of the ENLIGHT alliance. It draws on good practices from partner universities and fosters mutual inspiration and knowledge-sharing across the faculties and units of Comenius University.



University of Bern, Building Mittelstrasse

© Universität Bern

University of Galway



Sustainability is similarly a core value at the University of Galway, enshrined in its [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#) and [Climate Action and Sustainability Policy](#). Sustainability and the SDGs are at the heart of institutional priorities. The university is currently implementing its second [Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025](#), embedding sustainability in its culture, operational policies and governance structures, and empowering communities to be champions of sustainability and the SDGs. The [Sustainability Office](#) at the University of Galway, formally established on Earth Day 2024, serves as the central coordinating unit for the university's sustainability efforts. The office is led by the Director of Sustainability, who reports directly to the Deputy President & Registrar, the university's designated Climate & Sustainability Champion. The current staff complement includes: Director of Sustainability (Dr Richard Manton); Community and University Sustainability Officer (Michelle O'Dowd Lohan); Sustainability Accountant (Derk Whelan); and Sustainability Administrator (Lorraine Leahy). The office collaborates closely with two Lecturers in Sustainability & Education for Sustainable Development based in the Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT).

The office supports and services three key governance bodies:

1. University Sustainability Advisory Board, chaired by the Deputy President & Registrar, providing strategic oversight, policy direction, and reporting bi-annually to the University Management Team and annually to the Governing Authority.
2. Community and University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP), founded in 2015, is a multi-disciplinary, volunteer-based initiative comprising a General Board (40 plus members), and four Working Groups (Research & Learning; Sustainable Living & Wellbeing; Nature & Ecosystems; Governance & Leadership).

The Sustainability Office's mission is to lead and embed sustainability across learning, research, operational culture, governance, and community engagement, empowering staff, students, and partners to co-create a sustainable campus and advance the SDGs. Further information can be found in the [Sustainability Governance handbook](#).

Ghent University



At Ghent University, the Sustainability Team is the central point of contact for sustainability. It shapes and coordinates the university's sustainability policy, leads transition working groups, and supports faculties and directorates in translating policy into practice. The team establishes living labs, connect expertise, engagement, projects, and ideas, and create a framework that encourages individual initiative. In addition, it raises awareness, expands and maintains the sustainability network, and reports to and advises the central governing and advisory bodies. The team consists of a sustainability coordinator, a Green Office coordinator, a mobility coordinator, and logistic support. At Ghent University, responsibility for sustainability policy is shared across the entire university community. Leadership must recognise its urgency, staff and students need to feel actively involved, and faculties must take ownership of the transition plans. To support this collective approach, the university has established a comprehensive [sustainability platform](#) that defines clear roles and responsibilities.

Since 2015, Ghent University has had a [Green Office](#), where students and staff shape and strengthen the sustainability policy together, by initiating and coordinating sustainability projects, experimenting and connecting. Green Office consists of 15 student employees who each work 8 hours a week on sustainability, diversity and inclusion at Ghent University. The Green Office team is incorporated in the Sustainability team.

University of Göttingen



Reflecting a similar focus on shared responsibility, the University of Göttingen recognises sustainability and climate protection in particular to be the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The University's committees acknowledge both the urgent need for action and the university's responsibility to serve as a role model and leader. This underlines the University's obligation to contribute to regional, national and international action to address climate change and to help shape the related processes of transformation. This is why the "Sustainable University" is one of the five cross-cutting objectives of the University's strategy process.

The University of Göttingen adopted a [Climate Protection Statement](#) in 2021 with the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2030. To ensure effective coordination of this complex transformation, the university has appointed a [Vice President for Research and Sustainability](#) in 2024, established a [Senate Commission for Climate Protection and Sustainability](#) in 2022, and founded a [Green Office](#) in 2019.

The Green Office is the central sustainability office of the university and consists of one sustainability coordinator and three student assistants. It bundles activities and knowledge in the field of sustainability as well as initiates and supports the development and implementation of appropriate measures. The Green Office also promotes the networking of all members of the University and the Göttingen Campus on topics of sustainable development. It coordinates and monitors the implementation of the [Climate Action Plan 2030](#) in energy, mobility, campus greening, procurement, divestment, research, education and third mission, involving the entire university community.

University of Groningen



Similarly aiming to integrate sustainability across its operations and academic activities, the Green Office of the University of Groningen (UG) coordinates and initiates sustainability efforts and authored the university's [Sustainability Roadmap 2021–2026](#). Its work is guided by national and international frameworks such as the Dutch Climate Agreement, UN SDGs, and local agreements like the Groningen Agreement.

Operating in an advisory, policy, and catalyst role, the Green Office drives UG's sustainability agenda. It also acts as a network hub, connecting academics, students, staff, and external stakeholders. The team develops and coordinates a broad range of projects, in collaboration with internal and external partners. Input and strategic advice are provided by the Sustainability Sounding Board.

To maintain UG's sustainable profile, the Green Office contributes to international rankings, organises events, and communicates key developments. The team consists of four staff members, including the Sustainability Programme Manager (who leads the team), supported by six student assistants.

Since 1 June, the Green Office has been part of the Governance & Legal staff department, enabling a more integrated and central role in the university's sustainability strategy.

University of Tartu



Following a similar integrated approach to its partners, the University of Tartu has placed sustainable development at the core of its activities, as outlined in the University of Tartu Act and Statutes. Since 2020, the university's statutes include a commitment to promote sustainability-oriented thinking and to align its core activities with sustainable development goals. The university supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals through research, education, and everyday operations.

The goals supporting the sustainable development of the Estonian state are formulated in the national development strategy Estonia 2035, which also serves as the foundation for the University of Tartu's [strategic plan](#). [The new strategic plan](#) (2026–2035) has three areas of development: increasing international competitiveness, enhancing societal impact and creating the best learning and working environment. The development of a sustainable university falls under the responsibility of the Vice Rector for Development.

In 2022, the University of Tartu established the [Centre for Sustainable Development](#), which brings together all academic fields and fosters interdisciplinary collaboration. The Centre also supports the university's holistic development as a sustainable organisation.

Additionally, the Rector's Strategy Office includes both a Research and Development Adviser and an Environmental Adviser, who work together to coordinate and promote environmental sustainability in cooperation with other university units and the Centre for Sustainable Development. Central to this work is the development of the university's environmental management system, starting with the formulation of environmental principles and a roadmap towards climate neutrality [environmental principles and a roadmap towards climate neutrality in 2050](#).

Uppsala University



Finally, the University Board of Uppsala University has embedded sustainable development in [Uppsala University: Mission, Goals and Strategies](#).

Uppsala University has a central Environmental Office, consisting of three full-time staff members, including the university's Environmental Manager. The Environmental Office is responsible for coordinating, developing and monitoring university-wide environmental and climate action, as well as providing support and advice to the university management and operational units on environmental issues.

The university has an environmental management system, which serves as the backbone of its environmental and climate work. The Environmental Office ensures that the university works in accordance with this system, including ensuring that the university has an [Environmental Policy](#) and that [Environmental goals and Action plans](#) are updated every three

years. The Environmental Office also works with setting environmental criteria in procurement and coordinating collaboration with the wider community in primarily the Uppsala region on sustainability and climate action.

The head of each department at the university is responsible for implementing the Environmental Goals and Action Plan within their department. As their support they have Green Representatives, who in a sense act as an extension of the central Environmental Office.

Since autumn 2023, Uppsala University has also had a Sustainability Forum. This forum serves as a meeting place for students, staff and the public, with the aim of capturing ideas and projects related to the university's environmental and sustainability work and translating them into concrete action. The forum is coordinated by the Environmental Office and staffed by one part-time employee and two part-time student employees.



ENLIGHT Sustainability Guidelines and Policies

Sustainability guidelines, policies, and declarations are key to fostering consistent and strategic approach to sustainable development across the ENLIGHT partnership. They provide a shared framework for the partner universities, guiding the alignment of sustainability actions in research, education, governance, and operations. This section summarises the main sustainability declarations, policies, and guidelines developed within ENLIGHT.

Sustainability Declaration

ENLIGHT addresses modern societal and environmental challenges, such as health and wellbeing, digital revolution and artificial intelligence, climate change, energy use, circular economy, and equity through multiple coordinated approaches. These are formalised in the ENLIGHT [Sustainability Declaration](#), signed in 2021 by all member universities. The declaration covers governance, research, education, knowledge transfer, and operations, embedding a culture of sustainability at all levels of the participating universities.

Sustainable Travel Policy

Recognising that mobility at higher education institutions generates a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions, ENLIGHT developed the [Sustainable Travel Policy](#) to promote environmentally responsible travel across the partner universities. Finalised in 2024, the policy addresses multiple aspects of travel behaviour. A decision tree guides the selection of the most appropriate travel option or, where possible, encourages reconsidering the need to travel altogether. The policy also provides guidance for sustainable travel at destinations,

ENLIGHT student exchanges, potential funding opportunities for low-carbon travel, and strategies for assessing, reducing, or offsetting the environmental impact of flights.

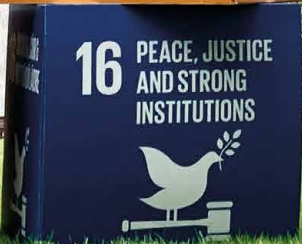
In addition, ENLIGHT published a Sustainable Travel Map, comprehensive information on sustainable travel options and connections, and a Sustainable Route Planner, which provides details on CO₂ emissions for different routes and modes of transport.

Sustainable and Inclusive Event Management

To ensure events are sustainable, accessible, and inclusive, ENLIGHT has developed a [checklist for sustainable and inclusive event management](#). The checklist covers all stages of event organisation, from planning to follow-up, and addresses key aspects such as event themes, catering, and accessibility. Its purpose is to create an inclusive environment and provide a meaningful and environmentally responsible experience for all attendees.

Sustainable Food Policy

Recognising the complex sustainability challenges associated with current food systems – including land degradation, biodiversity loss, increased pest risks, and climate change in part driven by unsustainable agricultural practices – ENLIGHT has adopted a Sustainable [Food Policy](#). The policy encourages a shift toward locally produced plant-based protein diets and integrates sustainability into its educational measures to promote food security, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity conservation.



The Quadrangle, University of Galway
Photo credit: Dr John Caulfield



Energy Academy, University of Groningen

Photo credit: Silvio Zangarini

Sustainable Actions and Best Practices of ENLIGHT Partner Universities

ENLIGHT, together with its Green Network, aims to strengthen the exchange of sustainability best practices across the alliance. Through frontrunner models and tandem partnerships, successful strategies and measures are shared and adapted by partner universities. This section presents selected examples that showcase innovative and effective approaches to sustainability within higher education.

University of the Basque Country



Campus Bizia Lab

[Campus Bizia Lab](#) (CBL) is a living lab for sustainability in the University of the Basque Country. It brings together students, faculty, and administrative and service staff to co-create solutions to real sustainability challenges on campus, transforming the university into a living space for experimentation and impact. CBL runs action-research, challenge-based projects embedded in the curriculum, mainly through final degree projects and Master's theses. Students develop transdisciplinary skills while faculty develop reflective teaching practices, working closely with staff who help pilot and implement solutions in daily operations. Now in its ninth edition, CBL has grown into an active and committed community and a proven model for learning with impact and transforming the university from within.

UnicitiES 2030

This initiative promotes the development of final degree and Master's projects aligned with the needs of cities, strengthening the connection between universities and cities. Students, teachers, and municipal technical staff collaborate to co-create solutions and address the challenges cities face in achieving climate neutrality and resilience. This collaborative work is based on public policies and municipal strategies that pursue the creation of resilient and climate-neutral cities, enabling testing

of ideas, prototypes, and actions that generate evidence and transform the city into a living lab. The initiative is currently being developed in collaboration with the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz.

EHU Agenda 2030

[EHU Agenda 2030](#) for Sustainable Development is the university's overarching sustainability framework. It defines EHU's contribution to the SDGs and, through SDG 17+1, includes a formal commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity. The EHU Agenda incorporates actions from the sectoral plans on equality, inclusion, and environmental management, alongside the university's educational model. The Agenda is accompanied by a [panel of indicators](#) that provides the basis for tracking progress and reporting results.

University of Bern



Climate Strategy

The University of Bern is continuously working to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. This is an ambitious goal that requires the cooperation of all staff and students. In the process of developing a holistic [climate strategy](#), the University of Bern is developing a participatory [roadmap](#) with concrete measures and targets and is refraining from making claims. It focuses on a combination of measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also promoting alternative ways to engage in climate and environmental protection.

Climate Contribution Ideas Competition, GreenLabs Network and Environmental Tips

As part of the climate strategy, the first climate contribution ideas competition ["Ready to Reduce"](#) was launched in spring 2025. It was a successful impetus for more active involvement in sustainability at the University of Bern. The aim was to find practical measures that could be implemented as independently as possible to reduce environmental impact. The response was pleasingly high. A total

of 15 project ideas were submitted. Eight of these met the formal criteria and were evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee. Four projects were selected for funding.

The University of Bern is pursuing the goal of reducing the environmental impact of its laboratories. To record the energy and resource requirements of the laboratories and identify opportunities for reduction, a [GreenLabs Network](#) was set up in June 2025 with the various laboratories at the University of Bern to exchange ideas and experiences.

The network makes a valuable contribution to more sustainable research institutions and thus to the Roadmap Climate 2030.

To raise awareness, [environmental tips](#) have been published on a regular basis since spring 2025. The tips offer practical suggestions for more environmental protection in everyday work, research and private life.

Engaged UniBE – A Bridge between the University and Society

[Engaged UniBE](#) is an initiative by the University of Bern that aims to strengthen the university's role in society and actively promote the exchange between science and the public.

The University of Bern collaborates with stakeholders from the city, the region, the canton of Bern, and beyond to help shape societal developments.

Sustainability is treated as a cross-cutting issue, impacting all areas of the university. This systemic understanding forms the foundation of Engaged UniBE's actions: sustainability should be conceived, shaped, and lived on multiple levels – moving toward a lived sustainability that is tangible in everyday life and enjoyable. Our society faces major challenges: climate change and adaptation, biodiversity loss, demographic shifts, and the impacts of digitalisation. There is no single best solution to these challenges. Instead, approaches should be developed collaboratively with societal actors – creatively, transdisciplinarily, and based on sound science. Engaged UniBE provides space, resources, and inspiration for this, transforming knowledge into impact and research into societal change. It connects research, teaching, and practice with the questions and challenges of our time. At its core: transdisciplinary work, genuine collaboration – and the joy of making a difference.

University of Bordeaux



Support for Research Structures: Transitioning Lab Charter

Research staff are reflecting on their practices and missions to address transition issues and reduce environmental impact: how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to the energy consumption of buildings and equipment, the purchase of large equipment or consumables, missions and field trips, how to reduce laboratory waste production and the consumption of natural resources.

The university aims to reduce the environmental impact of research activities while ensuring an open, inclusive, and gender-equal working environment. In collaboration with higher education and research institutions and research organisations on the site, with the signing of a Labos en transitions charter, the university aims to support and equip the transition actions proposed by its research units. 50% of research structures have already signed the charter and begun their transition.

Teaching Transitions

1. Deployment of a transition education module
 - Mandatory for undergraduate students.
 - Designed in two parts: the first transdisciplinary, the second directly related to the disciplinary field (30 hours of training/3 ECTS each).
 - Schedule: January 2025 for the Health and ST Colleges and certain UF of the SH College; start of the 2025 academic year for the entire SH College, DSPEG and IUT.



*New students gathered outside university main building, Uppsala University,
Photo credit: Mikael Wallerstedt*

2. Integration of transitions into all specialisations
 - 9 teacher-researchers assigned to each college and training institute.
 - 100% of majors will integrate transitions in 2027 in preparation for the new accreditation.
3. Support and training for teaching teams
 - Provision of online tools and deployment of workshops.
 - 20% of tenured teacher-researchers trained in teaching transitions in 2027.
4. Development of personalised pathways
 - In 2027, at least one pathway dedicated to a transition issue in half of the master's degree programmes and BUT specialisations.
 - Support for professional integration into transition-related professions.

The Environmental and Societal Transitions

Council (CTES) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the institution's policy in the field of environmental and societal transitions.

Each year, the President of the university, or his representative, presents the progress and direction of their policy in the field of environmental and societal transitions to the CTES.

The CTES determines the theme of the transition master plan for the year, based on proposals from the President, the Board of Directors, or on its own initiative. Based on its assessment, the CTES recommends actions to the President to ensure successful implementation. The President of the University may then suggest additional actions to the Board of Directors to complement the transition strategy.

The CTES aims to have equal representation of women and men among the 36 representatives of the university community (staff and students enrolled in the university's departments and structures). The Council is thus composed of 12 faculty members (researchers and lecturers), 12 administrative and technical staff, and 12 students. The members of the Council are drawn by lot for a two-year term. The CTES is chaired by an external figure appointed by the President of the University. The President of the CTES may invite any individuals deemed necessary to attend meetings.

Week of Responsibility ([Týždeň zodpovednosti](#)) as part of the course International Economic Relations for third-year students. The event encourages students to reflect on responsibility from individual, social, national, and global perspectives. Students lead the programme design, choosing formats such as lectures, discussions, or workshops, and inviting guest speakers. In 2023, the programme included student-organised sessions on sustainable business, financial literacy, and mental health, as well as lectures on ESG from practitioners and alumni. The week concluded with an educational theatre performance "GreenIsTheNewBlack". This initiative fosters student engagement, develops organisational skills, and deepens awareness of sustainability and responsibility in managerial practice and beyond.

Educational Programme "We Think Circular" at the Faculty of Management

In cooperation with the Institute for Circular Economy, the Faculty of Management launched the pilot edition of the We Think Circular programme for third- and fifth-year students ([Študenti FMUK na exkurzii vo firme AFB](#)). The programme, combining three theoretical and three practical modules, introduces circular economy, environmental issues, and climate change in a broader context, while also developing future-oriented and soft skills needed for "green jobs." This initiative aims to integrate sustainability into study programmes, enhance students' employability, and promote innovation in managerial education. FM UK and INCIEN plan to continue their collaboration to expand the programme in the coming years.

FSEV FEST – Faculty Festival on Responsibility and Sustainability

The Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences (FSEV UK) organises [FSEV FEST | Facebook](#), a student-led festival that combines informal education with discussions on sustainability and social responsibility. The 2023 edition featured three panel discussions (on environment, politics, and respect/mental health), charity collections, and a clothing swap. The event fosters community building, teamwork, and organisational skills while raising awareness of environmental and social issues, making it an important platform for student engagement and sustainable practices.

**Comenius University
Bratislava**



Week of Responsibility at the Faculty of Management, Comenius University

The Faculty of Management organises an annual

University of Galway



Embedding Sustainability in Education

University of Galway has made significant strides in [integrating sustainability](#) across its educational mission. Two new lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development have been appointed within the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, driving curricular reform across all colleges. Their work supports course directors in embedding sustainability principles into programme design through innovative pedagogies, staff training, and resource development. A newly launched micro-credential in sustainability has also been developed under their leadership. This initiative exemplifies the university's strategic commitments to positioning sustainability at the heart of learning and teaching.

Sustainable Campus Operations

The campus continues to evolve as a living lab for sustainability. Recent initiatives include the expansion of biodiversity programmes through native planting, pollinator zones, a new herb garden and orchard, and the creation of a 100 m² [pocket forest](#). All university catering outlets have eliminated single-use cups, and sustainable transport has been promoted via the electrification of the Park-and-Ride system. All laboratories in the Alice Perry Engineering Building are certified under the [My Green Labs programme](#). We are a European demonstrator site for geothermal energy systems ([GEOFIT](#)) and a national demonstrator site for [energy efficient buildings](#) and [solar energy projects](#).

Community Engagement for SDG Impact

Partnerships have been strengthened with Galway City and County Councils and local Non-Government Organisations to co-develop solutions aimed at progressing the SDGs. A new [Sustainability Engagement Fund](#) was launched to support student- and staff-led initiatives, particularly around SDG 6 and SDG 14. One flagship project, Clean Coasts, Clear Futures, engaged the local community through workshops, citizen science, and coastal clean-ups. In addition, the University hosts an [annual SDG Week](#), bringing together students, staff, and the wider Galway community to explore and take action on the SDGs. Through talks, workshops, exhibitions, and hands-on activities, SDG Week fosters awareness, dialogue, and collaboration, ensuring the SDGs remain a shared focus across our campus and city.

Sustainability Champion Digital Badge

University of Galway is empowering students to become changemakers through its innovative [Sustainability Champion Digital Badge](#), a co-curricular initiative that recognises student leadership in advancing the UN SDGs on campus and beyond. Launched in the 2024–2025 academic year, the badge forms part of the [University's Skills Passport](#) and is awarded to students who actively engage in sustainability through advocacy, peer education, and practical action. Students complete a combination of sustainability training, hands-on initiatives, and reflective learning. Pathways include participating in the University's flagship [Community and University Sustainability Partnership](#), joining the Students' Union Climate Crew, leading awareness campaigns in student residences, or receiving a [Sustainability Leadership Award](#). In May 2025, nine students received the badge for contributions ranging from waste reduction and energy conservation to biodiversity restoration and sustainable food advocacy. Their projects demonstrated how grassroots student action can advance institutional sustainability strategies while fostering personal and collective transformation.

Ghent University



Governance and Sustainability

The new [sustainability strategy](#) emphasises faculty commitment and highlights the importance of shaping policies through community involvement. Engagement at all levels is essential to fostering impactful and inclusive sustainability practices.

Transitie UGent

[Transitie UGent](#) is an open think tank and network in which new actions and suggestions are put forward by experts, policy officers and committed staff members and students. It gives them the opportunity to become closely involved in Ghent University's sustainability policy and provides a platform for ongoing dialogue about sustainability and climate change and Ghent University's role in this, where issues that are not yet sufficiently addressed in current policy can also be raised.

Student-Led Winter School about Sustainable Research

In addition to the annual student-led summer school on sustainability transitions, PhD students organised

their first doctoral [winter school](#): Interdisciplinary pathways for ecological and social resilience, to help young scientists deal with the sustainability challenges they face in their research work.

Future Proef Award

The Gent Future Proef Award recognises Ghent University master's theses that contribute to a sustainable future. Ghent University seeks graduating students who have conducted high-quality research that is impactful, future-oriented, and contributes to a more sustainable society, economy, and planet.

CO₂ Compensation for Flights

For every flight booked by Ghent University, a contribution of €50 per tonne of CO₂ is charged. Ghent University uses this contribution to finance reforestation and forest restoration projects, subsidise train travel, and support a 'Living Labs' fund, as detailed on [Ghent University's sustainability travel guidelines](#).

Parking Makeovers

In recent years, many university campuses have struggled to find enough space for the and/and

story: sufficient space for bicycles and wide, accessible footpaths, and car parking, and greenery, and so on.

At Ghent University, master plans and recent construction projects prioritise green spaces and slow mobility. However, these are long-term visions that may take years – or even decades – to fully realise. That is why Ghent University is already looking for ways to take action now: by converting unnecessary car parks into bicycle facilities, green areas, and meeting places.

These smaller transformations pave the way for larger projects in which extensive car parks will also disappear and staff and visitors will park further away – or may no longer have parking rights at all. In the meantime, Ghent University has already completed several car park makeovers: in some cases, by removing the surface layer and turning the space into green areas, and in others by converting parts of underground car parks into large bicycle parking facilities, which in turn allows the above-ground areas previously used for bicycles to be greened, as described on [Ghent University's Rectorate car park redevelopment page](#).



University of Göttingen



Climate Action Plan

To ensure an effective and timely response to climate change, the University of Göttingen has developed a [Climate Action Plan](#) to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. For this purpose, the university encourages making environmentally conscious mobility decisions and provides recommendations about sustainable procurement as part of its decarbonisation plan. Another step towards climate neutrality is the purchase of additional electricity with the high-quality eco-electricity certificate "Grüner Strom Label", which ensures that the energy supply consists only of green electricity.

Lecture Series "Sustainable Development"

With the interdisciplinary [lecture series "Sustainable Development"](#), the University offers students an in-depth look at sustainability and sustainable development. Each lecture is held by two lecturers from different faculties. The approach focuses on motivating already interested academics. Marketing efforts leverage all available university channels to maximise outreach. Future goals include increasing student contributions to the content of the lectures. Currently, the lectures are open to all levels and all disciplines, but expanding access to ENLIGHT partners is a potential idea for the future.

Large Open-Space Photovoltaic Plant

The University of Göttingen is dedicated to transitioning its energy supply to renewable energies. To support its goal, it is planning the construction of a [large open-space photovoltaic plant](#) in Deppoldshausen, a district of Göttingen. The plant will cover an area of approximately 56 hectares and it is expected to produce around 34 megawatts peak (MWp), which could save around 13,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year compared to the current electricity mix. It is expected to cover up to 25% of the electricity needs of the University of Göttingen and the University Medical Center Göttingen. In addition to its energetic advantages, the plant will also serve academic goals. Research conducted on-site will include crop cultivation, animal farming, machine utilisation, sensor technology, soil compression, and erosion research.

University of Groningen



CO₂ Reduction Through Air Travel Cap

To reduce CO₂ emissions resulting from air travel,

the University of Groningen has introduced a CO₂ cap per faculty. This cap is based on the average CO₂ emissions from air travel in the years 2019, 2022, and 2023.

Starting 1 January 2024, this cap will be gradually lowered each year, with the aim of achieving a 30% reduction by the end of 2026, in line with the goals outlined in the Sustainability Roadmap. This measure is expected to reduce the university's total CO₂ emissions by 6%.

How the CO₂ Cap Works:

- The cap is based on the historical average from 2019, 2022, and 2023.
- The cap decreases annually until the end of 2026.
- Exceeding the cap? Any surplus CO₂ emissions will be subtracted from the cap for the following year.

If the system proves problematic in practice, a re-evaluation will take place after one year.

- Monitoring and reporting.
- All booked and planned flights are registered per faculty.

Flight data is reported quarterly by the university's contracted travel agency.

Awareness Campaign

- An awareness campaign has been launched to help staff understand the environmental impact of air travel. Key messages include:
- 30% of flights are responsible for 70% of total CO₂ emissions.

Long-haul flights (> 2,500 km) emit over three times more CO₂ on average than short flights.

University of Tartu



Centre for Sustainable Development

The [Centre for Sustainable Development](#) brings together researchers, students, and University of Tartu experts across various fields of research to search for solutions to the insidious challenges of the climate crisis, which transcend national and disciplinary boundaries. The centre is a cooperation platform for both the creation of new knowledge and advising society as well as for collaboration with external actors. On 18 October 2024, the University of Tartu Library hosted the university's Centre for Sustainable Development urban space conference "Meil aiaäärne tänavas". The conference explored

how to create urban environments that foster a sense of community and support both mental and physical well-being. Through the academic year 2024/2025, every month, the Centre for Sustainable Development's discussion series "Future Frontiers" brings together experts from the university and beyond to explore the challenges related to sustainability and possible solutions.

Sustainable Campus

The University of Tartu has an important role to play in shaping the space of Tartu and its college towns, [preserving cultural heritage and implementing energy-efficient solutions](#). As a result of the investments made in recent years, the university's electricity costs have decreased by 12-14% per month.

Solar Panels

The use of solar energy in university buildings will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Coupled with storage batteries, this reduces the university's vulnerability to fluctuations in electricity prices. In August 2024, a solar park was installed on the Chemicum (Ravila 14a), Physicum (W. Ostwald 1) and Ravila 14b buildings. In 2023, the University of Tartu consumed electricity of which 2.81% was self-generated solar electricity.

The District Cooling System

The district cooling system uses chilled water from the Emajõgi River to lower temperature in buildings during the hot season. This will reduce energy consumption, noise from conventional cooling equipment and the use of fossil fuels. District cooling systems in Tartu have been recognised with the efficient district cooling label.

Sustainable Mobility in Tartu and College Towns

The University of Tartu encourages cycling among its staff and students. In total, there are around 2,400 bike racks outside the university buildings, of which 1,410 are covered. An overview of bike parking is available via the university's virtual tour, where clicking the bike icon on each building shows parking options and photos.

In 2023–2024, the University of Tartu Mobility Lab in cooperation with the University of Tartu Research Group of Physical Activity for Health carried out a mobility survey to support sustainable mobility at the university. The survey results will provide a basis for formulating mobility-related environmental principles and preparing a mobility plan at the university.

Uppsala University

Institute for Future-Oriented and Interdisciplinary Research

[Uppsala University Future Institutes](#) (UUniFI)

was established in June 2025 on the initiative of the Vice-chancellor. The purpose of UUniFI is to create a university-wide and internationally leading research environment that enables collaboration on challenge-driven and cross-disciplinary research. Through an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, and research characterised by excellence and originality, the initiative will foster new research questions, innovative approaches, and collaborative opportunities. UUniFI will act as a host organisation for initially six research institutes with varied research orientations, such as migration, precision health, green energy transition, AI and digitalisation, conflicting objectives in societal transformation, and inter- and multidisciplinary.

The Climate Pot

The Climate Pot was initiated in 2020, as part of the effort to reduce Uppsala University's climate impact. The Vice-Chancellor set aside 2 million SEK during the period 2020-2022, to be used as funding for projects and initiatives by students and staff that could make concrete contributions to reducing the University's climate footprint. During this period, the Climate Pot funded 19 different projects and initiatives. A few examples of student-led initiatives include the establishment of a [Campus Garden](#) and a [Community Kitchen](#). Other examples include sustainability initiatives in laboratories and actions to decrease the energy consumption from a data centre. Funds were also used to develop a [Climate Guide](#) for Uppsala University as well as a [handbook for sustainable business travel](#).

Community Engagement for Climate Action

The university is an active member in the Uppsala Climate Protocol, a local climate agreement between the private and public sector in Uppsala. The protocol was established in 2010 by the City of Uppsala and it invites local actors operating in different sectors of society and in different industries to jointly take on the climate challenge. This collaboration strengthens societal impact and accelerates climate action in Uppsala. Uppsala University has been a member since the start and has participated in multiple focus and working groups of the protocol, with a focus on issues such as business travel, energy consumption, waste management, and reuse of IT products.



Joint Sustainable ENLIGHT Projects

Supported by ENLIGHT+ and national funding, the ENLIGHT Green Network has launched several sustainability projects. These initiatives address sustainability challenges across ENLIGHT universities by developing and implementing practical measures. The projects foster collaboration across institutions, create synergies, and support more sustainable university practices. This section provides an overview of recent projects and their impact.

GreENLIGHT

The GreENLIGHT project promotes student engagement on sustainability and “greenlights” the development of student sustainability leaders across the ENLIGHT partners (Galway, Bern, Bordeaux, Bratislava, and Göttingen). Building on the University of Galway’s [Student Sustainability Leadership Awards programme](#), each partner selects a student leader to design and deliver sustainability engagement events. These activities raise awareness while developing leadership, project management, and communication

skills, preparing students to become sustainability changemakers within their universities and beyond. Some events are held online to enable participation across all ENLIGHT partners and foster intercultural exchange on shared sustainability challenges. Student leaders will meet regularly online throughout the 2025/26 academic year to exchange ideas, share learning, and inspire one another. The project will culminate in an in-person gathering at the end of the year, strengthening cross-university networks of student leaders committed to advancing sustainability.

Green Labs

Sustainable initiatives in laboratories have been gaining momentum at ENLIGHT universities (Groningen, Basque Country, Bern, Bratislava, Bordeaux, Galway, Göttingen, and Uppsala). However, knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices remain limited. To address this, a “Green Labs Network” was established within ENLIGHT. The network has connected Green Labs teams through



Student Adam Mullins is presented with the ENLIGHT Sustainability Award 2025 for his work on the Food Pantry Initiative. From left to right: Pamela Devins, Adam Mullins, Richard Manton, and Michelle O' Dowd Lohan, University of Galway. Photo credit: Aengus Mc Mahon.

initial online meetings and will continue with symposia where participants present their activities and progress. It facilitates ongoing exchanges for sharing developments and exploring new collaborations. Teams also share best practices and offer guidance to universities still establishing Green Labs. After roughly one year, a joint event will review progress and experiences and support new teams. The project coordinators are exploring local, national, and EU funding opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the initiative, particularly for future events, while daily operations remain with the local Green Labs and ENLIGHT teams.

CARBON

As carbon budgeting and pricing systems can help universities reduce carbon emissions in the sectors energy, mobility, and procurement, the partners (Göttingen, Bordeaux, Bratislava, Galway, Groningen, and Uppsala) aim to learn from existing systems. Comprehensive research on carbon budgeting and pricing systems has been conducted. The project includes a comprehensive workshop series where external experts who have implemented such systems share their experiences with all ENLIGHT partners. This provides ENLIGHT with a clear view of the benefits and challenges and guides further research and implementation efforts.

University Gardens for Learning and Collaboration

This initiative fosters knowledge exchange on university community gardens and focuses on creating, managing, and cultivating such gardens. The project promotes sustainability, community engagement, and practical education in gardening. It draws on each university's expertise to build a network that enriches learning, supports community wellbeing, and promotes local environmental stewardship. The involved universities are Bordeaux, Basque Country, Bratislava, and Uppsala. The initiative comprises two key components. First, each university hosts a knowledge exchange workshop focusing on aspects such as garden creation, community garden management, and cultivation practices. These workshops are led by university community garden members, ensuring exchange of practical experience. Second, collaborative garden projects bring together students to establish or revitalise garden plots and implement organic gardening methods. This hands-on collaboration allows students to apply the knowledge

gained from workshops and share insights with their peers.

The Four Seasons in (Climate) Change – Documentary and Concert

Inspired by the observed impacts of climate change on flora and fauna, Antonio Vivaldi's work "The Four Seasons" was reinterpreted by composers of the Detmold University of Music in cooperation with the Göttingen Baroque Orchestra and ENLIGHT researchers from Basque Country, Ghent, Göttingen, and Uppsala. The new composition "The Four Seasons in (Climate) Change" premiered in 2022 at the University of Göttingen. In this conversation concert, the audience experienced the effects of climate change on the seasons through scientific impulses and the newly interpreted music. Under the direction of Antonius Adamske, the Göttingen Baroque Orchestra and soloist Hyewon Kim delivered an acclaimed performance. Between movements, researchers from the Department of Bioclimatology led by Prof. Alexander Knohl explained the climate changes affecting each season, while the team of composers led by Prof. Mark Barden described how the scientific findings informed their composition. The concert recording and the [video documentary are available on YouTube](#).

Exploring the Inner Development Goals

The initiative "Exploring the Inner Development Goals (IDGs)" is a two-day congress hosted by the University of Groningen in collaboration with its Green Office. It aims to raise awareness of the IDGs and their potential to advance sustainability, inclusivity, and personal growth. The IDGs provide a framework for developing essential individual and collective skills that empower organisations and institutions to promote sustainable development. The congress supports ENLIGHT's mission to foster collaboration and innovation across partner universities in addressing pressing societal challenges. The event brings together students, faculty, and staff from ENLIGHT partner universities (Bordeaux, Tartu, and Uppsala) as well as local organisations for two days of intensive learning and dialogue. Each participating university invites five lecturers. Participants explore practical ways to integrate the IDGs into their academic, professional, and personal contexts, helping to drive systemic change in education and society.



The Added Value and Impact of ENLIGHT on the Partner

Over the past years, the ENLIGHT Green Network has provided a strong framework for cooperation and exchange of best practices, enabling partner universities to advance their sustainability agendas. Through this cooperation, structures, policies, projects, and measures have been launched or advanced, addressing sustainability in research, education, governance, and campus operations. Many of these achievements build on long-standing bilateral partnerships, which have been broadened and deepened through ENLIGHT. This section highlights selected examples of how ENLIGHT has inspired and supported partner universities in implementing innovative and successful approaches.

University of the Basque Country



For the University of the Basque Country, being part of the ENLIGHT Green Network has been highly valuable. ENLIGHT's greatest added value lies in the opportunity it provides to learn from peers and exchange best practices on embedding sustainability into all areas of university life. The network provides a trusted space in which we can openly discuss challenges, compare approaches, and draw inspiration from successful initiatives elsewhere. This peer-to-peer learning has encouraged us to reflect more critically on our own practices and identify areas for improvement. At the same time, ENLIGHT offers a platform to explore opportunities for innovation and collaboration. By sharing tools, methodologies, and pilot projects, the network enables us to test ideas that would be challenging to develop independently. Being part of ENLIGHT strengthens our confidence to advance new initiatives, accelerate our internal processes, and connect us with a wider European community that multiplies the impact of our sustainability efforts.

University of Bern



Being part of the ENLIGHT Green Network has a very positive impact on the work of the University

of Bern's Office for Sustainable Development. The exchange within the network was particularly inspiring for integrating sustainability in the organisation of events. Valuable ideas for sustainability in laboratories were also gathered and are being incorporated into ongoing considerations. In general, cooperation within the network significantly enriches the further development of sustainable development at the University of Bern, as regular exchanges provide practical ideas, best practices, and new perspectives that strengthen and accelerate the work on site.

University of Bordeaux



Being part of the Green Network has enabled us to introduce new innovative measures within our own institution: we have been able to get our sustainable travel policy accepted, which prohibits air travel for journeys that can be made in less than 6 hours by train. We were inspired by the universities of Groningen and Ghent. It is also thanks to discussions within ENLIGHT that we were able to obtain valuable advice for our Transitioning Lab charter. We have been able to incorporate the best practices of our partners into our action sheets for laboratories. Thanks to ENLIGHT+ funding, a project allowed our shared garden leaders to meet other leaders within the programme and to visit the garden of the University of the Basque Country, which was a real source of inspiration to revitalise our Périgueux garden, which was struggling to renew itself.

Comenius University Bratislava



The establishment of the Sustainability Team at Comenius University was inspired by the ENLIGHT alliance, which significantly strengthened the university's commitment to sustainability ([Udržateľnosť na UK](#)). The sustainability team serves as a working group dedicated to building an information network for sustainable development

across the university, collecting and sharing activities that contribute to the 17 SDGs and advancing ENLIGHT sustainability initiatives. Its mission is to inform, connect, and empower students and staff to actively integrate sustainability into education, research, and everyday university life. With this foundation, the team seeks to establish sustainability as a core value of Comenius University, enhance institutional resilience, and position the university as a strong partner in the broader transformation towards a sustainable society.

University of Galway



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Through the ENLIGHT Green Network, the University of Galway has engaged in peer-to-peer exchange on topics such as sustainable travel, sustainable food, carbon budget development and integrating the SDGs into teaching and research. Joint ENLIGHT workshops on climate action and sustainable event hosting have introduced innovative approaches now informing our own teaching, engagement, and operational practices. Student leadership exchanges – including the current ENLIGHT

GreENLIGHT project – connected University of Galway student leaders with peers across Europe to co-create sustainability events, share cultural perspectives, and inspire collaborative campaigns. These experiences all influenced our sustainability initiatives on campus, ensuring they are informed by an engaged network.

Ghent University



The sustainability coordinators of the ENLIGHT partner institutions help, inspire, and support each other to accelerate and scale up a socially just ecological transition within their institutions. Good practices and challenges are shared across the alliance, and the actions of frontrunners are taken up by others. At the same time, the entire consortium is encouraged to adopt ambitious commitments, such as implementing a flight policy and guidelines for sustainable food, including at conference dinners. These commitments at the ENLIGHT level can also serve as inspiration for partners still catching up and for other alliances and collaborations beyond ENLIGHT.



University of Göttingen



The University of Göttingen has been cooperating with the ENLIGHT partners for many years on sustainability in research, teaching, third mission, operations, and governance. Inspired by and with the support of its partners, the University of Göttingen established an innovative Green Office in 2019 – with particular support from the University of Groningen – and set up a Senate Commission for Climate Protection and Sustainability. The Sustainable Travel Policy, as well as the guidelines and checklists for sustainable and inclusive event management developed within ENLIGHT, have been incorporated into the university's strategic documents and are thus applied in Göttingen beyond ENLIGHT. Through joint projects such as GreENLIGHT, CARBON, and Green Labs, the University of Göttingen and its ENLIGHT partners address current challenges in sustainable development and work together to develop solutions that make a valuable contribution to a more sustainable future.

University of Groningen



The Digital CleanUp Week at the University of Groningen (UG) was inspired by the successful initiative of the University of Tartu. With this event, UG – like Tartu – aims to raise awareness about the digital footprint we leave behind every day. Every email, every file stored in the cloud, and every unnecessary digital storage consumes energy, contributing to the university's total energy use – around 11 million kWh per year, enough to power 4,500 households.

By organising the Digital CleanUp Week, UG encourages staff and students to clean up their digital storage together, delete unnecessary files, and reduce their digital impact. With workshops, CleanUp Cafés, and a handy guide, UG provides practical support so everyone can easily contribute to a more sustainable digital environment. This initiative aligns seamlessly with UG's ambition to integrate

sustainability into all aspects of the university – from education and research to daily operations.

University of Tartu



ENLIGHT has provided significant added value to the University of Tartu by inspiring and accelerating the integration of sustainability into university operations (Sustainable Campus at the University of Tartu). Drawing on the experiences and best practices of other ENLIGHT partner universities, the University of Tartu has strengthened its sustainability efforts, including the establishment of a Green Office, which initiates and coordinates environmentally responsible practices across the institution. Inspired by ENLIGHT's collaborative approach, the university has also begun drafting a university-wide climate neutrality roadmap and environmental principles, aiming to set ambitious targets for reducing emissions and resource use.

ENLIGHT has encouraged the university to pay greater attention to sustainable mobility and visitor experience, which is reflected in the creation of a dedicated information page on sustainable travel and living in Tartu. Additionally, the exchange of ideas within the ENLIGHT network has supported the launch of new projects focused on sustainable food choices and responsible travel, helping to foster a culture of environmental awareness and action.

Uppsala University



The creation of a Sustainability Forum at Uppsala University is partly inspired by cooperation within ENLIGHT and the work of different Green Offices at partner universities. Through ENLIGHT inspiration has also been gathered on how a sustainability forum can function, which topics or types of tasks it should focus on and how student involvement in internal environmental and climate action can increase.

Fact sheets

University	Number of students	Number of staff	Carbon neutrality target year	Share of renewable energy in total energy consumption
University of the Basque Country	44,700	7,900	2050	60%
University of Bern	20,000	5,000	2050	60%
University of Bordeaux	53,000	6,000	2050	8%
Comenius University Bratislava	23,200	4,400	2050 ⁵	not available
University of Galway	18,900	2,600	2030	39%
Ghent University	50,000	15,500	2050	37%
University of Göttingen	28,000	4,700	2030	43%
University of Groningen	35,000	6,200	2035	19%
University of Tartu	15,200	3,700	2050	92%
Uppsala University	50,000	6,600	2045	98%

¹ Each fulfilled criterion counts as 1 point, represented as a leaf in the table.

² The criteria are: Data is collected annually; data is collected per faculty; data is collected per building; data is published online.

³ The criteria are: Carbon footprint report exists; emissions are measured annually; emissions are measured for Scope 1, 2, and 3; the carbon footprint report is published.

⁴ The criteria are: Team has at least 1 person; team has 2-3 persons; team has 4 or more persons; at least 1 student/student assistant as team member.

⁵ No specific carbon neutrality target year available; EU target year (2050) is shown as reference.

Annual sustainability / environmental report	Energy tracking & reporting quality ^{1,2}	CO ₂ calculation & reporting quality ^{1,3}	Sustainability office team composition and size ^{1,4}
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
✗	—	—	⊕ ⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
Under preparation	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕
✓	⊕ ⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕	⊕ ⊕



Event "The most convenient cycling route
between the campuses Maarjamõisa and
Delta study buildings", Kstina Noormets,
Chancellor of the University of Tartu,
Photo credit: Andero Kalju

Statements

At the University of Tartu, sustainability is a guiding mindset – shaping how we build, plan, and live together. Our campuses are developed with long-term energy efficiency in mind, balancing historical preservation with modern low-carbon solutions. We aim to foster a responsible university culture, where everyday choices reflect care for future generations.

The ENLIGHT network has been instrumental in sharing practical experiences around sustainable mobility and campus development. Most importantly, the greatest inspiration and support has come from ENLIGHT colleagues themselves – enthusiastic, encouraging, and generous in sharing their expertise, which has helped build confidence and momentum for sustainability initiatives at the University of Tartu.

Kstina Noormets

Chancellor, University of Tartu

Sustainable development is a natural part of a university's activities and since Uppsala University alumnus Svante Arrhenius recognised the greenhouse effect in 1896, the scientific community has steadily come together. In Uppsala, for example, we have systematised our efforts by establishing a climate leadership professorship in 2015. On Gotland, where the University has a campus in the middle of the Baltic Sea, we have a Blue Centre working on marine issues and also the GRASS graduate school – an interdisciplinary initiative to foreground sustainability issues. The new UUniFI research institutes include an important initiative to further explore sustainability issues.

We do all this because we recognise the urgency of sustainability and we do it in international cooperation with all those who see the need to gather further knowledge to ensure a common future. In this commitment, research and education go hand in hand.

Anders Hagfeldt

Vice-Chancellor, Uppsala University

We need to act sustainably if we want to create a sustainable world. That might sound obvious, but in fact it is not. We see it as our task as a university to inspire people and to involve them in the topic of sustainability. The University of Groningen (UG) wants to take an exemplary role in this regionally and internationally, in its teaching, research and business operations. The new Sustainability Roadmap is therefore also a part of our strategy. To this end, over the coming five years, we will be working on aspects including fossil-fuel-free transport, full circular waste management and 100% sustainable tendering. The UG also aims to be CO₂-neutral by 2035. The full package of measures will ensure that the UG takes up its responsibility to protect our Earth, now and in the future.

Prof. J. (Jouke) de Vries

President of the Board, University of Groningen

University-wide decisions concerning environmental and sustainability issues shape the behaviour and actions of all members of our academic community. We therefore view sustainability not as an isolated area of activity, but as a guiding principle embedded in all internal processes – from research and teaching to governance, and everyday life on campus. Our goal is to ensure that every member of the University – from students to the President – actively contributes to a sustainable future.

Our efforts within the ENLIGHT Green Network are a further expression of our commitment towards sustainable transformation. The network has provided our university with an environment for exchanging ideas and lessons learned, facilitating the transfer of best practices and enabling valuable mutual learning while reducing personnel resources and costs for all partner institutions. Through this exchange, the University of Göttingen has gained important insights into sustainability governance at other universities – knowledge we can apply to further develop and strengthen our own structures. In addition, participation in the projects CARBON and GreenLAB has deepened our strategic and practical understanding of carbon budgeting and pricing systems as well as sustainable initiatives in laboratories. Through ENLIGHT, joint efforts and the exchange of different approaches enable us to achieve our sustainable development goals more efficiently and within a shorter timeframe.

Prof. Bernhard Brümmer

Vice-President for Research and Sustainability, University of Göttingen

The ENLIGHT Green Network is where sustainability coordinators come together – to inspire one another and strengthen the sustainability policies of their institutions. But it's also where they unite to challenge university leadership to address the elephants in the room and take real action: our own flight behaviour, the meat served at official dinners, and the limited staffing for sustainability teams and Green Offices.

Riet Van de Velde

Sustainability coordinator, Ghent University

At University of Galway, sustainability is not just an ambition, it's how we learn, live and lead. Our approach is rooted in the belief that universities have a unique role to play in shaping a more sustainable future, through the education we provide, the research we undertake, and the example we set in how we operate. Partnership and collaboration are at the heart of this work. Real change happens when we work together, across disciplines, with our students and staff, and in partnership with our community, government, and industry. Through initiatives such as the ENLIGHT European University alliance, we're extending that collaboration across Europe, sharing knowledge, and empowering students to drive real change. We empower our students to be sustainability leaders, to learn through experience, to live their values, and to lead by example.

Dr Richard Manton

Director of Sustainability, University of Galway

Being engaged in the ENLIGHT Green Network is both inspiring and practical. It brings together amazing and committed people who turn ideas on sustainability into action through collaboration, shared learning, and mutual support across universities. Their energy and openness continually inspire me to bring new perspectives and initiatives to our university community.

Doc. Peter Hanajík, PhD

Teacher, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University Bratislava

Sustainability is a prominent feature of all missions of the University of Bordeaux. This is true for our research activities, which must create knowledge that allows us to build sustainable solutions for living in a socially just and environmentally safe world. This is also true for our education and training activities, which aim to raise awareness among our students of these evolving concepts in order to better prepare them to face current challenges, whether environmental or societal. European and international cooperation is key to these sustainability aims since it develops partnership skills and intercultural understanding, essential skills if we are to address these complex global challenges.

Philippe Moretto

Vice-President for transitions and societal dialogue, University of Bordeaux

Joanne Pagèze

Vice-President for internationalisation, University of Bordeaux

The University of the Basque Country, through its Office for Sustainable Development and Social Commitment, firmly reaffirms its unwavering commitment to creating a sustainable, fair, and inclusive future. Guided by the principles of environmental stewardship, social justice, and economic integrity, we combine academic excellence with bold, transformative action to generate positive impact for society and the planet.

We call upon every member of our community – students, faculty, and staff – to join this shared mission, including initiatives such as the Campus Bizia Lab programme. Together, we act with conviction to build a university that not only teaches sustainability but embodies it through our i3 model, advances knowledge in service of humanity through cooperation programmes such as Gaztenpatia, and safeguards the future of our common home, the Earth. Within the ENLIGHT alliance, we share these experiences and learn from others to strengthen our common vision of universities as drivers of transformation. By fostering cooperation, intercultural dialogue, and collective engagement, we aim to empower our academic communities to act for a fairer, more sustainable, and inclusive future for all.

Estíbaliz Sáez de Cámara Oleaga

Deputy Director of Quality, Sustainability, and Dual Training,
Bilbao School of Engineering, University of the Basque Country

Within the ENLIGHT alliance, the University's HaziCampusa initiative, an organic learning garden, exemplifies how green campus spaces can become dynamic laboratories for sustainability. By transforming university grounds into living classrooms, we promote interdisciplinary teaching and community participation that bridge academic knowledge and practical action.

Through the creation of a University Gardens for Learning and Collaboration Network among several ENLIGHT universities, we have explored innovative models of governance and shared stewardship. This collaboration highlights the value of co-creation, shared decision-making, and the pivotal role that campus gardens can play as bridges between higher education institutions and broader sustainability movements – nurturing both environmental awareness and a collective sense of responsibility for our shared future.

Dr Arantza Rico

Coordinator of HaziCampusa, University of the Basque Country





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Further information
www.enlight-eu.org

