CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

ie

UNIVERSITY
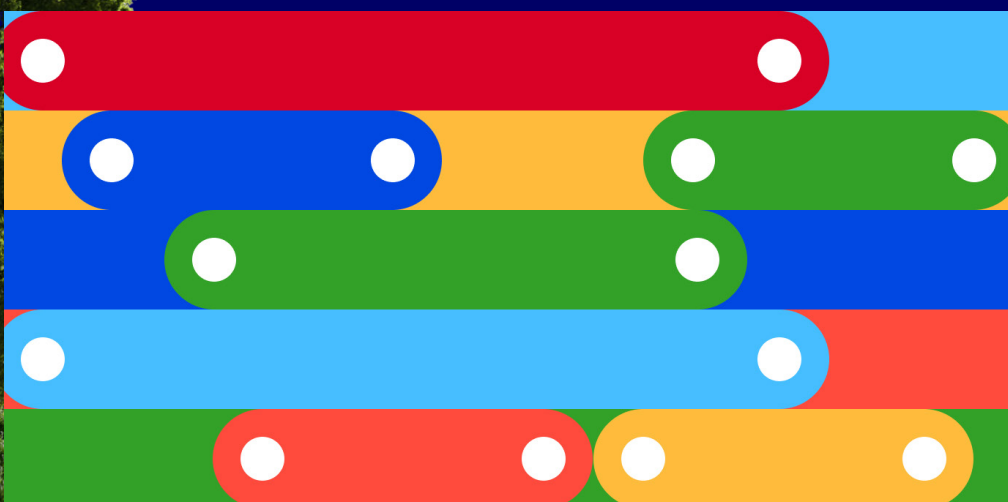
SUSTAINABILITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IE University's Climate and Sustainability Plan 2025 sets a bold agenda for transformation at a critical moment for our planet and society. Grounded in innovation, inclusion, and impact, the plan weaves sustainability into every dimension of university life — from academics and operations to research, community engagement, and governance.

Building on our global leadership in education, IE University has achieved carbon neutrality, integrated sustainability across curricula, invested in accessibility beyond legal standards, and empowered our community through direct project funding and inclusive participation. Guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of ethical leadership, IE's Climate and Sustainability Plan is not just a framework for today — it is a living commitment to shaping the next generation of changemakers and creating a resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

INTRODUCTION

In a world at a critical crossroads for climate and societal resilience, universities are not just centers of learning — they are engines of transformation. At IE University, we embrace this role with urgency and vision, forging new paths toward a sustainable and inclusive future. Guided by our core values, the IE University Sustainability Office works to cultivate a sustainability-driven culture by raising awareness, inspiring behavior change, and integrating sustainability into decision-making. Through active engagement, data-driven strategies, and transparent reporting, we strive to reduce emissions.

At IE University, we embed sustainability across our campus and beyond. Our dedication extends to preparing future leaders who will transform industries, economies, and policies in response to the climate crisis.

At the heart of this plan are six key goals that encompass our approach to climate action:

- Transformative Knowledge and Skill Development
- Sustainable Campus Operations
- Leading Research on Grand Challenges
- Social Equity
- Community Engagement
- Governance and Ethical Leadership

Each goal in this plan translates into measurable action. It is not just a roadmap for compliance; it is a forward-looking vision designed to transform our institution into a leader in sustainability, empowering students and staff to create a lasting, positive impact.

1. TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

Embed sustainability into academic programs, ensuring students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to drive systemic change.

WHY IT MATTERS

By equipping students with sustainability competencies, we prepare them to lead the green economy, tackle environmental challenges, and influence corporate and policy decisions in their careers.

KPI'S

- Integrate sustainability across all disciplines and curricula.
- Develop specialized programs in sustainable finance, renewable energy, and climate resilience.
- Ensure all first-year students are introduced to sustainability initiatives.
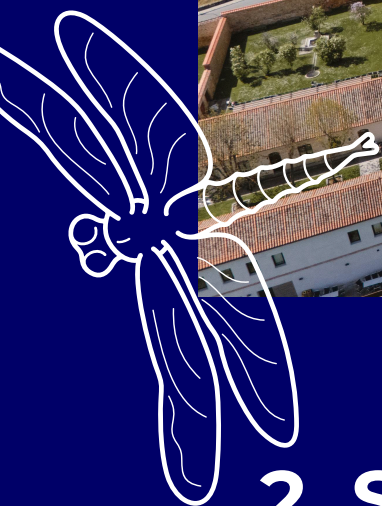- Track student participation in climate-focused internships, workshops, and capstone projects.
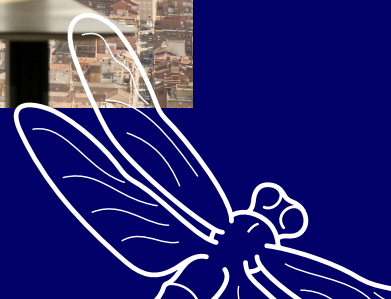
ACHIEVEMENTS

- In 2023–2024, IE University delivered over **15,106.5 hours** of sustainability-related content across its academic programs.

- More than **50 core and elective courses** now include sustainability principles, many mapped directly to specific UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- The IE Impact Program includes **21 ECTS credits** focused on humanities, technology, entrepreneurship, and sustainable innovation challenges.

- In 2023, IE University launched the **Bachelor in Environmental Sciences for Sustainability**, a pioneering undergraduate program designed to train future leaders in sustainable innovation, systems thinking, and social entrepreneurship.

- In 2024, IE University expanded its academic leadership in sustainability with the launch of the **Master in Sustainability and Business Transformation**. This pioneering program prepares future leaders to embed sustainability at the core of business strategy, operations, and innovation, equipping graduates to drive systemic change across industries and sectors.

- As part of their academic training, IE University students collaborate with external organizations to drive social impact and support sustainability goals. Through the **IEU Labs**, undergraduate students engage in initiatives such as the **Social Impact Lab**, supporting nonprofit organizations like **Fundación Prójimo Próximo**, which serves individuals with disabilities and end-of-life care needs. Other Labs focus on sustainable business innovation, including project with ethical fashion brands, internships in sustainable finance with CaixaBank, and support for the renewable energy startups.

- All students in the **Master in Management** program participate in the **Splash Project**, an intensive, eight-day social impact initiative fostering leadership and community service. In the 2023–2024 academic year alone, IE students and faculty dedicated an estimated **66,251 hours** to projects and initiatives with a clear social or environmental impact, reinforcing IE's commitment to education for sustainable development.

- Faculty receive ongoing training and resources to incorporate sustainability in diverse disciplines.
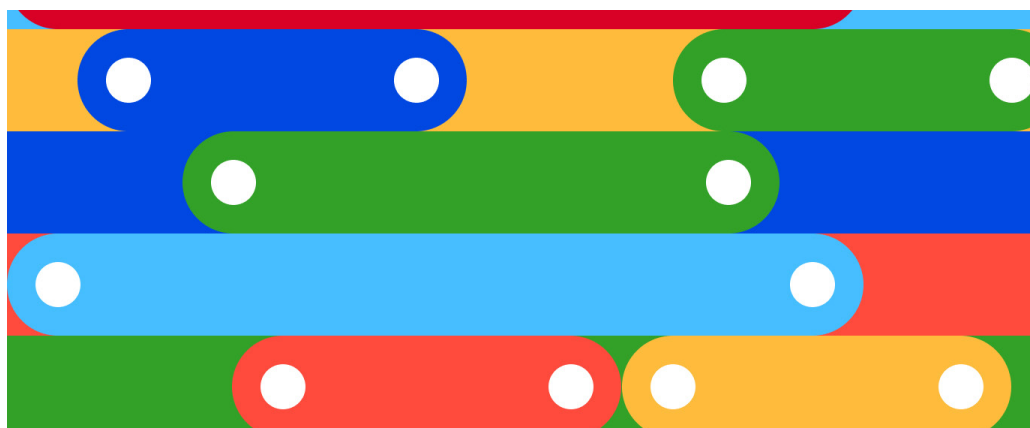
2. SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS OPERATIONS

OBJECTIVE

Reduce IE University's environmental footprint through sustainable practices in energy efficiency, renewable energy use, waste reduction, and responsible use of resources.

WHY IT MATTERS

Universities have a duty to lead by example. By embedding sustainability into our daily operations, we not only reduce our impact on the planet but also create a living laboratory where innovation, learning, and action meet.

KPI'S

- Reduce total campus carbon emissions year-on-year.
- Maintain 100% sourcing of electricity from certified renewable providers.
- Achieve measurable improvements in campus energy and water efficiency through smart management systems.
- Reduce overall campus waste generation and increase composting and recycling rates annually.
- Lower total material consumption (e.g., paper usage) through digitalization and sustainable procurement.
- Maintain and expand green spaces, increasing biodiversity across campus environments.
- Ensure that 60% of suppliers meet verified sustainability standards by 2030.
- Conduct annual audits for greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability compliance, aligned with international standards.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- IE University sources **100% of its electricity from certified renewable providers** and achieved **carbon neutrality** for its direct operational emissions in 2022, positioning itself among the first universities in Europe to reach this milestone.
- Through the **10 Year Challenge**, IE has driven continuous improvements in operational efficiency, upgrading HVAC and water systems with smart technologies and embedding real-time energy management tools like the "Hubgrade" platform across its campuses.
- IE University has implemented annual third-party audits to verify its greenhouse gas emissions, reinforcing the credibility of its climate strategy. Even as IE's student population grew by **64%** from 2020–2021 to 2023–2024, the university achieved a **28% reduction in its absolute carbon footprint**, and a remarkable **56% reduction in carbon emissions per student** over the same period, demonstrating leadership in sustainable growth.
- Waste reduction initiatives, including enhanced recycling and composting programs, have significantly decreased campus waste generation and improved resource recovery. On the Segovia campus, IE composts approximately **20 kilograms of food waste every week**, closing nutrient loops and promoting a circular approach to campus resource management. As of 2024, total campus waste generation has been reduced to **9.84 kilograms per student**, reflecting IE's steady progress toward zero-waste goals.
- As part of its broader waste reduction strategy, IE University partnered with **Bumerang** to introduce reusable container systems on campus, reducing single-use packaging waste. Additionally, through collaboration with **Too Good To Go**, IE actively combats food waste by facilitating the redistribution of surplus meals, aligning daily operations with principles of responsible consumption and the circular economy.
- Green infrastructure projects, including the expansion of native-species green areas, have increased campus biodiversity by **20%** at Segovia, enhancing ecological value and improving campus resilience.
- Sustainable procurement practices have steadily progressed, with **45% of purchasing** now meeting recognized environmental and ethical standards, supporting a greener supply chain for goods and services.

3. LEADING RESEARCH ON GRAND CHALLENGES

OBJECTIVE

Position IE University as a leader in sustainability research, focusing on climate resilience, social equity, and circular economy solutions.

WHY IT MATTERS

Research fuels innovation and provides practical, data-driven solutions to climate challenges that influence public policy and industry practices.

KPI'S

- Establish interdisciplinary research hubs on sustainability.
- Secure external funding and partnerships with global sustainability organizations.
- Develop research-based policy recommendations and publish findings.
- Measure research impact on sustainability policies and initiatives.
- Increase research projects addressing environmental and social challenges.

4. SOCIAL FOOTPRINT

OBJECTIVE

Foster inclusivity and engage the IE Community in sustainability efforts to ensure a more equitable society.

WHY IT MATTERS

A university's social footprint reflects its broader impact on society, shaping the well-being of its community and helping community members reach their maximum potential. By fostering equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership, universities can help address societal challenges such as climate change, social justice, and economic inequality. These initiatives strengthen IE's role in shaping future leaders who are equipped to build a more just, sustainable, and resilient society.

KPI'S

- Ensure gender balance across faculty, staff and students.
- Maintain a 0% gender pay gap across administrative and academic positions.
- Expand scholarships for women in STEM and sustainability programs and targeting underrepresented groups.
- Ensure all campus buildings meet accessibility standards.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- IE University fosters an environment where diversity, equity, and inclusion are foundational values. Our **Equal Opportunity Policy** actively protects against discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, disability, nationality, and other identities.
- IE continuously strengthens its **Anti-Discrimination and Harassment protocols**, offering clear reporting channels, protection measures, and awareness training across the institution.
- Women comprise 52.8% of the student population, 49% of faculty, and 44% of senior leadership.
- IE offers targeted scholarships to support underrepresented and resilient leaders:
  - **IE Women Scholarship** and **IE Social Impact Scholarship** promote gender equity and social entrepreneurship.
  - **IE Africa Talent Fellowship** and **IE Resilience Scholarship** empower students from African nations and those overcoming extraordinary challenges.
- IE University goes beyond national and international accessibility standards, continuously upgrading its physical and digital environments to ensure full participation, including compliance with **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)** and ongoing audits.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE

Foster a culture of active participation and shared responsibility, empowering every member of the IE community to contribute to a more sustainable future.
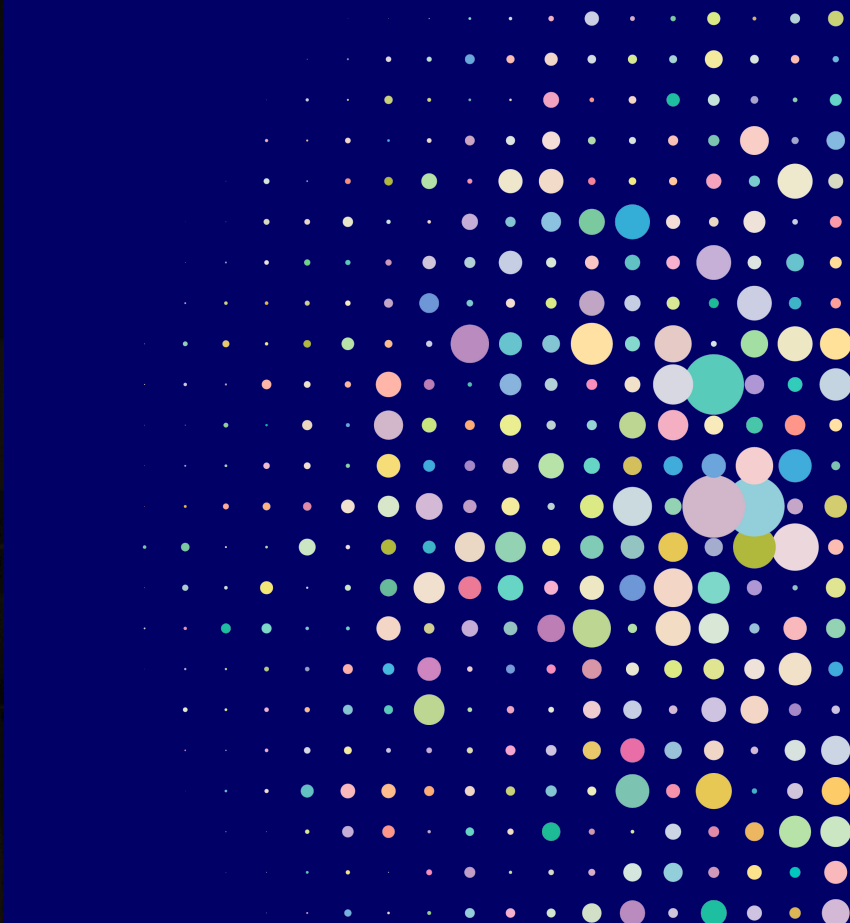
WHY IT MATTERS

Sustainability is a collective endeavor. By engaging students, faculty, staff, and external partners, we amplify our impact and build a resilient, inclusive community dedicated to driving meaningful change.
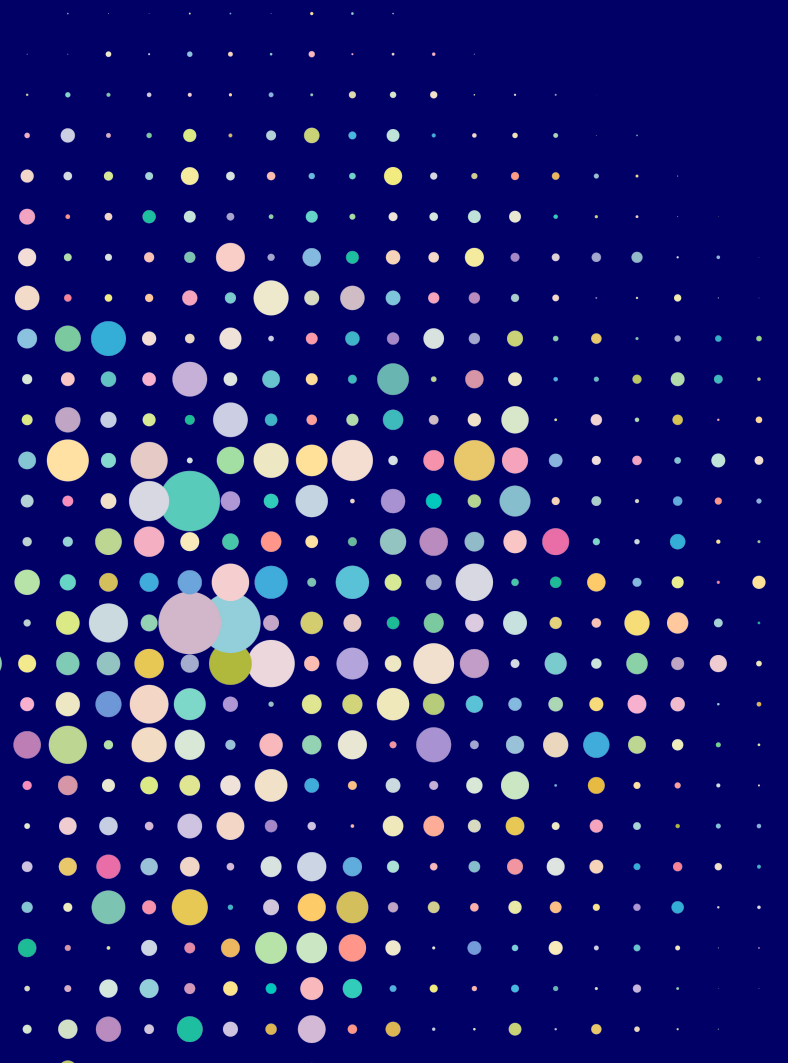
ACHIEVEMENTS

- Through active engagement campaigns, the Student Sustainability Committee, and the Sustainability Ambassador Program, IE has built a dynamic network of students, faculty, and staff driving grassroots initiatives and inspiring collective action across the university.
- The launch of the **Sustainability Townhall** created a platform for open dialogue and idea generation, investing nearly **€18,000** in sustainability-related projects developed by the community, for the community, as of the 2024-2025 academic year.
- From 2020 to 2024, IE University organized over **550 sustainability-focused activities**, including **Sustainability Week celebrations**, volunteer programs, expert roundtables, and workshops.
- Volunteering and service-learning opportunities engaged over **1,500 students** in real-world projects aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Partnerships with local and global organizations, including collaborations with Segovia's municipality on urban greening projects, extended IE's impact beyond the campus into broader society.

6. GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

OBJECTIVE

Uphold high standards of transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership in sustainability governance.

WHY IT MATTERS

Strong governance ensures that sustainability efforts remain a core priority and continue beyond short-term initiatives.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- IE University upholds a strong sustainability governance structure through the **Sustainability Committee**, composed of senior leadership and operational heads. These bodies meet regularly to set strategy, allocate resources, and ensure accountability across all institutional areas.
- A robust framework of policies — including the **IE Code of Ethics**, the **Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy**, and the **Equal Opportunity Policy** — reinforces a culture of integrity, respect, and transparency, guiding all community actions and decision-making processes.
- IE maintains **100% compliance** with evolving national and international sustainability regulations, supported by a dedicated regulatory tracking system and periodic independent audits.
- Annual SDG and sustainability reports are prepared following **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards** and **Spanish Law 11/2018**, ensuring external validation of IE's progress toward its climate, social, and governance goals.
- Community dialogue initiatives, such as the **Sustainability Townhall** and the **10 Year Challenge**, foster continuous engagement with students, staff, and faculty, creating shared ownership of sustainability ambitions and driving collective action.

CONCLUSION

This Climate & Sustainability Plan embodies IE University's unwavering commitment to shaping a world where innovation, inclusion, and sustainability drive every decision — on campus and beyond.

Sustainability and accessibility are not standalone initiatives at IE University; they are foundational principles integrated into institutional strategy, academic innovation, and campus operations. Through this holistic approach, IE aims to transform business, society, and leadership for a just, sustainable, and resilient future.

Through teaching, we equip future leaders to drive change; through research, we develop solutions for a more sustainable society. Partnerships with industry and support for sustainability-focused startups amplify our impact.

Ultimately, our societal footprint is defined by the positive transformations we inspire – on campus, in our communities, and globally. Sustainability is not a project at IE University — it is our guiding principle, our shared responsibility, and our enduring legacy to future generations.