

Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan



of the
University
of Coimbra
2023-2027

Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan



UNIVERSIDADE D
COIMBRA

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of Coimbra
2023-2027**

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Message from the Rector



Almícar Falcão

Rector of the University of Coimbra

Higher education has an intrinsic responsibility in shaping future generations. There is no other institution where intergenerational dialogue is more intense. And this in itself is a fundamental tool for instilling humanistic values which, in the case of the University of Coimbra, correspond to a centuries-old practice.

Sustainability (in all its dimensions) and Social Responsibility are part of the DNA of the University of Coimbra. This legacy has been passed down from generation to generation over time and has set a trend.

With the advent of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have come to serve as tangible indicators. The University of Coimbra, in anticipation, had already incorporated the SDGs into its Strategic and Action Plan since 2019. It is no coincidence that we are the national institution that occupies the top positions in international rankings that focus on Sustainability and Social Responsibility, and it is worth noting that we have been the national leader in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for six consecutive years. In addition to this leadership, we also lead the countries of southern Europe, consistently ranking in the Top 100 worldwide.

It is indisputable that we are doing quite well, but we are neither satisfied nor complacent. We continue to strive to do more and better for people and the planet. And we know that we can only achieve this if we act collectively. For this very reason, the existence of a Strategic and Action Plan focused on Sustainability and Social Responsibility at the University of Coimbra makes perfect sense. We are highlighting it because we want it to stand out. It is a concrete commitment that aims to show ambition and demonstrate our desire to contribute to a better world.

Climate change has not disappeared just because other issues have taken over the media spotlight. The pandemic and the latest armed conflicts proliferating around the world have only diverted attention, but in fact they have only exacerbated what was already difficult to achieve from an environmental preservation point of view.

At the University of Coimbra, we stand together when it comes to creating the conditions for our young students to have the future they deserve: peace, social responsibility, and sustainability.

Message from the Vice-Rector for Planning, Sustainability and Quality



Patrícia Pereira da Silva

Vice-Rector for Planning, Sustainability and Quality

The University of Coimbra (UC) wholeheartedly embraces the challenge of innovating and designing solutions that respond to present needs and prepare for the future. It is in this context that we present UC's first Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan, which constitutes an institutional milestone for the University. Supported by the experience gained during previous strategic cycles, in which sustainability and social responsibility were already central themes, this Plan now acquires the necessary autonomy to reinforce its visibility and impact, while remaining fully aligned with the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

This document reflects an ambitious vision: to achieve carbon neutrality, deepen our commitment to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, and promote a more just, inclusive, and solidary academic community. By integrating sustainability into all aspects of the university's mission: teaching, research, governance, culture and connection to society; we reaffirm the role of higher education as an engine of change and social transformation. We are aware that the challenges of sustainability are,

by nature, global and intergenerational. Therefore, this Plan also reflects the international dimension of this mission, aligning itself with the global efforts enshrined in the UN's 2030 Agenda.

The success of this Plan will depend on the active involvement of the entire academic community: students, faculty, researchers and technical staff. Every contribution will be essential in enabling us to make the transition to a more responsible, innovative and sustainable University, capable of inspiring and generating a positive impact beyond its walls.

With this Plan, UC clearly and structurally commits to building a future in which sustainability and social responsibility are at the heart of our decisions and practices, promoting equal opportunities and creating conditions for everyone to participate in this collective journey. We therefore reiterate our intergenerational commitment: to build a legacy of sustainability and social responsibility, ensuring that the positive impact of our actions will endure for generations to come.

Introduction

The University of Coimbra (UC) is committed to the sustainable management of its activities and resources and to social responsibility in its actions, enabling it to respond to present needs without compromising the future, raising awareness and civic action, and assessing impacts. The University of Coimbra aims to be the first Portuguese higher education institution to achieve carbon neutrality. To this end, it adopts environmental protection and climate change mitigation measures that promote the conditions for low-carbon management, based on principles of resource efficiency, in line with the premises of the Paris Agreement and national and international strategies. In the social dimension, UC is dedicated to building a more just, inclusive and pluralistic university community, promoting respect for diversity, equal opportunities and social participation, with the Plan for Equality, Equity and Diversity (PIED) being an example of the institutional commitment in this area.

The UC adopts a whole-school approach in its contribution to sustainable development, recognising its fundamental role through the essential functions of the university activity: learning and teaching, research, organisational governance, culture and operations, and external leadership. It is committed to building an environmentally responsible campus and, to this end, will seek to raise awareness and inform the academic community about the impact of their choices, promote the adoption of sustainable practices in their daily lives, encourage sustainable change, and stimulate the participation and involvement of all in responding to the challenges of our time. Awareness of sustainable behaviour is key to the future of our planet and human society. Climate change, biodiversity loss, natural resource scarcity and pollution are global challenges that require a profound change in the way we live and interact with the environment. Given the complexity of the challenges facing the world today, UC will

continue to teach and create courses focused on sustainability and social responsibility, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to make informed and responsible decisions in favour of sustainable development, investing in the development of interdisciplinary research and innovation projects that seek solutions to global challenges, and launching initiatives and programmes, in connection with society, to encourage reflection and action by all so that, together, we can face the challenges of the 21st century.

It should also be noted that, since its creation, UC has been a member of ORSIES - Observatory of Social Responsibility and Higher Education Institutions, having been involved in the co-creation of a shared vision of the 'Green Paper on Social Responsibility and Higher Education Institutions'. It is also a member of the United Nations Global Compact Portugal, unreservedly committing to the network's 10 guiding principles.

The adoption of the guidelines of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a premise of the latest Strategic Plan and, in this sense, UC is also part of the Sustainable Campus Network, where 28 public higher education institutions (HEIs) have signed the Sustainable Campus Letter of Intent, which already constitutes an institutional commitment to the principles and practice of sustainable development in all its relevant aspects - environmental, social and economic - and more recently, as a founding member, the Sustainability Network of Higher Education Institutions in Portuguese-speaking Countries and Regions, comprising 34 HEIs from Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Macau, Mozambique, Portugal and East Timor.

The commitment to the future is evident at UC through the set of sustainability and social responsibility networks it is part of, assuming a prominent

position in international rankings. Participation in networks and the creation of partnerships are crucial for the advancement of knowledge and action in the area of sustainability. Based on this vision of sharing and transmitting best practices, UC will seek to continue on the path it has been following to create and promote the synergies necessary to strengthen its commitment to sustainable development and social responsibility. We must collectively reflect on the challenges and solutions in sustainability, as interaction between different institutions with different areas of expertise stimulates the deve-

lopment of innovative and effective solutions to sustainability challenges. Collaboration in networks and partnerships allows for the implementation of larger-scale and higher-impact projects, amplifying social change in the area of sustainability.

MISSION

The University of Coimbra is an institution for creation, critical analysis, transmission and dissemination of culture, science and technology which, by means of research, teaching and community services provision, contributes to the economic and social development, the environmental protection, the promotion of social justice and informed and responsible citizenship, and the consolidation of knowledge-based sovereignty.

The University has a duty to contribute to: *Statutes of the University of Coimbra [Article 2]*



The public understanding of humanities, arts, science and technology, by promoting and organising actions to support the dissemination of the humanistic, artistic, scientific and technological culture, and providing the necessary resources for these purposes.



The development of activities related to society, namely the dissemination and transfer of knowledge, as well as the economic valorisation of scientific knowledge.



The promotion of the actual mobility of professors and researchers, students and graduates, at both the national and international levels, namely in the European Higher Education Area and in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries.

VALUES



Strategic Reference Framework for Sustainability and Social Responsibility



VISION

To be internationally recognised as a research university in which the production of high-quality knowledge influences the educational process and increases the sharing of knowledge with society, and responds to which and everyone's problems and actively contributes to sustainable development.

In order to achieve the established vision, the strategic approach for 2023-2027 involves four pillars of the mission – Research & Innovation, Teaching, Societal Challenges, and Internationalisation –, which are directly related to the aims of the University of Coimbra, and five mission axes – People, Quality, Facilities, Funding, and Communication –, which translate into the means necessary to achieve those ends. Furthermore, establishing UC as a centre of excellence requires the sustainable management of its activities and resources, as well as social responsibility in its actions. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that sustainability and social responsibility embody attitudes, behaviours, and actions that underpin all UC activities, are cross-cutting, and should always be present across all its areas of operation, the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan maintains the autonomy of two dimensions which, due to their relevance and their continuous emergence in the current context, determine a firm commitment to sustainable development and human rights: Environment and Climate Action, and Citizenship, Equality, and Inclusiveness.

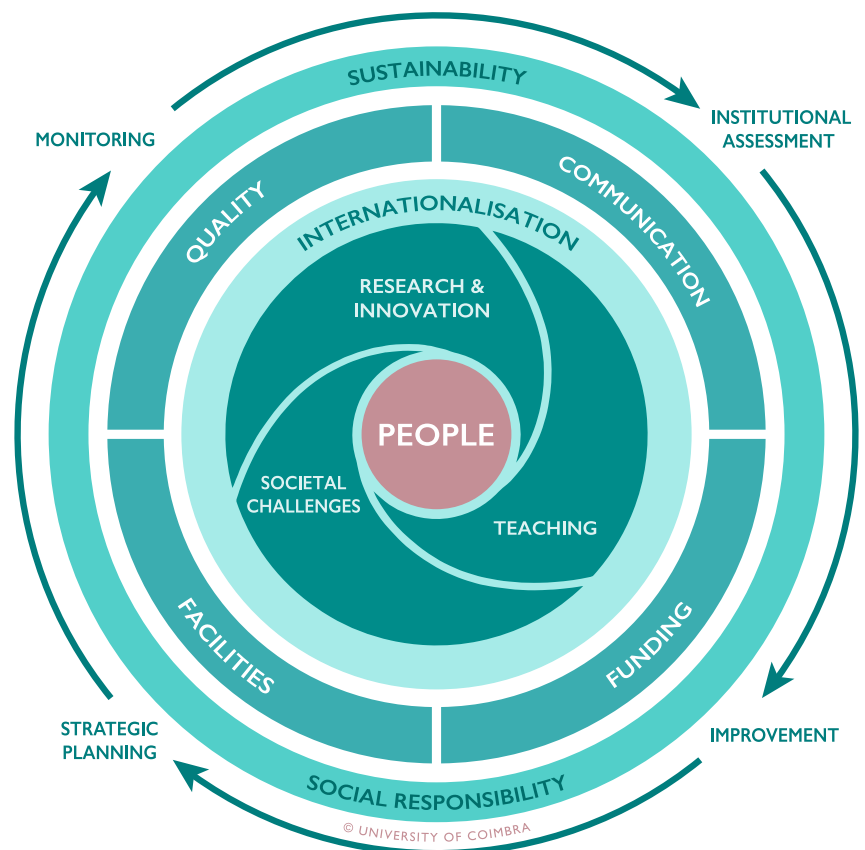


Figure 1
UC's strategic reference
framework.

This is a dynamic model: if Research & Innovation progresses, the other two core pillars –Teaching and Societal Challenges – will move in the same direction and at the same pace. Similarly, any development in the Teaching and Societal Challenges pillar will drive the other two pillars forward. Additionally, the ambition to become a research university will contribute to strengthening a global University of Coimbra, which is why internationalisation is also a priority. In order to propel UC towards greater global recognition, Internationalisation is a mission pillar that, although not central per se, frames and contributes to the Research and Innovation, Teaching, and Societal Challenges pillars, with a cross-cutting presence across all areas of activity at the University.

No matter how well-defined a strategy may be, it is destined for failure if its operationalisation is

not properly implemented. Similarly, no matter how well-designed the strategy may be, it will only succeed if it is implemented with people and for people. People are, therefore, the most important asset of any organisation and the most vital element of the adopted strategy. This is why they will occupy a central role in the model to be implemented, serving as the driving force behind the movement of the mission pillars and, consequently, the functioning of the University.

Illustrating the dynamism and interconnection between sustainable development and the other areas of activity of the University of Coimbra, it is possible to establish an association between the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the aforementioned Strategic Reference Framework, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2
Mapping the Sustainable Development Goals in the Strategic Reference Framework - Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Just as it has developed a strategic reference framework specific to its reality, the University of Coimbra presents its reference framework for sustainability, which integrates the 5Ps – corresponding

to the three usual dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and social), plus Peace and Partnerships - and the way in which they are interconnected. It is a dynamic model, but in permanent balance, in which progress in one of the P's supports progress in the others. Similarly, to what happens in the strategic reference framework, by moving, for example, the Planet pillar, the UC will contribute so that the other P move in the same direction and at the same speed. Likewise, any development in one of the other P's will advance the others.



Figure 3
Strategic Sustainability Framework
of the University of Coimbra

The main difference between this UC model and the usual ones is that it places a P in the spotlight - People. As in the Strategic Plan, the UC's commitment to sustainable development will only be successful if it is implemented with people and for people. People are therefore the most important component, taking a prominent place in the model, serving as the central axis for the movement of all the other Ps.

By highlighting the 5P's and how the 17 SDGs constitute an interdependent structure and not a set of isolated objectives, it is important to represent this association



Figure 4
SDGs Association to the 5Ps

Similarly to the UC Strategic Plan for the previous four-year period, goals were identified for the Environment and Climate Action and Citizenship, Equity, and Inclusiveness. In order to achieve the proposed goals, it is important to align with the actions set out in each Action Plan. Thus, the Action Plans of the organisational units and other units and services, as well as the Quality Plan, include actions dedicated to these two areas. The Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan represents an improvement over previous strategic planning cycles because it adds concrete actions to be developed in support of the goals defined for the Environment and Climate Action and Citizenship, Equity, and Inclusiveness.

Aim



The UC's commitment to sustainable development has been reinforced over time, which has naturally had an impact on the institution's management mechanisms to ensure the integration of a holistic perspective of sustainable development, as recommended in the whole-school approach. In line with this, the University of Coimbra presents a new milestone in this area for its strategy for the 2023-2027 four-year period: the University of Coimbra Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan (SSRPUC).

Through an integrative approach guided by the institutional mission, vision and strategic guidelines, the SSRPUC aims to strengthen actions dedicated to promoting sustainable development, in particular, within the responsibility of the UC Rectorate and Administration, ensuring the visibility and clarity of institutional priorities for action in this area to stakeholders. Reinforcing the institutional commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda, it applies the motto underlying the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan to the context of sustainable deve-

lopment, *Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communis*: faster, higher, stronger - together!

Aiming to intervene in various areas of sustainable development, this plan contributes to promoting an organisational culture of sustainability and social responsibility with a cross-cutting application that enhances the involvement of different services in pursuit of a common and structured vision. It thus strengthens the integration of these concerns into the essential functions of university activity - learning and teaching, research, organisational governance, culture and operations, and external leadership - aligning them with national and international best practices and targets. The SSRPUC also aims to promote transparency regarding the steps that are being and will be taken towards institutional sustainability, without forgetting their impact on society, promoting the achievement of institutional goals by supporting the creation of the necessary conditions for the various services involved to carry out progressively more sustainable work.

Process



The development of the SSRPUC naturally follows on from the creation of the Strategic Plan, a document in which the entire process is described in greater detail. However, this chapter will consider in greater detail the inputs relevant to the strategic definition in the area of sustainability and social responsibility and the subsequent preparation of this SSRPUC.

As part of the strategic planning process, a **context analysis** was carried out. This involved **engaging with and addressing the expectations and needs of different stakeholders** through a consultation process, resulting in 133 ideas regarding sustainable development being gathered from the face-to-face sessions.

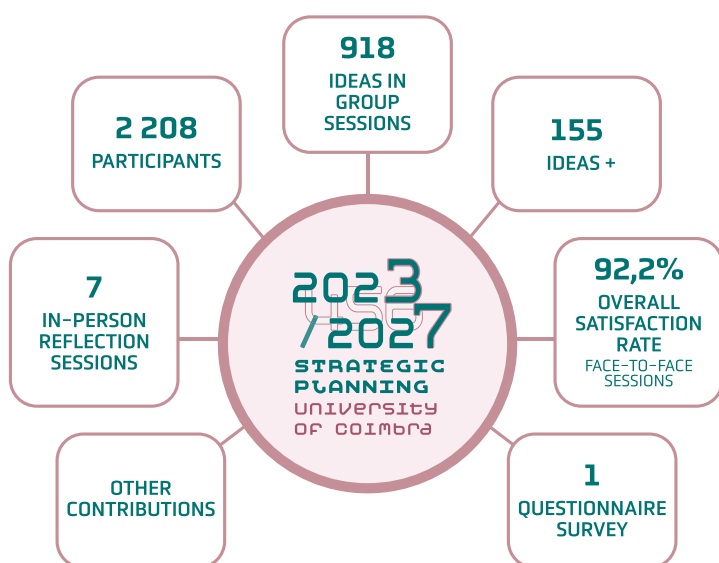


Figure 5
Main results of the consultation process for the 2023-2027 strategic planning.

Identifying the stakeholders – people, groups, entities, and organisations that affect and/or can be affected by the UC, its missions, activities, and projects – analysing their needs and expectations, and assessing their positioning, enables the organisation, monitoring, and optimization of the interactions involved. Ongoing monitoring of the positioning of each stakeholder in relation to the UC provides support and objectivity for decision-making and strategic choices. Aware of the strategic nature of stakeholder management and the importance of implementing the respective model for a coherent assessment of organisational per-

formance, stakeholder mapping is reviewed annually as part of the UC's Management System. The model considers the assessment of the position of each stakeholder – considering their ability to regulate and/or influence the activities to be carried out by the UC (power) and their level of interest in the results and relevance or benefits that the UC's activities have for each of them (interest). Thus, by analysing the model's representation, we can quickly assess the positioning of each stakeholder in terms of how the UC manages and meets their expectations, and therefore their level of involvement and proximity.



Figure 6
UC's stakeholders



In addition to the above, in 2024, on National Sustainability Day, established on 25 September by Council of Ministers Resolution No. 56/2023 of 9 June, the University of Coimbra released the results of the questionnaire ‘The University of Coimbra and Sustainable Development’, which received 1,141 valid responses. This was a proposal by the Energy for Sustainability Initiative, implemented in close collaboration with the Office for Sustainable Development, and its main objective was to gather the opinions and perceptions of the university community on the policies, measures and actions of the University of Coimbra in the field of sustainable development. The consultation focused on six areas: policies and conditions in the field of sustainable development; professional context: equality, equity, health and well-being; teaching and research; water, energy, waste and consumption; mobility; and partnerships. For each dimension, a general characterisation of the data obtained was made, and the results were also broken down by each body of the community (students, technical staff,

researchers and teaching staff). The responses were also analysed to define strategic guidelines in the field of sustainable development.

The context analysis in relation to the strategic planning also involves an in-depth **diagnosis** – both self-assessment and external evaluation – to understand the strengths and weaknesses of its surroundings to harness favourable circumstances and opportunities, and anticipate risks and threats that may arise. Aimed at improving the ability to anticipate and support the preparation for new challenges, **prospective analysis** enables creative and structured reflection on how to organise the future, contributing to the improvement of decision-making processes in the present and at the same time acting as a catalyst for action towards a desired future, thus being a complement to strategy.

Thus, efforts were made to promote alignment with the guidelines of the Paris Agreement and with national strategies such as the Roadmap for Carbon

Neutrality 2050 (RNC 2050), the National Energy and Climate Plan 2030 (PNEC 2030), the Resource Efficiency and Decarbonisation Programme in Public Administration (ECO.AP 2030), the National Strategy for Green Public Procurement 2030 (ECO360), the National Waste Management Plan 2030 (PNGR 2030), the National Strategy for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (ENCNB 2030), the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030, “Portugal + Equal” (ENIND), the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021-2025, “Portugal against racism” (PNCRD 2021-2025) and the National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2021-2025 (ENIPD 2021-2025), the European Sustainability Competence Framework, among other initiatives. The context analysis also focused on the extent to which UC can contribute to each of these and the risks and opportunities they represent, making it possible to identify when positive impacts can gain scale and when negative impacts can be reduced or avoided.

It is important to mention the maturation process that has taken place in the institution, with regard to planning, monitoring and evaluation over the last few years, allowing for the full integration of the PDCA cycle (Plan - Do - Check - Act) into the management cycle of the University of Coimbra. Thus, the identification of the main key areas in which the UC has economic and social impacts and environmental impacts was supported by a better understanding of the institutional context, through detailed assessment mechanisms in several internal documents, namely in the monitoring of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, the Sustainability Reports and the evolution of the respective indicators over the years, as well as the external evaluation, resulting from national legislation, and within the scope of renowned international rankings in the area of sustainable development. Benchmarking analysis of the sector was also used.

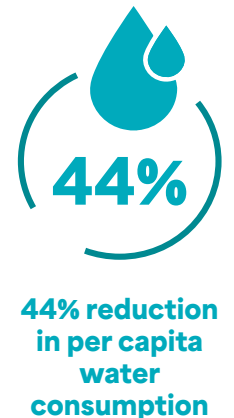
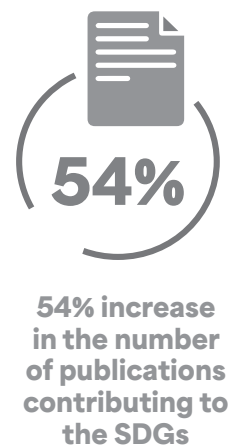
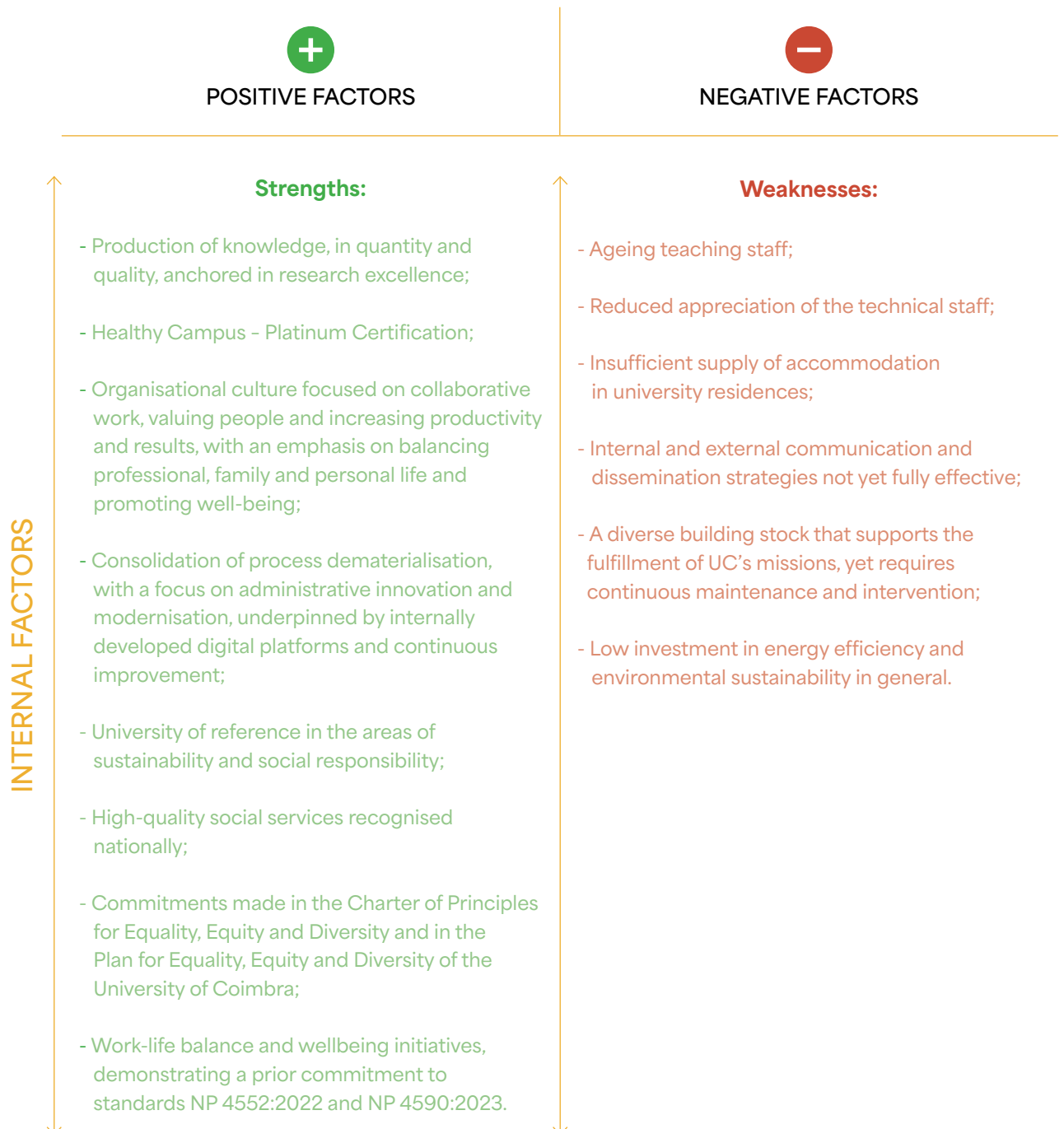


Figure 7
2019-2022 overview

In the context of this SSRPUC, it is important to highlight some of the results of the SWOT analysis:



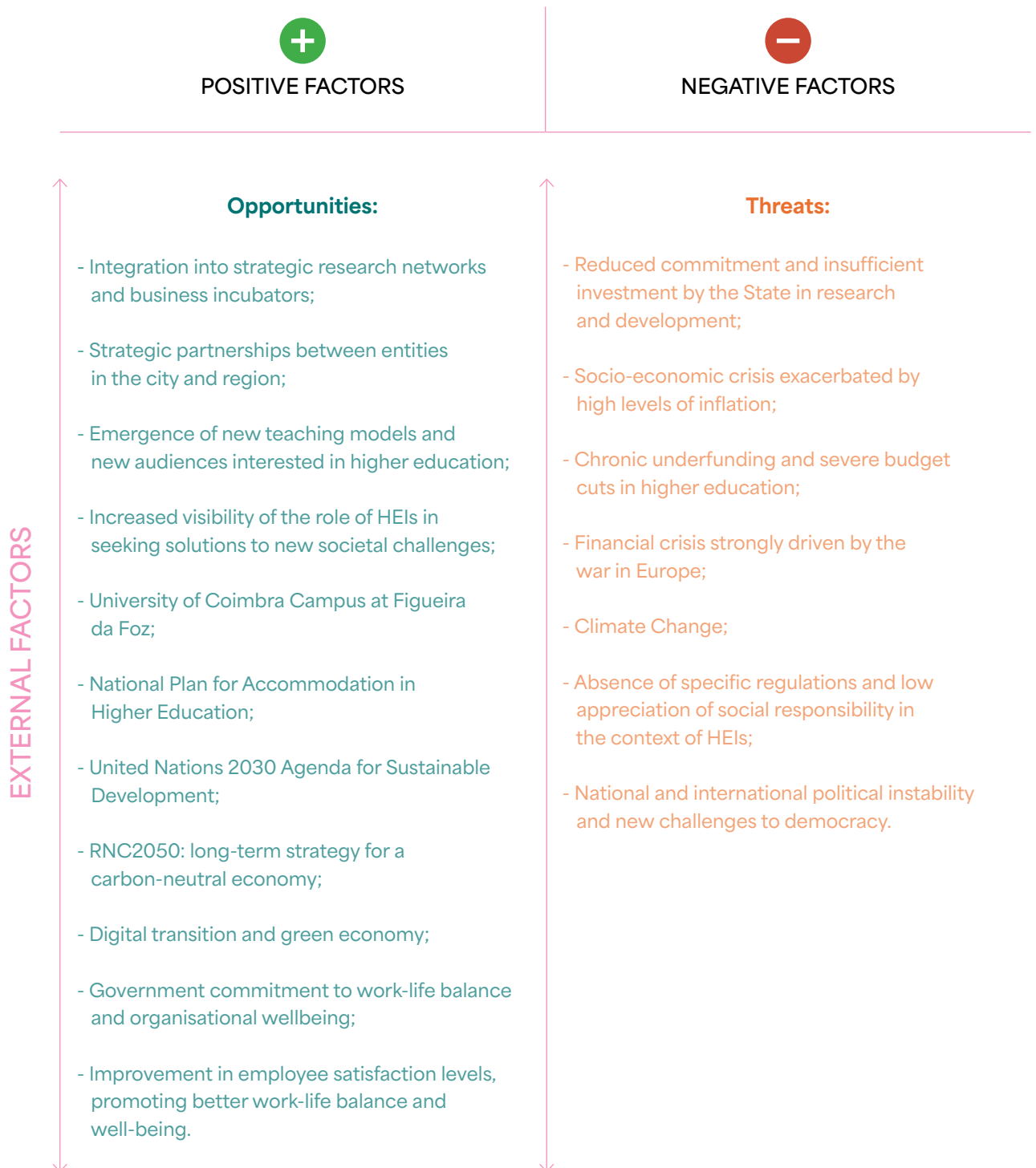
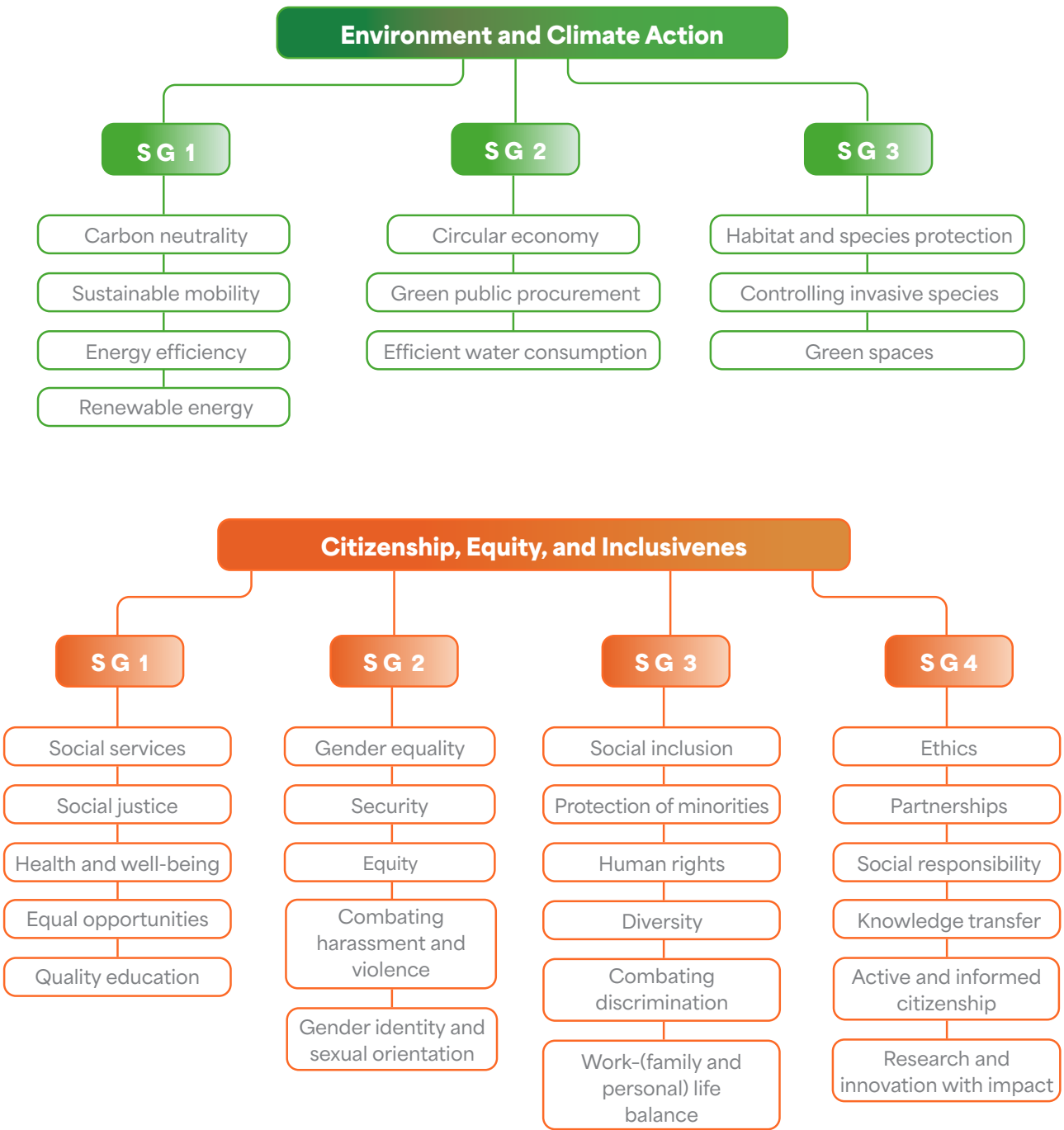


Figure 8
SWOT analysis

All these considerations allowed the identification of the strategic orientation and the mapping of the main material topics that reflect the impacts framed within the areas of Environment and Climate Action and Citizenship, Equity, and Inclusiveness, which facilitated the identification of institutional goals, as well as priority actions to achieve them. The actions adopted integrate a short and medium-term impact perspective, considering the effects that

can be monitored annually and over the four-year period, but also in the long term, in creating the necessary conditions for the continued promotion of institutional sustainability. These actions are the responsibility of members of the Rector's Team and depend on the work of different services, allowing for the broad integration of sustainability into the various fundamental areas of activity of the University of Coimbra.





Monitoring

The monitoring of the Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan will be integrated into the evaluation and monitoring cycle of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Used as a management and improvement tool for each area of sustainable development, by being aligned with the Strategic Plan, it channels efforts towards implementing the most suitable initiatives to address both current and future challenges faced by UC.

Throughout previous strategic planning cycles, a culture of ongoing monitoring and regular evaluation of the University of Coimbra's activities has been created and developed, across the entire organisational structure and at various management levels, and has been fully assimilated by the academic community. Integrated into the UC management cycle, this dynamic process will continue, allowing for the ongoing development of planning, monitoring, evaluation and feedback processes, aiming for excellence in all mission pillars and axes and areas of sustainability. In this context, the representatives of each area are responsible for monitoring the development of their respective actions.

Regular monitoring of the SSRPUC, complemented by the various Action Plans monitoring, will enable progress and deviations from the initial targets to be assessed, and thus the impact of the initiatives developed. To enable effective monitoring of progress, reporting will be done through annual monitoring reports, complemented by interim reports covering the first semester of each year, with the first report covering the year 2023. These reports will provide guiding data for evaluation and subsequent decision-making by the University of Coimbra's governance and management bodies. The process will be enriched by regular self-assessment by responsible stakeholders at different levels –

from the University to sub-units and services – on the due implementation of the planned activities. The evaluation will consider the evolving context, enabling continuous assessment of how well the strategic initiatives and goals align with changes in potential opportunities and external risks.

Thus, the process goes beyond mere measurement and is complemented by the definition and implementation of improvement strategies based on the evaluation conducted. In line with the principles of quality assurance, supported by the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) cycle and risk-based thinking, it will involve analysing and identifying deviations from the plan and triggering the necessary actions – adjustments, corrective measures, continuous improvement, disruptive change, innovation, and reorganisation – in a dynamic process that monitors both internal and external contexts.

As with the Strategic Plan, the SSRPUC is dynamic and flexible enough to adapt to ongoing contextual changes. As such, it can be revised whenever deemed necessary, following analysis of monitoring results or relevant changes.

Throughout the process, and in line with the principles of participatory management and transparency, it will be essential to establish communication channels with stakeholders to keep them informed about the progress of the SSRPUC implementation and the various evaluations conducted, while allowing for the continuous submission of suggestions for improvement.

A final evaluation will be conducted at the beginning of 2027, reflecting all the work completed over the four-year period and concluding another cycle of integrated strategic planning.

Strategic Guidelines of the University of Coimbra Strategic Plan 2023-2027



→Environment and Climate Action

VISION

Implement a strategy of environmental sustainability and efficient resource management that will enable the University of Coimbra to be the first portuguese university to achieve carbon neutrality, while raising awareness of nature conservation and biodiversity within the academic community.

GOALS

- Complete 1 major intervention to guarantee the renovation and conservation of green spaces on each of the University of Coimbra campuses (Campus 1, 2 and 3), as well as at Quinta de São Marcos.
- Reduce the carbon footprint by 5-12% (scope 1 and 2 emissions).
- Achieve a 5-10% share of self-consumption from renewable energy sources.

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

Define an environmental and energy sustainability strategy for the University of Coimbra campuses [ECA1].

The University remains committed to managing its transition to a more sustainable future and achieving carbon neutrality in alignment with the Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality 2050 (RNC 2050) and the National Energy and Climate Plan 2030 (PNEC 2030). To achieve this, the University must develop an environmental sustainability strategy aimed at enhancing the energy efficiency of its buildings by improving their thermal, acoustic and lighting conditions, reducing consumption, ensuring the rational use of energy resources, and promoting the generation of energy from renewable sources. As part of promoting renewable energy sources, additional photovoltaic panels will be installed across the various University centres and at Quinta de São Marcos, to be integrated and managed collectively by a Renewable Energy Community (CER), enabling

production to cover a substantial portion of the University's consumption. An efficient system for generating renewable energy for self-consumption will significantly reduce reliance on non-renewable sources and lower the cost of contracted electricity, paving the way for energy independence.

In order to promote environmental sustainability, with a focus on gradual change and reducing the carbon footprint of the academic community's commuting, incentives for sustainable mobility will be introduced, such as providing bicycle parking spaces and installing more electric vehicle charging points.

The environmental sustainability strategy to be defined will require further commitment to analysing measures aimed at ensuring the adaptation and preservation of the UC buildings, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, through the use of innovative and durable solutions.

Implement policies for efficient resource management, promote circular economy and combat waste [ECA2].

The 6Rs policy - reduce, reuse, recycle, rethink, refuse, repair - is adopted by UC as a core element of its strategy to move towards a circular economy and foster a culture of waste reduction. Waste is one of the biggest environmental impacts, so it is essential to invest in its reduction, reuse and recycling, and to encourage the engagement of the whole community.

Implementing resource efficiency policies is key to mitigating such impacts and ensuring the availability of resources for future generations, thereby promoting sustainable development. UC will continue to leverage efficient resource management and minimise impacts by implementing measures that reduce waste and facilitate a sustainable, balanced performance. This includes reducing consumption of water, plastic and paper, streamlining processes, improving administrative practices and raising awareness within the academic community.

In line with what has been developed for the 2019-2023 period, and in accordance with the new National Strategy for Green Public Procurement 2030 - ECO 360, the UC will continue to apply environmental and social criteria to its purchases and develop the circular economy, fulfilling its commitment to the Portuguese Pact for Plastics and the Institutional Pact for the Valorisation of the Circular Economy in the Centre Region.



Promote nature conservation and biodiversity [ECA3].

Conservation and biodiversity are fundamental to the health of the planet and the well-being of society. Aware of the responsibility that comes with being recognised as the most sustainable higher education institution in Portugal in the last five editions of THE Impact Ranking, one of the UC's commitments is to actively promote conservation and environmental protection on its campuses, prioritising the rehabilitation of its green spaces. This will play a pivotal role in connecting the community with nature, strengthening local biodiversity and promoting the health and well-being of the academic community, in line with the National Strategy for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity 2030 (ENCNB 2030).

The UC has unique spaces that contribute to the valuable biodiversity of the city and region, such as the Botanical Garden, the Algae Collection, the COI - the largest herbarium in Portugal - and the University of Coimbra Bacteria Culture Collection (UCCCB). The UC will continue to protect this natural heritage and will also ensure that each of its campuses and the Quinta de São Marcos undergo infrastructural interventions to preserve natural habitats.

→Citizenship, Equity, and Inclusiveness

VISION

Promote active and informed citizenship that is socially responsible and inclusive, safeguarding the right to have rights, respecting dignity, equality, and the right to difference, and ensuring that everyone has access to a safe, equitable, and welcoming environment.

GOALS

- Increase by 15-20% the amount of social support granted to students (UC scholarships, *Santander Futuro* scholarships, student-athlete scholarships and PASEP stipends).
 - Increase the number of volunteer programmes developed by 100-150%.
 - 100-150% increase in the number of sustainability and social responsibility training programmes.
 - Increase the percentage of women enrolled in master's and doctoral programmes in the areas of information and communication technology and engineering by 3-7%.
-

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

Address vulnerability factors within the student community by strengthening social support, ensuring equitable access to education, promoting academic success and improving students' living conditions [CEI].

The UC must ensure inclusive, high-quality and equitable education while promoting lifelong learning for everyone in an environment of tolerance, respect for freedom of thought and expression, and safe, non-violent spaces that foster social justice and protect the most vulnerable.

Social support must reflect the diversity of the academic community and contribute to the academic success and well-being of all. Direct and indirect support for students and social programmes will be maintained, with increased support for the most disadvantaged students and those with special needs. In addition to teaching, ensuring the involvement of these students in innovation and research activities will be crucial to overcoming physical and communication barriers to full social and academic integration.

The creation of adequate study and welcoming conditions will be guaranteed to enhance academic success. In order to meet the needs of new higher education audiences and to promote lifelong learning, measures will be taken to promote a better balance between study, work, and private life. Health and psychological support services will be reinforced and further promoted

within the academic community. Partnerships with the Coimbra Academic Association, the student *republicas*, “*solares*”, the city council and other stakeholders will be essential to ensure that no one is left behind.

Combat gender inequalities and ensure equal opportunities by eliminating stereotypes, inequalities and barriers through an intersectional approach [CEI2].

Gender equality is a global priority and a fundamental human right. The UC is committed to developing policies with an intersectional approach in teaching, research, human resources management and the prevention of harassment and violence. The integration of the gender perspective will be reinforced in the production and transfer of knowledge, promoting the social relevance of research in this area.

UC embraces the commitments of the UN 2030 Agenda, the European Research Area and the Portugal + Igual programme to ensure equal opportunities and inclusion for all through the Plan for Equality, Equity and Diversity. The academic community will be actively involved in actions to combat discrimination, racism, and stereotypes, with the whistleblowing channel serving as a tool to deter and change inappropriate behaviour.

Promote policies of social inclusion and protection of minorities, social cohesion and human rights, upholding social and ethical principles and the right to difference [CEI3].

The UC is committed to the well-being of the academic community and to the defence of freedom of thought and expression, while promoting a culture of inclusion, equality, and diversity. The fight against all forms of discrimination and the promotion of the right to difference will be ensured in all University policies and procedures.

There will be equal access to all levels of education and training, improving accessibility and working

and study conditions, especially for the most vulnerable groups. With the emergence of new target groups for higher education and in the context of an ageing population, UC will combat ageism and promote social inclusion through lifelong learning. In an environment of open and non-judgemental communication, UC will welcome input from the academic community to empower vulnerable communities, with a particular focus on student associations, especially those representing international students.

Promote informed and responsible citizenship and raise awareness of sustainable behaviour, contributing to the integral development of citizens [CEI4].

The UC plays a crucial role in promoting education for sustainable development and in educating socially aware and responsible citizens who can contribute to a better world. The goal is to prepare UC students and staff to use their knowledge for the benefit of society and to equip them with skills for active citizenship.

Training programmes will be created and adapted to encourage the development of projects and partnerships that empower students to become agents of change. UC is committed to training staff in sustainability and social responsibility,

promoting informed citizenship and encouraging participation in volunteer activities.

Mechanisms to assess sustainable development literacy will be implemented, tailoring campaigns and actions to the needs of the community. A culture of sustainability will be promoted to make UC a greener institution, committed to the transition to a more equitable and sustainable future, integrating good environmental and civil practices.



Alignment of the Strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda



	1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
ECA1							x				x		x				
ECA2		x				x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	
ECA3			x	x							x	x	x	x	x		
CEI1	x	x		x	x			x		x						x	
CEI2				x	x			x	x								
CEI3	x	x	x	x	x			x		x						x	x
CEI4				x				x	x	x			x				x

Figure 9
Association of the SDGs with
the Strategic Guidelines

Sustainability and Social Responsibility Plan - Action Plan

→Environment and Climate Action

			2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
ECA1	Increase renewable energy production and reduce dependence on external sources by promoting the installation of photovoltaic systems for self-consumption.	SDG 7, 13	x	x	x	x	x
	Promote the gradual replacement of the UC and SASUC vehicle fleet with electric or hybrid vehicles.	SDG 11, 13	x	x	x	x	x
ECA2	Establish strategic circular economy partnerships with a positive social impact.	SDG 10, 12		x	x	x	x
	Incorporate sustainability criteria into public procurement procedures in line with the New National Strategy for Green Public Procurement 2030 (ECO360), if justified by the specific type of procurement.	SDG 12	x	x	x	x	x
	Develop a system for continuous monitoring of electricity, water and natural gas consumption for the UC.	SDG 6, 7, 9, 12	x	x	x	x	x
	Increase rainwater harvesting mechanisms.	SDG 6, 12		x	x	x	x
	Promote an efficient system for redistributing surplus food to students in food emergency circumstances, reducing waste.	SDG 2, 12			x	x	x
ECA3	Requalify and conserve green spaces, by UC campus (campuses I, II and III) and at Quinta de São Marcos.	SDG 3, 11, 15		x	x	x	x
	Make a Nature Positive Pledge.	SDG 4, 12, 14, 15	x	x	x	x	x

→Citizenship, Equity, and Inclusiveness

			2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
CEI1	Increase social support for students in situations of economic vulnerability.	SDG 1, 2, 4, 10, 16	x	x	x	x	x
	Invest in expanding student accommodation by investing in the construction of new residences.	SDG 1, 4, 10, 16		x	x	x	
	Strengthen UC's commitment to the academic community by providing them with greater access to family support services in the areas of childcare and nursery school.	SDG 4, 5, 8, 16			x	x	x
CEI2	Implement measures to encourage the participation and retention of women in second and third cycle courses in the fields of information and communication technology and engineering.	SDG 4, 5, 8	x	x	x	x	x
CEI3	Implement projects with social impact in partnership with NGOs, associations/ organisations and Coimbra City Council.	SDG 10, 16, 17	x	x	x	x	x
	Update the teaching skills of teaching staff to promote social inclusion in the classroom.	SDG 4, 10, 16	x	x	x	x	x
	Implement a programme promoting work-life balance, wellbeing and organisational happiness for UC employees.	SDG 3, 5, 8, 16		x	x		
CEI4	Strengthen the social responsibility and civic action of the UC community through training in various areas of sustainable development.	SDG 4	x	x	x	x	x
	Promote training sessions for teachers on integrating sustainability into their teaching plans and activities.	SDG 4	x	x	x	x	x
	Integrate sustainability in a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary manner into curricula in order to consciously increase knowledge on this topic.	SDG 4		x	x	x	x
	Promote collaboration within the academic community as part of a social responsibility policy, encouraging more volunteering activities.	SDG 4, 10, 17	x	x	x	x	x

			2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
CEI4	Create grants for students who lead or participate in sustainability projects.	SDG 4, 10, 13	x	x	x	x	x
	Expand strategic alliances and partnerships with networks and entities in the area of sustainable development.	SDG 17	x	x	x	x	x
	Stimulate interdisciplinary research to address complex scientific questions and societal challenges, contributing to the SDGs.	SDG 9	x	x	x	x	x
	Stimulate qualified entrepreneurship in the area of sustainability by supporting projects with high business potential.	SDG 4, 8, 9	x	x	x	x	x





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