



Times Higher Education
**Sustainability
Impact Ratings**

SDG

15

Life On Land





SDG 15

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Why we measure

This is the second of two SDGs that look at the broader ecosystem – the other being SDG 14: Life Below Water. Life on land is a precious resource – we need to ensure that it is passed on to future generations, at a time when loss of biodiversity is an increasing concern. Different universities will have responsibility for very different landscapes and the life within, but all have a responsibility as stewards of their environment.

We are exploring how universities contribute to sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/>

Links to other SDGs

SDG 15 relates to other SDGs since biodiversity and the ecosystem can also be the basis for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies (SDG13). Life on the land and life below water (SDG14) are interlinked, and life throughout the ecosystem provides routes out of hunger (SDG2) and poverty (SDG1). Clean water (SDG6) and clean energy (SDG7) are also vital to maintaining life on land.

Metrics and indicators

15.1 Research on land ecosystems

15.1.1 Life On Land: CiteScore

This indicator measures the proportion of a university's publications appear in the top 10% of journals according to the Citescore metric. It is intended to reflect on excellence of academic output.

The indicator is normalised and is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.60% of the overall score).

15.1.2 Life On Land: FWCI

This indicator explores the quality of a university's output in the area of land ecosystems and biodiversity research using the number of citations received as a metric.

This number is normalised by publication type (paper, review, conference proceeding, book, or book chapter), by year of publication, and by subject. Subjects are defined using Elsevier's ASJC classification.

This indicator is normalised and is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.6% of the overall score).

15.1.3 Life On Land: publications

The number of publications looks at the scale of research output from a university around research addressing life on land, including land ecosystems and biodiversity as well as land sensitive waste disposal. It is not scaled by the size of the institution – rather it looks at the overall impact.



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This indicator is normalised and is worth 7% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 1.82% of the overall score)

15.2 Supporting land ecosystems through education

Universities need to show how they are working towards supporting ecosystems that they don't directly control.

There are a total of 16 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, worth 23% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 5.98% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relate to the UN Targets 15.1, 15.2, 15.5 and 15.8.

#	Indicator	Maximum score
15.2.1	Events about sustainable use of land Year: 2024 Support or organise events aimed to promote conservation and sustainable utilisation of the land, including forests and wild land Up to three points based on: • Existence of events – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.60% in SDG (1.20% Overall)
15.2.2	Sustainably farmed food on campus Year: in place by 2024 Have policies to ensure that food on campus is sustainably farmed Up to four points based on: • Existence of policies – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point • Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	4.60% in SDG (1.20% Overall)
15.2.3	Maintain and extend current ecosystems' biodiversity Year: 2024 Work directly to maintain and extend existing ecosystems and their biodiversity, of both plants and animals, especially ecosystems under threat Up to three points based on: • Existence of direct work – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.60% in SDG (1.20% Overall)



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#	Indicator	Maximum score
15.2.4	Educational programmes on ecosystems Year: 2024 Offer educational programmes on ecosystems (looking at wild flora and fauna) for local or national communities? Up to three points based on: • Existence of programmes – maximum one point for free access, 0.25 points for charged access only • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.60% in SDG (1.20% Overall)
15.2.5	Sustainable management of land for agriculture (educational outreach) Year: 2024 <i>This indicator has been split into two indicators this year: 15.2.5 Sustainable management of land for agriculture, and 15.2.6 Sustainable management of land for tourism.</i> Offer educational programme/outreach for local or national communities on sustainable management of land for agriculture Up to three points based on: • Existence of programmes – maximum one point for free access, 0.25 points for charged access only • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	2.30% in SDG (0.60% Overall)
15.2.6	Sustainable management of land for tourism (educational outreach) Year: 2024 Offer educational programme/outreach for local or national communities on sustainable management of land for tourism. Up to three points based on: Existence of programmes – maximum one point for free access, 0.25 points for charged access only Evidence provided – up to one point Is the evidence provided public – one point	2.30% in SDG (0.60% Overall)



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Data submission guidance

Biodiversity can be understood as a measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem level. High biodiversity is therefore an indicator of ecosystem health and has been shown to have direct links to human health.

15.3 Supporting land ecosystems through action

Universities need to show how they deal with land-based ecosystems for which they have, or share, responsibility. This may include their campuses.

There are a total of 18 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, which is worth up to 27% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 7.02% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relate to the UN Targets 15.1.

#	Indicator	Maximum score
15.3.1	Sustainable use, conservation and restoration of land (policy) Year: in place by 2024 Have a policy to ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems associated with the university, in particular forests, mountains and drylands Up to four points based on: • Existence of policy – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point • Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	5.40% in SDG (1.40% Overall)
15.3.2	Monitoring IUCN and other conservation species (policies) Year: in place by 2024 Have a policy to identify, monitor and protect any IUCN Red Listed species and national conservation list species with habits in areas affected by the operation of your university Up to four points based on: • Existence of policy – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point • Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	5.40% in SDG (1.40% Overall)



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15.3.3	Local biodiversity included in planning and development Year: 2024 Include local biodiversity into any planning and development process (e.g. construction of new buildings) Up to three points based on: • Existence of inclusion – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	5.40% in SDG (1.40% Overall)
15.3.4	Alien species impact reduction (policies) Year: in place by 2024 Have a policy to reduce the impact of alien species on campus Up to four points based on: • Existence of policy – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	5.40% in SDG (1.40% Overall)
15.3.5	Collaboration for shared land ecosystems Year: 2024 Collaborate with the local community to maintain shared land ecosystems Up to three points based on: • Existence of collaboration – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point Is the evidence provided public – one point	5.40% in SDG (1.40% Overall)

Data submission guidance

Definition: Alien species (15.3.4)

Please use the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition as reference.

15.4 Land sensitive waste disposal

Universities need to demonstrate a carefully managed practice and responsibility with the aim to prevent potential harm to humans, animals, or the environment.

There are a total of 11 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, a maximum score is worth 23% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 5.98% of the overall score).



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This metric and indicators relate to the UN Targets 15.9 and 15.C.

#	Indicator	Maximum score
15.4.1	Water discharge guidelines and standards Year: in place by 2024 Have water quality standards and guidelines for water discharges (to uphold water quality in order to protect ecosystems, wildlife, and human health and welfare) Up to three points based on: • Existence of standards and guidelines – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	7.70% in SDG (2% Overall)
15.4.2	Policy on plastic waste reduction Year: in place by 2024 Have a policy on reducing plastic waste on campus Up to four points based on: • Existence of policy – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point • Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	7.65% in SDG (1.99% Overall)
15.4.3	Policy on hazardous waste disposal Year: in place by 2024 Have a policy, process or practice on waste disposal covering hazardous materials Up to four points based on: • Existence of policy – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point • Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	7.65% in SDG (1.99% Overall)

Data submission guidance

Definition: Hazardous materials (15.4.3)

This covers any item or agent (biological, chemical, radiological, and/or physical), which has the potential to cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment, either by itself or through interaction with other factors.