Action Plan for Sustainable Development, 2016-2018

Approved by the Vice Chancellor 2016-01-12
Background and purpose

Pursuant to Chapter 1, Section 5 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), Uppsala University shall promote sustainable development to assure for present and future generations a sound and healthy environment, economic and social welfare, and justice.

Uppsala University’s mission is to gain and disseminate knowledge for the benefit of humankind and for a better world (Uppsala University: Mission and Core Values, UFV 2013/110). The responsibility to promote sustainable development falls under this overarching mission. The University is well positioned to be a driving force in this area through its large breadth of knowledge and subjects, and our goal to pursue world-leading research and first-class education.

Together, the Programme for Sustainable Development and the Action Plan for Sustainable Development comprise the University’s common and strategic goal documents for the work with sustainable development. The Action Plan for Sustainable Development specifies the strategic priorities in the Programme for Sustainable Development through a number of initiatives to be implemented in 2016-2018. The Action Plan for Sustainable Development aims to encourage engagement, initiative and innovation in the field of sustainability within the University as well as in external partnerships. The Action Plan for Sustainable Development will also help increase knowledge and awareness of the challenges in the field of sustainability and encourage accountability at all levels within the University. The ambition is that the Action Plan for Sustainable Development will be familiar throughout Uppsala University so that employees and students can be involved in its implementation.

The Environmental Objectives and Action Plan for Environmental Work (UFV 2012/1918) specifies actions that focus on environmental measures related to business trips and virtual meetings, energy consumption and waste and recycling, for example.
World-leading research

The long-term goal is for research at Uppsala University to contribute to sustainable development and a better world. Researchers at Uppsala University should be able to place their research in a societal context when relevant and in this way reflect on their research from a sustainability perspective. Research specialising in excellence in the field of sustainability will be reflected in degree programmes with an explicit focus on sustainability. The following strategies will be used to achieve this goal:

- Support the dissemination of knowledge and findings of research with a focus on sustainable development
- Encourage University researchers to explore new pathways to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives that may contribute to sustainable development
- Support collaboration and interdisciplinary work, especially in areas with strong connections to key issues in sustainable development
- Encourage and support doctoral students and researchers to integrate a sustainability perspective into their research early in their careers

1. SUPPORT INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Faculty Boards and Disciplinary Domain Boards support and encourage researchers to partake in interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of sustainable development. When relevant, external partners should be included and current societal issues should be addressed.

Responsible: Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards.

Time-frame: Follow up in 2018

2. DEVELOP ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO INCREASE THE EXCHANGE OF INTERNAL INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

CSD Uppsala regularly arranges conferences, seminars and the like with a focus on education and research for sustainable development. One example is the CEMUS Sustainability Festival, which is held twice per year. CSD Uppsala shall expand this conference to increase the internal exchange of information and knowledge in the University, thus strengthening the connection between education and research in the field of sustainable development.

Responsible: Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards with support from CSD.

Time-frame: Initiate in 2016
First-class education

The long-term goal is for all Uppsala University students to be given the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that allow them to contribute to sustainable development and a better world. The following strategies will be used to achieve this goal:

- Support and disseminate information about degree programmes with a focus on sustainable development
- Ensure that the sustainability perspective is integrated into educational programmes
- Support teachers in integrating sustainable development in their teaching
- Give students the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills in sustainable development into practice
- Encourage and facilitate the inclusion of courses related to sustainable development in the education of students at all levels
- Support increased awareness among study and career counsellors about opportunities to include sustainable development in educational programmes

3. INCLUDE THE SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE IN APPLICABLE CURRICULA AND SYLLABI

Where relevant, curricula and syllabi will make clear how the degree programme includes and takes various perspectives on sustainable development into account. One example may be a subject-specific introductory lecture. Another may be the inclusion of a special course on sustainable development and elements of sustainable development throughout the programme. Existing educational settings for sustainable development at the University will support subjects with little to no experience with the sustainability perspective in their programmes.

Responsible: Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards.

Time-frame: Follow up in 2018

4. PRESENT METHODS, TOOLS AND GOOD EXAMPLES

The ambition is to inspire teachers and make it easier for them to integrate sustainable development into their courses and programmes. Various organisations and networks have developed and presented a variety of tools and methods for education in sustainable development. These should be easily accessible for teachers and students. Teachers and students at Uppsala University should be able to contribute suggestions and good examples with ease.

Responsible: Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards in consultation with the University Director.

Time-frame: To be launched in 2016
5. FACILITATE INTEGRATION OF COURSES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

To encourage more students to take courses directly related to sustainable development, the opportunity to include and receive credit for relevant elective courses in first and second-cycle programmes should be reviewed and improved. The focus will be on a systemic perspective, equity issues and interdisciplinary approaches to local and global challenges.

**Responsible:** Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards.

**Time-frame:** Follow up in 2018

6. TRAIN STUDY AND CAREER COUNSELLORS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The aim is to improve knowledge about sustainable development and the competence to guide students who wish to learn more about or specialise in sustainable development. A list of relevant courses related to sustainable development that are eligible for credit in the various degree programmes at Uppsala University will be available.

**Responsible:** Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards.

**Time-frame:** Initiate in 2016
Attaining excellence and benefiting society

The long-term goal is for Uppsala University to be a committed collaboration partner in the field of sustainability at the local, national, regional and global levels. The following strategies will be used to achieve this goal:

- Facilitate outreach activities to highlight the University’s work for a better world
- Feature and promote collaborative initiatives that lead to innovation, perseverance and findings in sustainable development
- Create opportunities for society outreach on current issues related to sustainable development
- Contribute to higher levels of education and expertise in sustainable development in society locally, nationally, regionally and globally

7. INCLUDE THE SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE IN OPERATING PLANS

Including the sustainability perspective in all parts of the University will increase the visibility of ongoing initiatives in the field of sustainability while generating support and structure for new initiatives. The initiatives in this Action Plan for Sustainable Development shall appear in the relevant policy documents for the University Administration, Disciplinary Domain Boards, Faculty Boards and departments to enable follow-up, evaluation and improvement measures.

**Responsible**: Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards, Heads of Departments, University Director, Library Director, Head of UU Innovation.

**Time-frame**: Follow up in 2018

8. COMMUNICATE THE UNIVERSITY’S OVERALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO A BETTER WORLD

The aim is to highlight and communicate good examples of cross-border educational and research initiatives and collaborative projects in sustainable development. It should be easy for students, members of staff, external partners and visitors to find information about and an overview of the University’s work for sustainable development. The goal is to provide an overall, current picture of the University’s contributions to a better world.

**Responsible**: The University Director in consultation with Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards.

**Time-frame**: Initiate in 2016
9. ENHANCE THE SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE OF THE UNIVERSITY’S WORK TO SUPPORT COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION

Within innovation work at Uppsala University, projects that contribute to achieving the overarching sustainability goals will grow in number and scope at Uppsala University. Through contact with representatives from society and the business sector, special expertise in current issues pertaining to sustainable development will be available.

**Responsible:** Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards and Head of UU Innovation.

**Time-frame:** Initiate in 2016

10. STRENGTHEN EXISTING ORGANISATION AND NETWORKS IN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Internal and external collaborations in education for sustainable development will be strengthened. Practices at existing centres of expertise, such as CSD and SWEDESD, will be ensured and developed further.

**Responsible:** Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards and the University Director.

**Time-frame:** Initiate in 2016

11. INCLUDE THE SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE IN MANAGERIAL PROGRAMMES AND INTRODUCTARY TRAINING COURSES FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

Internal training programmes for managers and new employees will include information about Uppsala University’s sustainable development activities, as well as opportunities and obligations in the area of sustainable development, including the Programme for Sustainable Development and Action Plan for Sustainable Development.

**Responsible:** The University Director, Chairs of the Disciplinary Domain Boards/Faculty Boards and Heads of Departments.

**Time-frame:** Initiate in 2016
Appendix. The University’s governing documents

Uppsala University’s governing documents are drawn up for various purposes and degrees of governance. The governing documents that are adopted by the Vice-Chancellor and/or the University Board are divided into goal statements and regulatory documents respectively. The University’s overarching goal statements are based on the Mission and core values document and consist of both policy programmes and plans of action. Policy programmes are decided by the University Board and apply until further notice. Policy programmes provide the direction and structure for systematic work done by the University within a certain area. Uppsala University has policy programmes for, for example, internationalisation, quality assessment and development, equal opportunities, and collaboration. Plans of action are based on the policy programmes and are limited in duration (frequently period of 3–5 years), decided by the Vice-Chancellor, and considerably more concrete. Their purpose is to attain specific objectives and to designate the individuals or organisational units responsible for the measures. In addition, there are other goal statements that form part of the University’s regular operational planning and which are important for the University’s long-term development. Some of the most important plans of action include the annual internal operations plans at various levels, as well as the University’s more long-term research strategies.

Regulatory documents are usually based on external provisions (laws, regulations and so on), which are decided by the Swedish Government, the Riksdag (parliament) and other regulatory authorities. The regulatory documents include, for example, appointments regulations and rules of procedure for Uppsala University, as well as regulations governing admission to study programmes at all levels within the University.

Implementation and follow-up

Subordinate goal statements are based on and instilled with the considerations and priorities laid out in the Mission and core values document.

As with regular operations, the *Action Plan for Sustainable Development* will be continuously followed up with the potential for ongoing adjustments and reprioritisation.