



University of Vaasa
VAASAN YLIOPISTO

Sustainability report 2024



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Introduction



Our university's strategy states its ambition to become an internationally known research university by 2030, with an explicit focus on research impact. We believe we can have an impact in a variety of ways. Taking a leadership position in sustainability comes naturally, given that we are located in the Nordic energy capital. Our research projects integrate innovation and discoveries that help both industry and society to achieve sustainability goals, such as climate action and affordable, clean energy. Furthermore, we hope to ensure a long-term impact on companies and society around us by providing meaningful education and developing talents in a multidisciplinary environment. At the University of Vaasa, we aspire to create the common good by promoting new knowledge, education, and sustainable innovation while minimising costs for our environment and societies.

This 2024 report describes our sustainability targets and how successfully we achieved them in the previous year. We want to integrate the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability into everything we do.

For a start, let's clarify what sustainability is. Sustainability is fundamentally about strength, stability, and resilience. As a result, sustainability refers, first, to the vitality of individuals, species, communities, and ecosystems. Second, sustainability refers to the functionality and continuity of societies, economies, cultures, and other systems or organisations based on human activity. In this sense, sustainability refers to the durability and continuous function of human-made things, devices, and structures. Furthermore, sustainability relates to the strength and longevity of human thought, decisions, and commitment. All of these different aspects of sustainability are relevant when we discuss the sustainability activities of the University of Vaasa.

Environment

Our goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 in terms of direct emissions from our laboratory activities (VEBIC and Techobothnia), vehicles, and purchased energy (electricity and heat), which fall under Scopes 1 and 2. This requires specific efforts, which we are taking, to avoid and decrease emissions, develop our zero-emission energy contracts, and compensate for any remaining Scope 1 and 2 emissions. To establish the required amount of emission reduction, we track emissions and the effectiveness of emission-reduction efforts.

Since 2019, the University of Vaasa has conducted an annual assessment of its carbon footprint. The Hansel Procurement Pulse system calculates the carbon footprint using purchase invoices and data from various service providers, including waste management, cleaning services, and campus restaurants. The Granlund Manager Solution assesses our energy footprint and wastage.

In 2024, the University of Vaasa's carbon footprint was about 3.18 thousand metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gases. The largest emission categories in 2024 were procurement (50%), and real estate (42%), which together accounted for around 92% of emissions. Purchases include equipment, furniture, office supplies, and printing paper, among others. The maintenance and renovation of buildings, as well as the consumption of heat, electricity, and water, generated emissions from buildings. Travel accounted for about 5% of emissions in 2024.

Despite ongoing efforts to reduce it, our university's carbon footprint has slightly increased in absolute numbers (see Figure 1). This increase is essentially the result of our university's strategic goal of increasing the number of students, particularly international students, as well as the volume of education, research, and funding. Some of the ways in which this drive for expansion is concretised are the refurbishment of our campus (2019–2024) and the creation of new research infrastructure (e.g., the infrastructure required for hydrogen energy research and other laboratory facilities). We need these investments to implement our growth strategy. The University of Vaasa is a success story in terms of its social, educational, and scientific impacts, with its student population increasing by 1,000 since 2023 and its research funding and publication volume increasing continuously for several years. Even with this growth, our carbon footprint is declining relative to the number of students and employees. Emissions for university members, including students and personnel, were roughly 511 kilogrammes per capita in 2023 but reduced to around 450 kilogrammes per capita in 2024.

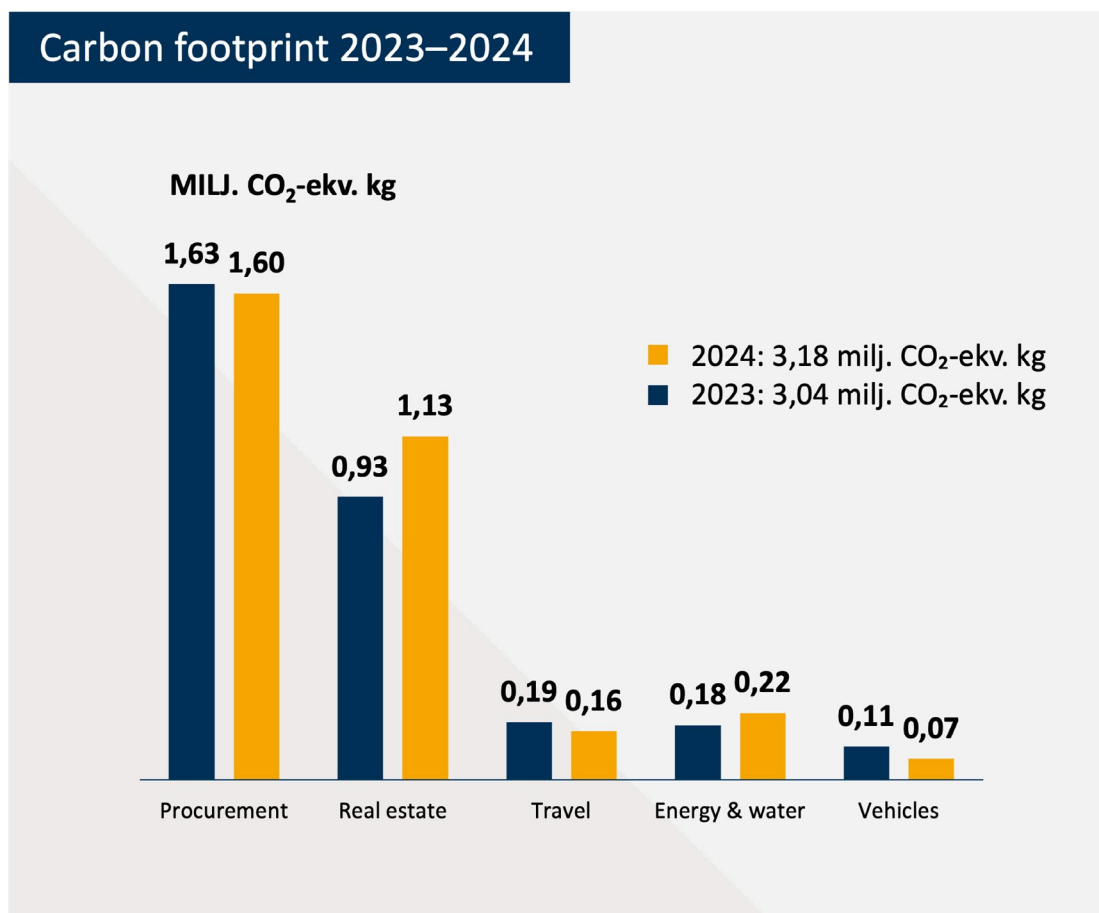


Figure 1. University of Vaasa carbon footprint 2023–2024

It should be noted that emissions related to the campus project complicate the comparability of carbon assessments between 2020 and 2024: emissions from reconstruction, new technical building services, and procurements were factored into calculations in phases.

Emission reduction goals

We want to cut **travel-related emissions by 30–50% by 2030 compared to 2019**. We can do this by prioritising remote participation in meetings and conferences when feasible and reasonable. The majority of travel emissions, almost 80%, come from flying. The need for and substitution of flights by train, including for international journeys, are carefully considered.

The University of Vaasa campus project (2019–2024) resulted in more effective space usage, meaning higher energy efficiency. Sensor control—automation that adjusts and turns off lights and ventilation—along with more efficient space utilisation, such as new teaching facilities, resulted in energy savings (up to 10%). We expect that the carbon footprint of the university's facilities will be significantly reduced over time due to improved space and energy efficiency.

Our university **aims to reduce emissions from waste management, cleaning, and catering by 20% by the end of the decade compared to 2019 levels**. This will be accomplished in partnership with contracted partners, such as by minimising food and other waste. We are also looking into switching to a plant-based approach to meeting and event catering. **Our library prioritises electronic materials** to reduce paper consumption and printing emissions. We also conduct comprehensive **needs evaluations and environmental impact assessments for procurements** in competitive tendering in order to reduce emissions.



Responsible investment

The University of Vaasa's investments are divided between its main portfolio and Viljo Syreniuksen rahasto (the Viljo Syrenius Fund). At the end of 2024, the main portfolio is worth approximately EUR 56.2 million, while the Viljo Syrenius Fund is worth approximately EUR 6.5 million. The University of Vaasa's main portfolio has a carbon risk of 76.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per million dollars in sales, according to the 2024 ESG report from Suomen Sijoitustutkimus (Investment Research Group). The Viljo Syrenius Fund has a carbon risk of 102.0 tCO₂e/\$M sales. The carbon risk is the weighted average of the carbon intensities of the holdings. It measures carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions from Scope 1 and Scope 2 in proportion to the company's revenue. Carbon risk in both portfolios has decreased since 2018.

The main portfolio has an ESG rating of A, while the Viljo Syrenius Fund has an ESG rating of AA. The main portfolio has a moderate exposure to exclusionary themes at 6.9%, whereas the Viljo Syrenius Fund has a low exposure of 2.5%. These percentages of the portfolios' market value are allocated to companies that engage in one or more activities that are widely regarded as violating the Principles of Responsible Investment (alcohol, tobacco, gambling, civilian firearms, weapons, cluster bombs, landmines, nuclear power, and genetically modified organisms). Our aim is to have low exposure to exclusionary themes in both portfolios.

Social sustainability

We recognise and acknowledge the need to measure and report on the positive impacts, or "handprint", of all activities at our university. Positive impact may be ecological, social, cultural, or economic. Our mission is to advance scientific knowledge and create informed and responsible citizens. Success in research and education contributes to the university's positive impact on society.

Our university is exploring the possibility of earmarking part of its own internal research funding to invest in research projects that promote ESG characteristics (i.e., environmental and social responsibility, as well as good governance) and contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Such projects can be in any of the fields we represent: business, engineering, management, and communications.

Another example of "internal compensation" or offsetting, in which we invest in our own actions to reduce carbon footprint and promote other aspects of sustainability, might be the construction of a bike shelter to facilitate winter cycling. This could result in more cycling between home and campus for both students and staff. This would minimise emissions from home-to-campus travel, which is included under Scope 3. We could correlate the scale of the investment with the European Emissions Trading System's (EU ETS) price for the average annual greenhouse gas emissions from flying, particularly those of our international students who commute from their home country to Finland.

Regarding social sustainability within the university community, our Equality Plan and Accessibility Plan seek to support individuals in joining and participating in common activities. On a daily basis, we work to ensure that all university events and services are equally accessible. We value equality, non-discrimination, involvement, engagement, and community spirit. This policy requires that our physical, social, and digital environments are designed and put into operation so that everyone can interact with others on an equal footing. We also take care that diverse groups and individuals are able to influence decisions that impact them in order for everyone to feel included in the community. According to our Code of Conduct, all members of the university community have the right to a safe, equal, and equitable study and working environment.

Our sustainability and responsibility agenda (2025-2035) is structured into four areas: research, education, campus, and cooperation (Table 1). The agenda addresses various aspects of sustainability and responsibility, including social, economic, environmental, and governmental.

Table 1: University of Vaasa's Sustainability and Responsibility Agenda 2025–2035

- This objective has been broadly achieved.
- We are on track to achieve this goal, but there is still work to be done.
- Achieving this goal is still in its infancy and will require a lot of effort.

Research	Education	Campus, our own functions and administration	Social impact and collaboration
The research activities of the University of Vaasa focus, among other topics, on tackling major sustainability challenges.	At the University of Vaasa, sustainability studies are part of all degree programmes and lifelong learning contributions.	The University of Vaasa inspires and encourages students and staff to promote sustainable development and responsibility. This occurs frequently, for example, through blogs and sustainability-related events, such as Science Day at our university.	The University of Vaasa is committed to preventing all forms of discrimination. Every member of the university community is encouraged to act to create a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.
The University of Vaasa research projects consider multiple facets of sustainability and responsibility, including environmental, social, economic, and governmental dimensions.	All our university graduates understand their responsibility to promote and develop sustainability.	The University of Vaasa sets concrete, absolute climate emission reduction targets. The general principle is to avoid and reduce emissions, increase energy efficiency, and act in a sustainable way.	The University of Vaasa integrates sustainability and responsibility objectives into its procurement strategies and develop its procurement skills.
The University of Vaasa supports interdisciplinarity, open science, and a global perspective in addressing sustainability challenges.	We will implement a mechanism (e.g., Sulitest) to assess entry and exit sustainability literacy among the student body.	The University of Vaasa aims to protect biodiversity. Therefore, the university is assessing the impact of its activities on biodiversity.	The University of Vaasa actively develops science communication to reach out to those outside the scientific community.

Research	Education	Campus, our own functions and administration	Social impact and collaboration
	As a member of the Green Skills Vaasa Network, we supplement our academic curricula connected to the SDGs with more vocationally focused training, SDG-related courses and challenges. The Green Skills Vaasa Network will also introduce the new Sustainability Day concept.	The University of Vaasa encourages its community to recycle, contribute to the circular economy, and limit consumption.	We will create a unified strategy to university engagement with NGOs that includes research, student volunteering, and the creation of educational resources.
	The University of Vaasa promotes equal access to education both nationally and globally.	We will agree to implement governance for a statement against forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour.	The University of Vaasa promotes the application of research innovations in society, such as through entrepreneurship and corporate partnerships.
	The University of Vaasa takes different life situations into account by enabling flexible study and participation options for students with illness, special health needs, learning difficulties, small children, and single-parent backgrounds.	International faculty and students at the University of Vaasa can fully engage in university community development and events.	Clean energy and energy efficiency retain their place in our annual Science Day as a key outreach activity.
	Our university is expanding the positive impact of skilled and educated graduates taking work placements. Our university has a top graduate employment rate: 91% of students who graduated in 2022 were employed in 2023.	The University of Vaasa is devoted to international action to promote and safeguard academic freedom. This is done, for example, via the Scholars at Risk network.	We collaborate with businesses to create SDG-led competitions and startup funding, as well as SDG-focused internship programmes and projects for our students. These forms of activity are interdisciplinary.
		We have established a systematic outreach activity which improve health and wellbeing, including nutrition, sports, exercise, and other health and wellbeing related topics.	The university and its partners are committed to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI), which address environmental, social, and governance concerns.

Sustainable Development Goals

The University of Vaasa's mission is closely aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. By focusing on sustainable energy, business, and society, our university not only advances specific goals but also supports the overarching aim of creating a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all. We are committed to the SDGs as part of our ethical and responsible operation mode, focusing on those that are most relevant to our academic expertise and have the most potential for positive societal impact in relation to our strategic emphasis. We selected the SDGs based on an external analysis of our research publications, ensuring that the chosen goals accurately reflect the contents of our research activities. Our University Board and Management Team made the final decision on our specific SDGs based on an inclusive discussion process in which effectively all members of our university community participated, and the results were published in our University Strategy 2030. Our SDGs are as follows:



7 Affordable and clean energy: Given our location at the heart of the largest energy technology hub in the Nordic countries, it is especially our responsibility to spearhead the promotion of sustainability. We are developing more efficient ways to produce, store and distribute energy.

8 Decent work and economic growth: We promote sustainable economic growth that takes into account environmental and social considerations. We produce scientific knowledge on how to create working conditions and practices that respect human rights and promote the well-being of all employees.

9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure: In the dissemination of innovations and technologies, research and education play a crucial role. We develop innovative production processes that help conserve natural resources and reduce environmental impact.

11 Sustainable cities and communities: We produce scientific knowledge and urban and regional development solutions to build sustainable communities and cities in collaboration with various players.

12 Responsible consumption and production: We encourage more eco-friendly consumption practices and contribute to a greater understanding of consumer responsibility and agency. Responsible consumption is a component of a larger sustainable lifestyle.

16 Peace, justice and strong institutions: We produce scientific knowledge on issues of peace, justice and good governance. The unique approach of our research is comprehensive security, which combines the political, economic, social and environmental factors of security.

In order to achieve these SDGs, we have established explicit strategic objectives for promoting business ecosystems and collaborations among the governmental, commercial, and non-profit sectors. These objectives include improving intellectual property management, commercialising our research results, and actively contributing to efforts to achieve carbon neutrality.

Examples of SDG-related research and educational activities at the University of Vaasa

SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy: Zero-emission ships are the future, but every ship in the global ship stock cannot just be replaced in one go. This means that solutions must also be developed for existing ships. The three-year project CHEK—deCarbonising shipping by Enabling Key technology symbiosis on real vessel is concept designs led by the University of Vaasa is a lighthouse for low-carbon shipping. The solutions it develops combine new vessel designs and technologies that can be installed on existing vessels.

SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth: The University of Vaasa is known for its close links with the working life, and our cooperation with the business world is diverse and mutually beneficial. A good example of this is our students, many of whom are working on a thesis or dissertation for a company or organisation on the verge of graduation. Working with a company brings meaning and motivation to the work but also, for example, time pressures. Working on a thesis often opens doors to a company and may even lead to a permanent job. Experience also makes students a highly desirable workforce in a wide range of sectors.

SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure: With the completion of the renovation of the Terhovi building at the University of Vaasa, the entire campus renovation has come to an end. During the extensive renovation, an attractive campus for students and personnel has been built in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, which also serves as an open meeting place for citizens and partners. Wherever possible, the old has been used and adapted to the new. The aim has been to create a sustainable campus where space is used in a versatile and efficient way.

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities: Researchers from the University of Vaasa, together with the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, have created an innovative model to help regions implement smart specialisation policy. The research-based model has spread to other countries around the Baltic Sea and given Ostrobothnia a reputation as a pioneer in the EU. Smart specialisation is the EU's response to global economic competition from the US, Japan, and China. The aim is to find a region's strengths—the industries, products, services, and skills that would make it more successful.

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production: The Strategic Business Development or SBD research group at the University of Vaasa has a long tradition of studying digital servitization. This means the transition of manufacturing companies towards digital service business. In practice, the companies track product usage and maintain their products based on user diagnostics. The products are optimised and a wide range of product-related information is used to improve customer value.

SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions: The IRWIN project, led by the University of Vaasa, explores security resilience in a complex and ever-changing world. It is about ensuring functioning society's decision-making, law-making and governance. This requires the common effort of government, business, research, organisations and civil society members.

The links below will take you to university news about the various SDGs in 2024:

1 No poverty

The UN's Sustainable Development Agenda seek to eliminate extreme poverty. Extreme poverty is described as a lack of the most basic essentials of life, including food, clothing, and shelter. The University of Vaasa focuses on themes such as energy and transportation poverty. Energy poverty is defined as the inability to meet basic demands due to high energy costs. Transport poverty is defined as the inability to travel to places where one's basic requirements can be supplied with reasonable effort, expense, and time.

Don't believe everything – Black Friday fast fashion deals put more pressure on consumers
<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/dont-believe-everything-black-friday-fast-fashion-deals-put-more-pressure>

2 Zero hunger

Hunger means that a person lacks food. It may be quantitative or qualitative, chronic or acute. Issues of equality and social responsibility are inextricably linked to fighting hunger and feeding the world's rapidly rising population. South Ostrobothnia is a thriving food production region that produces beef, milk, and grain. The University of Vaasa conducts food research, focusing on consumer behaviour and the circular economy. Many of our partners are food enterprises that operate in South Ostrobothnia.

3 Good health and well-being

Researchers at the University of Vaasa use nature-based methods to promote mental health and well-being in a variety of social and health services, as well as youth work. Work-life balance and human resource management challenges are strongly related to health and well-being. Our social and health management researchers investigate the conditions that promote health and well-being from the perspectives of clients and patients, as well as experts and professionals.

Young businesses succeed in international markets through trial and error – success does not always have to be based on careful planning, goal setting or large resources
<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/young-businesses-succeed-international-markets-through-trial-and-error-success>

4 Quality education

The University of Vaasa collaborates with industries and organisations for research and education. We strongly support student innovation. Vaasa's higher education institutions share a startup space on campus, which allows for new experiments, networking, and the development of entrepreneurial skills. The University of Vaasa uses a CoDoc collaboration model that incorporates a company's or another organisation's demands and research interests into a doctoral student's research topic.

New cooperation model brings together companies and doctoral researchers at the University of Vaasa – offering companies latest research and innovations and an attractive career path for doctoral researchers

<https://www.uvasa.fi/en/newshub/news/new-cooperation-model-brings-together-companies-and-doctoral-researchers-university>

University of Vaasa and ABB agree on extensive strategic cooperation in education and research – New initiative focuses on energy resilience and supply security

<https://www.uvasa.fi/en/newshub/news/university-vaasa-and-abb-agree-extensive-strategic-cooperation-education-and-research>

5 Gender equality

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals have designated gender equality and women's rights as a cross-cutting subject due to their intrinsic link to sustainable development. Everyone in an equal learning and working community can work without facing discrimination due to their gender, gender identity, gender expression, or any other personal characteristic. The University of Vaasa's equality and non-discrimination strategy includes both actions to promote gender equality and those required by the Non-Discrimination Act.

6 Clean water and sanitation

Water is necessary for human survival. It maintains the body's fluid equilibrium, controls temperature, and is an important component of metabolism. Access to clean water and sanitation are fundamental factors in promoting the general health and well-being of a population. In line with this goal, the University of Vaasa has upgraded its heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems as part of the broader campus project that also features water-saving faucets and new energy-efficient dishwashers.

7 Affordable and Clean Energy

Energy-related research and education are top priorities at the University of Vaasa. For instance, research conducted on the VEBIC research platform contributes to the development of more efficient methods of energy production, storage, and distribution. This will simultaneously reduce reliance on vulnerable energy sources. Research and education in the field of energy will facilitate

the transfer of knowledge to future generations. University of Vaasa graduates contribute to the sector by creating and implementing new knowledge.

New consortium led by University of Vaasa to research hydrogen-argon power cycle for net-zero power generation

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/new-consortium-led-university-vaasa-research-hydrogen-argon-power-cycle-net-zero-power>

Towards zero-emissions by fuel-flexible technologies – New Finnish consortium brings cleaner solutions to marine and off-road transport

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/towards-zero-emissions-fuel-flexible-technologies-new-finnish-consortium-brings>

8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

The University of Vaasa conducts research in numerous disciplines, including management and economics, on employment and economic growth. Understanding how to create working conditions and practices that respect human rights and promote the well-being of all employees is aided by research and instruction. Research and education also contribute to economic development that takes environmental and social concerns into account. Research, including the InnoLab research platform, contributes to an understanding of how to foster innovation and productivity growth.

Towards working life through thesis – cooperation with companies and organisations add relevance and job opportunities

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/towards-working-life-through-thesis-cooperation-companies-and-organisations-add>

The University of Vaasa, the University of Oulu, VTT, and Wärtsilä are building an energy laboratory for the development of future engines

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/university-vaasa-university-oulu-vtt-and-wartsila-are-building-energy-laboratory>

9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Innovative production processes devised by the Department of Production Economics at the University of Vaasa conserve natural resources and reduce environmental impacts. In the dissemination of innovations and technologies, research and education play a crucial role. This will be investigated via the InnoLab and Digital Economy research platforms, as well as the marketing and communication disciplines.

Higher education institutions in Vaasa promote entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mindset – opening of the joint StartUp space on 3 October

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/higher-education-institutions-vaasa-promote-entrepreneurship-and-entrepreneurial>

Building elements as distributed wireless infrastructure – Professor Xiaoshu Lü receives significant funding from the Research Council of Finland

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/building-elements-distributed-wireless-infrastructure-professor-xiaoshu-lu-receives>

University of Vaasa and Wäertsilä Finland agreed on extensive strategic partnership in education and research

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/university-vaasa-and-wartsila-finland-agreed-extensive-strategic-partnership-education>

10 Reduced inequalities

The University of Vaasa is dedicated to reducing global inequality. One way to accomplish this is through research and education on good governance. Another essential strategy to lessen inequities is to conduct research on equity concerns surrounding the energy transition. Communication sciences investigate concepts and terminology from a variety of domains. Concepts and terminology are necessary to structure, clarify, and enhance communication, thereby facilitating mutual understanding. Understanding is one of the necessary factors in reducing inequality.

“Vaasa Spouse Programme is like a family to me” – international spouses feel at home in Vaasa

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/vaasa-spouse-programme-family-me-international-spouses-feel-home-vaasa>

The EU decides on issues that affect the daily lives of Finns – Professor Christoph Demmke opens the door to EU decision-making

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/eu-decides-issues-affect-daily-lives-finns-professor-christoph-demmke-opens-door>

11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

One of the University of Vaasa’s longest-term sustainable development projects concerns the creation of sustainable communities and cities in collaboration with various players. The university will continue to work closely with the City of Vaasa, various regional NGOs, and other stakeholders. Urban and regional development challenges are specifically addressed in research and education in regional studies and other administrative sciences, as well as industrial management and marketing studies, both of which have a long history of green development projects in the Vaasa region.

Earning money while making the power grid more stable – energy consumers have a key role in supporting grid flexibility

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/earning-money-while-making-power-grid-more-stable-energy-consumers-have-key-role>

The definition of municipal citizenship needs updating

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/definition-municipal-citizenship-needs-updating>

12 Responsible Consumption and Production

Sustainable consumption research and instruction at the University of Vaasa encourage more eco-friendly consumption practises. These include waste reduction, recycling promotion, and the selection of sustainable products. Additionally, research and education on responsible consumption contribute to a greater understanding of consumer responsibility and agency. The University of Vaasa places special emphasis on the fact that responsible consumption is a component of a larger sustainable lifestyle that also includes energy efficiency, healthy dietary habits, and environmentally friendly transportation.

University of Vaasa and VTT lead ambitious partnership to build reusable packaging systems in Finland

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/university-vaasa-and-vtt-lead-ambitious-partnership-build-reusable-packaging-systems>

Vaasa EnergyWeek 2024 focused on green transition and sustainable business

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/vaasa-energyweek-2024-focused-green-transition-and-sustainable-business>

13 Climate Action

Research and instruction at the University of Vaasa assist individuals and organisations in making more environmentally responsible decisions, such as reducing energy consumption, selecting environmentally favourable products, and opting for public transportation. For instance, research and instruction in public management examine the significance of informed decision-making for planning and implementing climate action. Additionally, research assists in identifying vulnerable populations and ensuring that climate action is equitable and responsive to the requirements of all.

Powering the future together – Public-Private Collaboration for the energy transition in Finland

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/powering-future-together-public-private-collaboration-energy-transition-finland>

Natural environment is declining: are companies doing their part to save it?

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/natural-environment-declining-are-companies-doing-their-part-save-it>

Values guide the consumption of meat substitutes

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/values-guide-consumption-meat-substitutes>

14 Life below water

The world's rivers, oceans, and lakes are home to an astounding array of fish, animal, and plant life, but they are under threat from human activities. Water is also important for culture and trade. The international shipping industry is responsible for the carriage of around 90% of world trade. Therefore, carbon dioxide emissions from ships must be minimised, which is a major research goal at the University of Vaasa. We also have a number of space-data-related research projects underway. Transportation and logistics, along with monitoring water quality and environmental factors, can leverage space data.

Towards low-carbon shipping with energy technology and innovative ship design

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/towards-low-carbon-shipping-energy-technology-and-innovative-ship-design>

15 Life on land

The growing rate of biodiversity loss is one of humanity's most pressing issues, alongside—and inextricably tied to—climate change. To varying degrees, all human actions impact the natural environment and its biodiversity. Life on Earth is where we witness the most immediate effects. One of the instruments we employ to measure impacts is space data from Earth-orbiting satellites. The University of Vaasa is exploring the use of space data. It will help in understanding strategies for preventing and reducing emissions. It will also assist in identifying the necessary steps and monitoring their effectiveness.

Vaasa strongly involved in supporting green transition in the Nordics

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/vaasa-strongly-involved-supporting-green-transition-nordics>

16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

For peace to emerge and be sustained, it is crucial for businesses to be socially and environmentally sustainable. The University of Vaasa addresses topics of peace, justice, and good governance in both business studies and administrative sciences. Our research on these topics takes a unique approach called comprehensive security, which incorporates the political, economic, social, and environmental factors of security.

Uncertainties and crises challenge economy and society – University of Vaasa strengthens research on preparedness and resilience

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/uncertainties-and-crises-challenge-economy-and-society-university-vaasa-strengthens>

Genuinely ethical management begins with dismantling unscientific myths

<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/newshub/news/genuinely-ethical-management-begins-dismantling-unscientific-myths>

17 Partnerships for the goals

The University of Vaasa stands out for its extensive and diverse partnership with the regional business community. For the past two decades, the Strategic Business Development research group has actively advanced the field of research in service business, digital service business, and business collaboration. The University of Vaasa's experts help businesses and other communities expand their operations through a number of projects. Our experts worked with the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia to create an innovative model for supporting regions in adopting smart specialisation policies.

Success of technology companies not just about the products – University of Vaasa strengthens the digital servitization of companies

<https://www.uvasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/success-technology-companies-not-just-about-products-university-vaasa-strengthens>

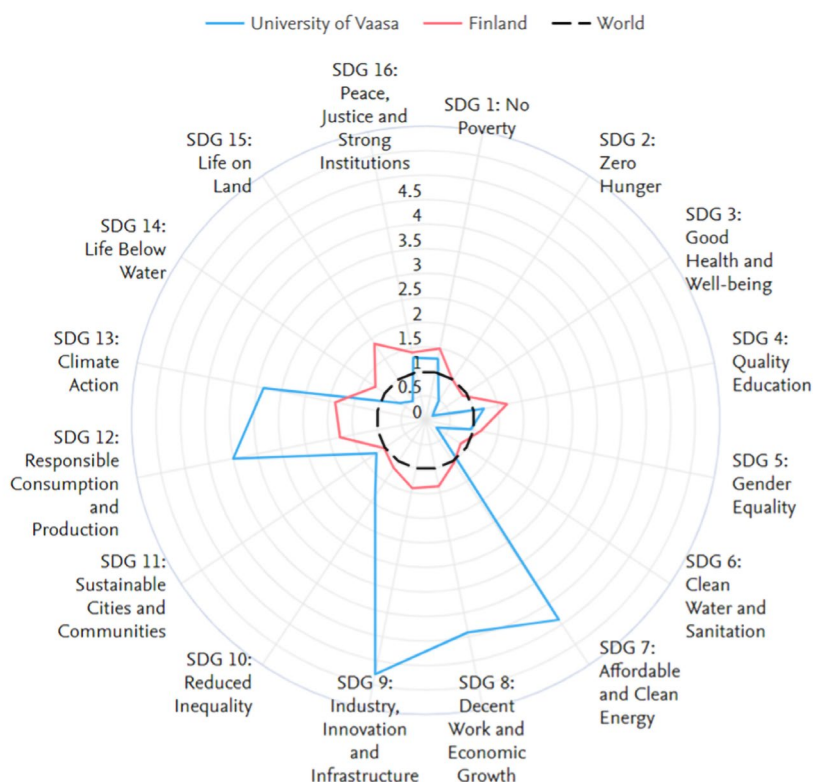
University of Vaasa research promotes smart specialisation of regions – Ostrobothnia becomes an EU pioneer

<https://www.uvasa.fi/en/newshub/articles/university-vaasa-research-promotes-smart-specialisation-regions-ostrobothnia>

Research

As stated, the UN Sustainable Development Goals specific to the University of Vaasa are SDGs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 16. The SciVal analysis (see Figure 1) also indicates a strong correlation between our research efforts and SDG 13 (climate action). Our university has a significant critical mass of activity within two areas: SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), with over 200 papers published by our researchers over the last five years.

Published research under SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) have outstanding citation impact (FWCI > 2.5). This research excellence aligns closely with the University of Vaasa's strategy and focus areas. We are creating new knowledge and understanding of sustainable and resilient energy transition. This target requires addressing research questions within the societal context as defined by the SDG targets.

Figure 1: University of Vaasa SDG relative activity Chart 2021–2023

Education

The University of Vaasa curriculum and delivery of degree programmes include transversal aspects of ethics, responsibility, sustainability, an international outlook, and a sense of community. In alignment with this, all our bachelor's and specialised master's degrees contain themes and learning goals that are based on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. Such an approach is evident in specific programme and course titles, as well as in the descriptions of individual courses.

Our programmes make explicit reference to sustainable development issues (e.g., the Master's Programme in International Business—Sustainable Global Business, Erasmus Mundus—Masters Smart Cities and Communities). Our bachelor's capstone course's learning goals include sustainability and ethics as major themes. Furthermore, we have introduced profiling studies in the shape of multidisciplinary study modules that have a strong focus on sustainability and seek to combine expertise from business, technology, and social sciences.

Furthermore, the University of Vaasa provides various opportunities for students to interact with university and school management, as well as participate in administrative bodies that influence the advancement of education. The rectorate and the deans have regular meetings with

the student union and student associations. The Student Forum, chaired by the Vice Rector of Education, gathers the student union and student associations with university management and student services for regular discussions.

Positive impact

Our dedication to sustainability runs deep, with a commitment to incorporating the social, economic, and ecological dimensions of sustainability into all aspects of our work. We are a valued partner within Northern Europe's largest energy and environment business cluster, working towards affordable and clean energy, economic growth, industry innovation, and responsible consumption and production.

Despite the challenges in assessing and measuring our "handprint", we have every reason to believe that the University of Vaasa is making a positive impact. We respond to global challenges through innovative and high-quality research and education. We support the sustainable development of learners, partners, ecosystems, and society, both regionally and globally.

The University of Vaasa is a member of the Climate Leadership Coalition (CLC). Its thematic groups are primarily responsible for bringing members together through practical activities. As an accredited member of the CLC, the University of Vaasa can participate in the Conference of the Parties (COPs) or the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This provides us with an additional global platform in which to influence governments, businesses, and NGOs, as well as ordinary citizens, on climate change mitigation and adaptation.



Our university's formal commitments to efforts in ethics, responsibility and sustainability

The University of Vaasa is committed to *Theses on Sustainable Development and Responsibility*, as agreed by all Finnish universities at Unifi (The Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities) (2020). Unifi is the collective voice of Finnish universities, promoting cooperation, creating conditions for universities to excel, and emphasizing shared views and positions on key issues concerning research and education policy, as well as the role of universities in society. The Finnish universities, including the University of Vaasa, perform systemic follow-up together and plan common steps in implementing the European sustainability competence framework (European GreenComp 2022).

In 2020, the University of Vaasa joined PRME to demonstrate its strong international commitment to developing the ideals of sustainability, responsibility, and ethics in education, research, and leadership. We utilise the PRME membership to improve and advance ethics, responsibility, and sustainability-related content in our degree programmes, as well as to improve administrative processes, such as curriculum development, in order to better serve our ethical and sustainability aims. We are represented in the PRME Nordic Chapter, which includes signatories from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The Nordic network promotes curriculum development and the exchange of best practices, and we have already profited from this collaboration by implementing a new Sustainability Day concept with visiting scholars from other PRME universities. As a natural extension of PRME membership, the University of Vaasa has also joined the Global Business School Network (GBSN) to advance the role of management education in meeting society's development needs.

In 2021, the University of Vaasa demonstrated its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals by signing the SDG Accord and joining the network. The SDG Accord is a global network of universities, research institutes, and educational institutions working to strengthen education's role in achieving the SDGs. Being a member of the SDG Accord has broadened our understanding of the significance of education in attaining the SDGs and the benefits it offers to society at large. Through the SDG Accord, we have developed and implemented new sustainability-related content and approaches in our courses and degree programmes.

In addition to these memberships, the commitment documents listed below govern our efforts in ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (ERS):

- University of Vaasa Strategy 2030: Sustainable Business, Energy and Society
- University of Vaasa Code of Conduct: Approved by the University Board on the 15 October 2021
- Principles for Responsible Management Education: Sharing Information on the 2022, 2024, and 2025 Progress Reports – University of Vaasa
- University of Vaasa HRS4R Action Plan 2022–2024

- The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023
- The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity 2023
- University of Vaasa Equality Plan 2024
- University of Vaasa Accessibility Plan 2025
- San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) 2022
- The Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) 2022.

Building on our core values, we actively promote equality and well-being on campus and across the community. Faculty, staff and students are represented in all decision-making bodies, ensuring the consistency of the mission and objectives with the voice and expertise of the whole community. Gender equality and the integration of international personnel and students into the university community are essential for our objectives in social sustainability. The university's performance and progress in diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) as well as its operating culture are reviewed via biennial workplace well-being surveys. A new internal networking and communication channel Viva Engage enables low-threshold idea sharing and connecting with others.

