



Building a sustainable Higher Education sector: How ESG changes the game

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What is ESG?



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● ESG – more than corporate social responsibility?

- ESG represents a more stakeholder-centred approach to operations.
- • Organisations agree to conduct themselves ethically in those three areas

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United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)

- ‘The world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative’
- 16 540 companies
- 158 countries
- 10 principles
- 4 themes: human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.
- 2 universities in SA signed up
- Voluntary reporting every second year (universities)
- No specific requirements for reporting

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



- In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all — “Agenda 2030”.
- 17 Goals to achieve ‘the world we want’
- 169 targets

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Africa 2063

- First call: May 2013, Adopted January 2015: 50 year development trajectory
- ‘Blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future’
- Focus on ‘inclusive and sustainable development’: inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security
- 15 key Flagship Programmes to boost economic growth and development
- 10 year Implementation Plans with key activities

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Legislative environment

- Carbon Tax Act 15 of 2019
 - taxes activities that release significant amounts of greenhouse gases
 - the “polluter pays” principle
 - multiplying the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) by the current rate of tax
- GHG reporting regulations 2017
- DFFE regulations

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DFFE National GHG Reporting Regulations:

- To introduce a single national reporting framework for the reporting and dissemination of information related to GHG emissions:
 - to enable the Department to collect, collate and publish GHG emissions data and information in an effective and efficient manner,
 - for South Africa to meet its obligations on international reporting requirements under the United Framework Convention on Climate Change and other international programs,

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- to fulfil section 6.7 of the National Climate Change Response that requires GHG emissions inventories that are accurate, complete and up-to-date,
- to inform government policy formulation and the South African general public; and
- to avoid duplication of similar reporting requirements in South Africa.

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South African Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting System (SAGERS)

- Registration
 - Greenhouse gas reporting by March of each year.
 - Window period for Tier 1 declarations closed
 - **Only 1** category of data provider
 - If you meet the reporting threshold you need to report (10 MW thermal of stationary combustion)
 - Carbon Tax declaration by end July annually

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The journey and contribution of South African universities - Unisa

- 2007 UNGC
- 2013 Green Economy and Sustainability Engagement Model (GESEM); Sustainability Office
- 2014 Sustainability Framework
- 2015 – 2017 master plans on carbon footprint, energy efficiency, alternative energy, waste and water
- 2017 Integrated Reporting
- 2019 SDGs indaba
- 2021 2nd Sustainability Framework

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University of Pretoria

Ilze Ueckermann

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UP's approach to sustainability...



- Incorporating sustainability into the everyday operations of the academic institution is key to ensure successful, long-term delivery outcomes and the university has a responsibility to leave a positive impact on its environment.
- Since 2017, UP has produced a sustainability report following the standards of the Core Option of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).
- The report includes goals set out by the University to be achieved – the current period ends in 2026.
- The University's fifth carbon footprint report covering 2021 focuses on:
 - ❖ GRI 301: Materials
 - ❖ GRI 302: Energy
 - ❖ GRI 303: Water and effluents
 - ❖ GRI 304: Biodiversity
 - ❖ GRI 305: Emissions
 - ❖ GRI 306: Waste
 - ❖ GRI 307: Environmental Compliance
 - ❖ GRI 308: Supplier and environmental assessment



UP's achievements

- Various South African Landscapers Institute awards over the years including specific awards for:
 - ❖ Landscape construction (waterwise planting at the Admin Building on Hatfield Campus)
 - ❖ Environmental landscape work (compost yard and rehabilitation of the Hartebeestspuit)
- Ecocert award for biodiversity (also Hartebeestspuit rehabilitation project)
- HEFMA renewable energy initiative award (power purchase agreement with Next Renewable Generation)
- HEFMA sustainability award (compost yard)



UP's failures

- Collaboration with researchers and academics within UP has been a challenge
- Over the past five years UP has sunk boreholes at the Hatfield campus which were unsuccessful
- UP installed bat houses at Groenkloof campus which were not occupied by bats
- UP installed owl houses on the Hillcrest Sport campus which were not occupied by owls



Lessons learnt



A move towards trans-disciplinary projects within UP has created opportunities for Facilities Management:

- Tree Plotter and the tree planting initiative
- Digital twin project
- Borehole project
- Hartebeestspuit rehabilitation
- Greenline student society
- Feral cat programme
- Bird census





North-West University

Ms. Beatrix Bouwman

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Background - Sustainability policy

- NWU policy adaption September 2022
- Why SDG's? The NWU wants to be an “environmentally sustainable university
- SDG 's of which is related to Environmental practices are:
Goals 6, 7, '9', '12', 13, 14, 15 and '17'



<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>



Practical implications

- Awareness of potential changes and trends and buy-in from all stakeholders
- Good records and reporting
- Supply chain management – procurement and product life cycle management
- Affordability and long-term goals
- New innovations -product life cycle transport footprint, **packaging used** And re-use and recycle potential....



<https://sdgmoveinenglish.wordpress.com/2017/08/12/the-current-world-trend/>



Where is your institution / PURCO?

- ESG programmes / reporting?
- Renewable energy?
- Waste recycling?
- Waterwise?
- Closing the gap between research and operations?
- Procurement?

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**Environmental -
Preservation of
the natural
world**

Organisation

**Social -
Considering
humans and
our
interdependen-
cies**

**Governance -
Processes for
running an
organization**

**The game
has changed!**

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