TRANSFORM 4EUROPE

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TRANSFORM4EUROPE:

THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY FOR KNOWLEDGE ENTREPRENEURS

Green Campus Certificate standards

Introduction

The **Green Campus Certification (GCC)** is a self-reporting framework designed for universities to measure, evaluate, and enhance their sustainability efforts. It focuses on key operational and infrastructural areas that drive impactful change across campuses. The certification is designed to:

- Provide a structured framework for advancing sustainability in **buildings, operations, energy, transportation, procurement and dining services**.
- Enable meaningful comparisons of sustainability progress over time and between universities using standardized metrics tailored to critical impact areas.
- Encourage continuous improvement through clear goals and incentives in areas like resource efficiency, renewable energy adoption, sustainable food procurement, waste management, and low-carbon transportation.
- Facilitate the sharing of practices and strategies among universities to strengthen sustainability efforts in operational categories.
- Build a diverse network of universities committed to measurable sustainability leadership.

The GCC recognizes universities at all stages of their sustainability journey. Whether an institution is taking its first steps toward incorporating sustainable practices or is a leader in energy efficiency, green building standards, and ecological management, the certification offers tailored pathways to recognition. By addressing specific impact areas, the framework ensures that universities can achieve meaningful progress and showcase their commitment to environmental stewardship.

Note: During the pilot testing phase, adjustments may be made if certain aspects do not work as intended or require modifications. Flexibility is allowed to ensure the standards remain practical and effective.

Scoring & Recognition

A university's overall performance in the Green Campus Certification is determined by its weighted scores across the five key categories: **Buildings & Grounds, Food & Dining, Transportation, Procurement & Waste and Energy & Climate.**

Each category is scored independently, and the total score is calculated based on the weighted contributions of these categories.

- Credits and standards that are not applicable to a university are excluded from scoring and do not count against the institution's final score.
- Universities can also earn **bonus points** for exemplary or innovative initiatives that demonstrate leadership in sustainability. These points are added to the overall score to recognize and encourage path-breaking contributions.

Tier Recognition

Universities are publicly recognized based on the following 5-tier system:

Tier	Score Range	Description
Tier 1	0-39	Starting on their sustainability journey.
Tier 2	40-54	Foundational sustainability practices with room for growth.
Tier 3	55-69	Meeting basic sustainability standards, with opportunities for further improvement.
Tier 4	70-84	Strong performance and measurable sustainability achievements.
Tier 5	85-100	Exceptional sustainability leadership, setting benchmarks for others.

This tiered system provides a transparent and equitable way to evaluate and recognize universities at various stages of their sustainability journey, encouraging continuous improvement and excellence. Recognition is valid for three years, although a university can re-submit an updated report for a new rating as often as once a year.

Sample Calculation

Category	Raw Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Buildings & Grounds	75 (out of 100)	20%	15.0
Food & Dining	60 (out of 100)	15%	9.0
Transportation	85 (out of 100)	20%	17.0
Procurement & Waste	55 (out of 100)	15%	8.25
Energy & Climate	90 (out of 100)	30%	27.0
Bonus points	0 (out of 100)	10%	0

Bonus points are extra points, as universities can add their own innovations and improvements.

Total Weighted Score: 15.0+9.0+17.0+8.25+27.0+0=76.25

Overall: Tier 4 “Strong performance and measurable sustainability achievements”

Institutional Characteristics

This gathers key information about a university's boundaries (defining the campus for reporting purposes), operational characteristics, and demographics. Such information provides valuable context for interpreting and understanding Green Campus Certification (GCC) data.

Several metrics described in this section are foundational and may also be required to pursue specific credits across the certification categories.

This information enables a comprehensive understanding of the unique context in which the university operates, ensuring equitable comparisons and insights.

Criteria

Measurement

Universities are expected to report the most recent data available from within the previous three years. At a minimum, institutions must report on their main campus. However, the Green Campus Certification recognizes that this may not always be feasible.

An institution may exclude specific features from its boundary, provided the exclusion is documented appropriately and applied consistently across all reporting.

The institutional boundary should remain consistent for the entirety of a certification report to ensure accurate comparisons and reporting across all categories. Universities should take care in selecting their boundaries to allow consistent reporting. Exceptions may be granted in cases of unforeseen data limitations that would otherwise prevent completion of a credit.

Documentation

The following information must be provided. Floor area should be reported in square meters, and percentage figures should be provided as a range from 0 to 100.

1. **Institution Type**:
    - Associate/Short-cycle
    - Baccalaureate
    - Doctoral/Research
    - Master's

- Other

2. **Institutional Control**:
   - Public
   - Private for-profit
   - Private nonprofit
3. **Institutional Boundary Narrative**:
   Provide a detailed description of the boundary used to complete the report. This should include:
   - Prominent features included or excluded.
   - Any data limitations that may influence the university's sustainability performance.
   - If multiple campuses are included, describe included and excluded features for each campus individually.
4. **Features Within Institutional Boundary**:
   Indicate whether the following are included:
   - Agricultural experiment station larger than 2 hectares
   - Agricultural school
   - Farm larger than 2 hectares
   - Hospital
   - Medical school
   - Museum
   - Satellite campus(es)
   - Veterinary school
5. **Locale (Required)**:
   Institutions with multiple settings should report the type that best represents their overall context, especially regarding transportation infrastructure:
   - Large city
   - Urban fringe of a large city
   - Mid-size city
   - Urban fringe of a mid-size city
   - Large town
   - Small town
   - Rural

6. **Climate Zone (Required):**

   Institutions with multiple settings should report the zone that best represents their context concerning heating and cooling needs:

   - 1 - Tropical (Hot and humid year-round, minimal temperature variation)
   - 2 - Arid/Desert (Extremely hot days, cool nights, low precipitation)
   - 3 - Mediterranean (Hot, dry summers; mild, wet winters)
   - 4 - Temperate (Moderate seasons with distinct summers and winters)
   - 5 - Continental (Cold winters, warm summers, more temperature variation)
   - 6 - Subarctic (Long, cold winters; short, mild summers)
   - 7 - Arctic/Polar (Very cold year-round, minimal direct sunlight in winter)

7. **Gross Floor Area of Building Space**:
   Report total building space in square meters, excluding unoccupied buildings and parking structures. To convert square feet to square meters, multiply by 0.09290304.
8. **Full-Time Equivalent Employees**:
   Include all employees, both academic and non-academic staff.
9. **Full-Time Equivalent Student Enrollment**:
   Include all students, both undergraduate and graduate.
10. **Percentage of Students Living in Campus Housing**:
    Report the estimated percentage of students living in university-owned, operated, or affiliated housing within the institutional boundary.
11. **Percentage of Students Enrolled Exclusively in Distance Education**:
    Report the percentage of students enrolled entirely in distance education programs.

Key Definitions for Reporting

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

A unit used to measure the total number of employed persons or enrolled students in a standardized way, accounting for variations in work or study hours. Institutions should report FTE figures based on their best estimates, annualized as feasible over the academic year, and calculated in accordance with relevant national, regional, or international standards. For example, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) calculates FTE staff by adding the number of full-time staff and one-third of the total number of part-time staff.

Gross Floor Area of Building Space

The total amount of building space included within the institutional boundary. Any recognized standard definition for measuring building space may be used (e.g., ASHRAE, ANSI/BOMA, or IECC), as long as it is applied consistently. Unless otherwise specified:

- **Exclusions:** Unoccupied buildings and parking structures.
- **Leased Spaces:**
    - Buildings fully leased by the institution (where the institution is the sole tenant) should be included.
    - Multi-tenant buildings may be excluded unless the institution occupies the entire building.
    - If included, the institution must count only the square footage it occupies within multi-tenant buildings and apply this policy consistently across all leased spaces.

Institutional Boundary

The institutional boundary encompasses all buildings, facilities, schools, and locations included in the Green Campus Certification report. Institutions are encouraged to select a boundary that allows consistent and accurate reporting across all categories and credits.

Institution Type

Each institution is classified into one of five types based on the level of educational programs offered and the number and type of degrees awarded. Institutions should select the type that best reflects their academic context:

Associate/Short-cycle (ISCED 5): Institutions offering degrees, certificates, or diplomas below the baccalaureate level, such as community colleges or technical schools.

Baccalaureate (ISCED 6): Institutions where baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10% of undergraduate degrees and fewer than 50 master's or 20 doctoral degrees are awarded annually.

Master's (ISCED 7): Institutions awarding at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees annually.

Doctoral/Research (ISCED 8): Institutions awarding at least 20 research doctoral degrees or 30 professional doctoral degrees annually across at least two programs.

Other (ISCED 2-4 and Other Entities): Secondary or non-tertiary institutions, including preparatory schools or adult education programs. This category also includes comprehensive universities that span multiple ISCED levels (5-8), offering associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs.

Locale

The locale refers to the setting of an institution's main campus. For institutions with multiple locations, the locale that most accurately represents the institution's primary setting should be reported.

- **Large City**: Central city of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) or consolidated MSA with a population ≥250,000.
- **Mid-size City**: Central city of an MSA with a population <250,000.
- **Urban Fringe of a Large City**: Suburban area within the MSA of a large city.
- **Urban Fringe of a Mid-size City**: Suburban area within the MSA of a mid-size city.
- **Large Town**: Incorporated or census-designated place with a population ≥25,000 located outside an MSA.
- **Small Town**: Incorporated or census-designated place with a population between 2,500 and 25,000 located outside an MSA.
- **Rural**: Areas designated as rural by a national census bureau or equivalent.

Guidance for Reporting

- **Consistency:** Institutions must apply consistent standards across all reporting fields to ensure accurate comparisons.
- **Documentation:** Clearly outline any exclusions or special considerations in the institutional boundary, leased spaces, or building classifications.
- **Standard References:** Use recognized national or international standards (e.g., IPEDS, ASHRAE) to ensure credibility and consistency

Certificate Standards

1. Buildings & Grounds

BG 1: Building Design and Construction

- **BG 1.1 Percentage of new floor area designed and constructed to green building standards**
    - Total floor area of newly constructed or renovated building space
    - Floor area of new building or renovated space third party certified to a comprehensive green building standard
    - Floor area of new building or renovated space third party certified to a less comprehensive green building standard
    - Floor area of new building or renovated space built to green building standards
    - List and description of building and renovation projects completed within the previous five years that improved sustainability to/or above the current building standards

BG 2: Building Operations and Maintenance

- **BG 2.1 Percentage of existing buildings managed for sustainability performance**
    - Gross floor area of existing building space
    - Floor area of existing buildings managed under a green cleaning program
    - Floor area of existing buildings individually assessed for energy performance

- Floor area of existing buildings individually assessed for IEQ performance
- Floor area of existing buildings managed or individually assessed for water performance
- Floor area of existing buildings third party certified to a green building standard (ISO 15392:2019)

BG 3: Water Use

- **BG 3.1 Potable water use per person**
  - Performance year for water use
  - Potable water from off-site sources
  - Reclaimed water from off-site sources
  - Reclaimed water from on-site sources (including desalinated water)
  - Potable water from on-site sources
  - Full-time equivalent student enrollment
  - Full-time equivalent of employees
- **BG 3.2 Potable water use per square meter**
  - Gross floor area of building space
- **BG 3.3 Systems for water recovery and return**
  - Does the institution harvest rainwater on-site for storage and use?
  - Does the institution recover water on-site for reuse?
  - Does the institution collect and return water to surface water or groundwater through on-site green infrastructure?
- **BG 3.4 Ratio of water recovered/returned to water withdrawal**
  - Does the institution have methodologies in place to estimate or model the annual volume of water recovered and/or returned on-site?

BG 4: Ecologically Managed Grounds

- **BG 4.1 Organic landscaping/grounds services**
  - Do the institution's landscaping/grounds services employ a written Integrated Pest Management (IPM) protocol that follows a four-tiered approach?
  - Do the institution's landscaping/grounds services publish, on at least an annual basis, an inventory of the synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides used on campus grounds?
  -

- Do the institution's landscaping/grounds services manage one or more sites or pilot projects without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, or herbicides?
- Have the institution's landscaping/grounds services eliminated their use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides?

2. Food & Dining

FD 1: Dining Service Procurement

- **FD 1.1 Percentage of food and beverage spending that meets sustainability criteria**
  - What percentage of the university's total food and beverage spending, whether for cafeteria operations, catering services, or contracted dining, was allocated to sustainably or ethically produced products during the reference year?
  - What percentage of the total food and beverage spending, whether for cafeteria operations or catering services, was allocated to plant-based food and beverage options during the reference year?
  - Does the university maintain an inventory of qualifying food and beverage purchases for its dining services or catered events, including sustainably or ethically produced products and plant-based options?
  - Does the university have sufficient data on its food and beverage spending, whether for cafeteria operations, catering, or contracted services, to report on sustainability indicators?
- **FD 2.1 Food recovery program**
  - Does the university, through its cafeteria or catering services, donate surplus food to a food redistribution program on a regular basis (at least monthly) when food services are operational or events occur?
  - Do the university's food services, whether cafeteria operations or catering providers, divert pre-consumer food waste from disposal and repurpose it for animal feed, composting, or biofuel production?
  - Do the university's food services, whether cafeteria or catering, have systems in place to divert post-consumer food waste for processing into animal feed, compost, or biofuel?

- Does the university, through its cafeteria or catering services, track and evaluate its efforts in managing food and organic waste at least once a year to identify and implement improvements?

3. Transportation

T 1: Vehicle Fleet

- **T 1.1 Percentage of fleet vehicles that are electric vehicles**
  - Total number of cars, vans, trucks, and buses in the institution's fleet
  - Number of cars, vans, trucks, and buses in the institution's fleet that are zero emission vehicles (ZEVs)
  - Number of cars, vans, trucks, and buses in the institution's fleet that are plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs)

T 2: Commute Modal Split

- **T 2.1 Percentage of students and employees using more sustainable commuting options**
  - Provide the number of full-time equivalent students during the reference year to contextualize commuting data
  - Provide the number of full-time equivalent employees during the reference year to contextualize commuting data
  - Has the university conducted surveys, studies, or assessments to collect information on how students commute to campus or participate in distance learning?
  - Has the university conducted surveys, studies, or assessments to collect information on how employees commute to campus or work remotely?
  - What percentage of students and employees commute using sustainable methods such as walking, cycling, public transportation, carpooling, car-sharing, or remote work?
  - Has the university implemented or supported initiatives to encourage carpooling or car-sharing as part of its sustainable commuting strategy?
  - Does the university have programs or incentives to encourage sustainable commuting options (e.g., bike-sharing programs, discounted public transit passes)?

T 3: Air Travel

- **T 3.1 Air travel reduction and mitigation**
    - Does the institution provide incentives designed to encourage employees to reduce their air travel?
    - Has the institution adopted restrictive measures designed to reduce the GHG emissions associated with its directly financed air travel?
    - Does the institution have a program designed to mitigate the GHG emissions associated with its directly financed air travel?

4. Procurement & Waste

PW 1: Sustainable Procurement System

- **PW 1.1 Supplier code of conduct**
    - Does the institution have a published code of conduct to guide suppliers on the institution's social and environmental expectations for them?
- **PW 1.2 Percentage of bid solicitations that identify sustainability considerations**
    - Does the institution have sufficient data on its bid solicitations to pursue this indicator?
- **PW 1.3 Average weight given to sustainability considerations in bid appraisal**
    - Average weight assigned to product sustainability specifications in the institution's bid appraisal process
    - Average weight assigned to supplier sustainability considerations in the institution's bid appraisal process
    - Narrative outlining how the average weights given to sustainability considerations were determined

PW 2: Purchased Goods

- **PW 2.1 Percentage of cleaning products spending that meets sustainability criteria**
    - Specify the currency used (e.g., EUR)
    - Does the institution have sufficient data on its cleaning product spending to pursue this indicator?
- **PW 2.2 Percentage of electronics spending meets sustainability criteria**

    - Does the institution have sufficient data on its electronics spending to pursue this indicator?
- **PW 2.3 Percentage of furniture spending that meets sustainability criteria**
    - Does the institution have sufficient data on its furniture spending to pursue this indicator?
- **PW 2.4 Percentage of office paper spending that meets sustainability criteria**
    - Does the institution have sufficient data on its office paper spending to pursue this indicator?

PW 3: Materials Management

- **PW 3.1 Surplus and reuse programs**
    - Does the institution have or participate in a composting program that accepts compostable alternatives to single-use disposable plastic?
    - Does the institution have or participate in a reusable container program designed to reduce the use of single-use disposable plastic?
    - Has the institution eliminated the on-site use of at least one form of single-use disposable plastic?
    - Has the institution eliminated the on-site sales and distribution of all single-use disposable plastic food containers, utensils, and beverage cups?
- **PW 3.2 Electronic waste management**
    - Does the institution have or participate in a program designed to collect electronic waste (e-waste) from employees for recycling and/or preparation for reuse?
    - Does the institution have or participate in a program designed to collect e-waste from students for recycling and/or preparation for reuse?
    - Does the institution use an e-waste recycler that is certified to a qualifying standard?
- **PW 3.3 Hazardous waste management and disclosure**
    - Does the institution have a hazardous waste management program or protocol that includes measures to minimize or reduce the use of hazardous materials?
    - Does the institution publish information about the specific types of hazardous waste it generates and how they are disposed of, recycled, and/or prepared for reuse?

PW 4: Waste Generation and Recovery

- **PW 4.1 Non-hazardous waste generated per person**
  - Performance year for non-hazardous waste
  - Non-hazardous waste recycled
  - Non-hazardous waste composted
  - Non-hazardous waste prepared for reuse
  - Non-hazardous waste disposed of to a landfill or incinerator
- **PW 4.2 Non-hazardous waste generated per square meter**
  - Gross floor area of building space
- **PW 4.3 Percentage of construction and demolition waste diverted from disposal**
  - Has the institution ensured that waste from construction, renovation, and demolition projects conducted within the past three years is handled properly (e.g., reused, recycled, or diverted from landfill)?

5. Energy & Climate

EC 1: Energy Use

- **EC 1.1 Energy consumption per square meter**
  - Gross floor area of building space
  - Electricity generated by on-site renewable systems
  - Electricity from off-site sources
  - Natural gas
  - Propane/LPG
  - Heating oil
  - Coal
  - Bioenergy products
  - Other stationary fuels
  - Steam from off-site sources
  - Hot water from off-site sources
  - Chilled water from off-site sources
- **EC 1.2 Percentage of energy from renewable sources**
  - Energy attribute certificates (EACs) sold or not owned by the institution
  - Electricity from certified off-site renewable sources
  - Electricity from uncertified off-site renewable sources

- Certified unbundled EACs
- Certified bioenergy products
- Uncertified biomethane from organic waste or landfill gas
- Heating and cooling from certified off-site renewable sources
- Heating and cooling from uncertified off-site renewable sources

EC 2: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **EC 2.1 Greenhouse gas emissions inventory and disclosure**
  - Has the institution completed an inventory within the previous three years to quantify its scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions from business travel?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions from commuting?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions from purchased goods and services?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions from fuel- and energy-related activities not included in scope 1 or scope 2?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions from upstream transportation and distribution?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions from waste generated in operations?
  - Within the previous three years, to what extent has the institution quantified its scope 3 GHG emissions in all other applicable categories identified in the GHG Protocol Scope 3 Standard?
- **EC 2.2 Adjusted net greenhouse gas emissions**
  - Does the institution have baseline scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions data?

Conclusion

This document provides a thorough and comprehensive framework for evaluating and improving the sustainability of T4EU universities in all important operating areas. It supports institutions at all stages of their sustainability journey, offering structured goals, incentives, and a tiered recognition system based on performance in five areas: buildings and grounds, food and dining, transportation, procurement and waste, energy and climate.

It includes a weighted scoring model that allows institutions to achieve recognition across five tiers, specific metrics that address resource efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable food procurement, waste management, and low-carbon transportation. Additionally, it proposes a flexible and inclusive framework allowing universities to modify limits and exclude irrelevant topics, and at the same time it is promoting continuous improvements with regular reporting and opportunities to earn bonus points.

Furthermore, the outline is given, how the consortium will implement a Green Campus Handbook, the Alliance's ecological footprint calculator and T4EU Code of Conduct for joint activities and events. These three items will assist the collaborating universities to progress on their path to sustainability and Green Campus Strategy implementation.

Moreover, the tools and means for the implementation of the Strategy are also discussed.