PADERBORN UNIVERSITY

Sustainability Strategy of Paderborn University 2026

Framework for Orientation Developed through a Participatory Process

This English version was produced with the assistance of the UPB AI Chat.

Date: 21 July 2026

A Framework for Guidance Instead of a List of Measures

This sustainability strategy differs from a "traditional" strategy, which typically involves binding measures, quantitative indicators, and fixed milestones. Our strategy is intended to serve as a guiding framework for the university's development, aligned with our understanding of sustainability. This orientation gives rise to the structure comprising strategic and operational objectives, as well as the twelve areas of action that define the scope for action without prescribing individual steps in a binding manner.

Instead of a catalog of measures, we present "impulses." These should be understood as suggestions that form a basis for engaging in dialogue with the responsible departments, learning together, and advance developments toward a sustainable university. An initiative thus serves as a starting point that is taken up in the respective departments, adapted to local conditions, and further developed through dialogue, while it does not entail a final determination of the course of action.

This leads to a process-oriented understanding of strategy that views strategy as a framework and a shared guide for development. It serves as a foundation against which the university's various units orient themselves and which is continually refined through dialogue. The strategy is therefore not designed to be a fixed road-map that dictates the timing and content of individual steps. Its impact is felt when the impetus is taken up by the responsible departments and translated into independent, coordinated action.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Sustainability Strategy **5**

Materiality Process **6**

Defining the Scope 6

Approach in the Materiality Process 7

Participatory Strategy Development 9

Understanding of Sustainability **10**

Fields of Action **11**

1. Research 14
   - Core Understanding of Sustainable Research 14
   - Strategic Goal 15
   - Operational Goals 15
   - Impulses 16
2. Teaching 17
   - Core Understanding of Sustainable Teaching 17
   - Strategic Goal 17
   - Operational Goals 18
   - Impulses 19
3. Transfer 20
   - Strategic Goal 20
   - Operational Goals 20
   - Impulses 20
4. Entrepreneurship 21
   - Strategic Goal 21
   - Operational Goals 21
   - Impulses 22
5. Public Engagement 23
   - Strategic goal 23
   - Operational Goals 23
   - Impulse 23
6. Climate Protection and Operations 25
   - Strategic Goal 25
   - Operational Goals 25
   - Impulses 25
7. Procurement 27
   - Strategic Goal 27
   - Operational Goals 27
   - Impulses 28
8. Biodiversity 29
   - Strategic Goal 29

Operational Goals ... 29
Impulses ... 30
9. Circular Economy ... 31
Strategic Goal ... 31
Operational Goals ... 31
Impulses ... 32
10. Campus ... 33
Strategic Goal ... 33
Operational Goals ... 33
Impulses ... 34
11. Working Conditions ... 35
Strategic Goal ... 35
Operational Goals ... 35
Impulses ... 36
12. Institutional Integration ... 37
Strategic Goal ... 37
Operational Goals ... 37
Impulses ... 38

Impact Monitoring ... 40
Qualitative Impact Monitoring — Participatory ... 40
Quantitative Impact Monitoring — Operations ... 40
Five-Year Framework and Continuation ... 40
Communication and Consolidation ... 41
Guiding Principle ... 41

Glossary ... 42

Bibliography ... 46

Introduction to the Sustainability Strategy

Warum?

Unsere Motivation

Die Universität Paderborn versteht sich als Multiplikatorin und Impulsgeberin für nachhaltige Transformationsprozesse. Unter Berücksichtigung der planetaren Grenzen und auf Basis sozialer Gerechtigkeit verpflichten wir uns zu einer Wissenschafts- und Bildungskultur, die Gemeinschaft stärkt und ökologische Verantwortung sowie wirtschaftliche Tragfähigkeit fördert.

Wie?

Unsere Orientierung

Aus diesem Grund wird nachhaltige Entwicklung an der Universität Paderborn als interdisziplinäre Querschnittsaufgabe verstanden, die sämtliche Bereiche der Universität betrifft – von Lehre und Forschung über Transfer bis zu Verwaltung und Betrieb. Wir setzen auf das Zusammenspiel aller Bereiche, um nachhaltige Lösungen zu schaffen. Eine nachhaltige Infrastruktur und partizipative Zusammenarbeit bilden die Basis für die Verankerung von Nachhaltigkeit als Leitprinzip.

Was?

Unser Selbstverständnis

Als vielfältige, gerechte und zukunftsorientierte Institution streben wir danach, einen positiven Einfluss auf die Gesellschaft auszuüben und unsere Aktivitäten verantwortungsbewusst, sozial gerecht und ressourcenschonend zu gestalten.

Why?

Our Motivation

Paderborn University defines itself as a catalyst for change and a driver of a sustainable future. Our University is committed to nurturing a culture of research and education that strengthens the community, promotes ecological responsibility, and encourages long-term economic sustainability. This is achieved by recognising planetary boundaries and being guided by the principles of social justice.

How?

Our Approach

At Paderborn University, we understand sustainable development as an interdisciplinary, cross-sectional task that extends to every area of the institution – from teaching and research to administration and daily operations. We rely on collaboration across all disciplines to create sustainable solutions. A sustainable infrastructure and joint collaboration lay the foundation for embedding sustainability as a guiding principle across the University.

What?

Self-conception

We aspire to be a diverse, fair, and forward-thinking institution that contributes positively to society. In doings so, we strive to shape teaching and research through a commitment to responsibility, social justice, and mindful use of resources.

Materiality Process

At the beginning of the strategy process, Paderborn University deliberately decided to develop its sustainability strategy by drawing on the strategic approach of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the associated thematic structure of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). In doing so, the university follows an approach based on the reporting and management standards of large corporations in Europe and methodologically transfers this approach to the higher education context.

Although the legal requirements in North Rhine-Westphalia currently only set basic requirements for universities regarding the collection of climate data as part of the Climate-Neutral State Administration (Klimaneutrale Landesverwaltung, KNLV), the chosen approach enables Paderborn University to record its key sustainability impacts, risks, and opportunities in a systematic, future-proof, and comparable manner. The aim is to identify the university's greatest levers and to strategically promote sustainability in line with the university's own understanding of sustainability.

By choosing a participatory process and actively involving key stakeholder groups, the development of the sustainability strategy is placed on a holistic and learning-oriented foundation. This approach strengthens the transparency, legitimacy, and effectiveness of the strategy and establishes sustainability as a shared responsibility of all members of Paderborn University.

Defining the Scope

The involvement of stakeholders in the development of the sustainability strategy was one of the greatest challenges, but at the same time also one of the greatest opportunities. Active participation took place through representatives of the university's relevant internal stakeholder groups, who collaborate in the Sustainability Working Group. This process was deliberately designed to be open in order to enable broad participation and a diversity of perspectives.
At the beginning of the strategy process, the faculties, the student body through student representatives, and the administration were specifically involved in forming the Sustainability Working Group. On the administrative side, involvement took place through Simone Probst, Vice President for Financial and Human Resources Administration; Dr. Martina Gerdes-Kühn, Head of Department for Construction Affairs, Facility Management, Technical Operations, Occupational Health and Safety, and Sustainability; and Matthias Gierth, Head of the Sustainable Infrastructure Unit. As the process continued—particularly after the completion of the first phase of the materiality analysis—additional administrative units were gradually integrated into the development process in order to ensure a comprehensive perspective on the operational, organizational, and personnel-related aspects of sustainable development at Paderborn University.
The faculties were asked to nominate two representatives each to contribute the specific perspectives of research and teaching to the working group. Student representatives were involved through the General Student Committee and the student initiative oikos.
In addition, initiatives from academic mid-level staff and higher education didactics were actively included in the process in order to incorporate the diverse roles, responsibilities, and competencies within the university.
Since October 2024, the Sustainability Working Group has consisted of the following members from central areas of the university:
From the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Prof. Dr. Christine Freitag and PD Dr. Lisa Knoll are represented. The faculty is further represented by Dr. Larissa Eikermann, Vice Dean for Sustainability, Equal Opportunities, and Diversity, with the support of Julia Ndlovu as a research associate in the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities for Sustainability.
The Faculty of Science is represented by Prof. Dr. Kirsten Schlegel-Matthies, emeritus as of January 2026, and Prof. Dr. Sabine Fechner, Faculty of Science and PLAZ – Professional School of Education. The Faculty of Bu-

siness Administration and Economics is represented in the working group by Prof. Dr. Daniel Reimsbach and Marie Wegener from the Paderborn Research Center for Sustainable Economy, PARSEC. The Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics is represented by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Henning Meschede and Dr. Markus Holt, and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Alexander Schlüter.
From the university management, Simone Probst, Vice President for Financial and Human Resources Administration, and Prof. Dr. René Fahr, Vice President for Transfer and Sustainability, are participants and chairs of the working group.
In addition, representatives of university initiatives and the student body are actively involved: Dr. Johanna Sackel from the Sustainability Initiative, the AStA Officer for Sustainability, the project lead of UPB for Future in Higher Education Didactics, and oikos.
This composition ensures broad representation of all status groups and secures an interdisciplinary perspective on sustainability at Paderborn University.
Organizational responsibility lies with the Sustainability Office, staffed by Friederike Häusler, Sustainability Officer, and Matthias Gierth, Head of the Sustainable Infrastructure Unit.

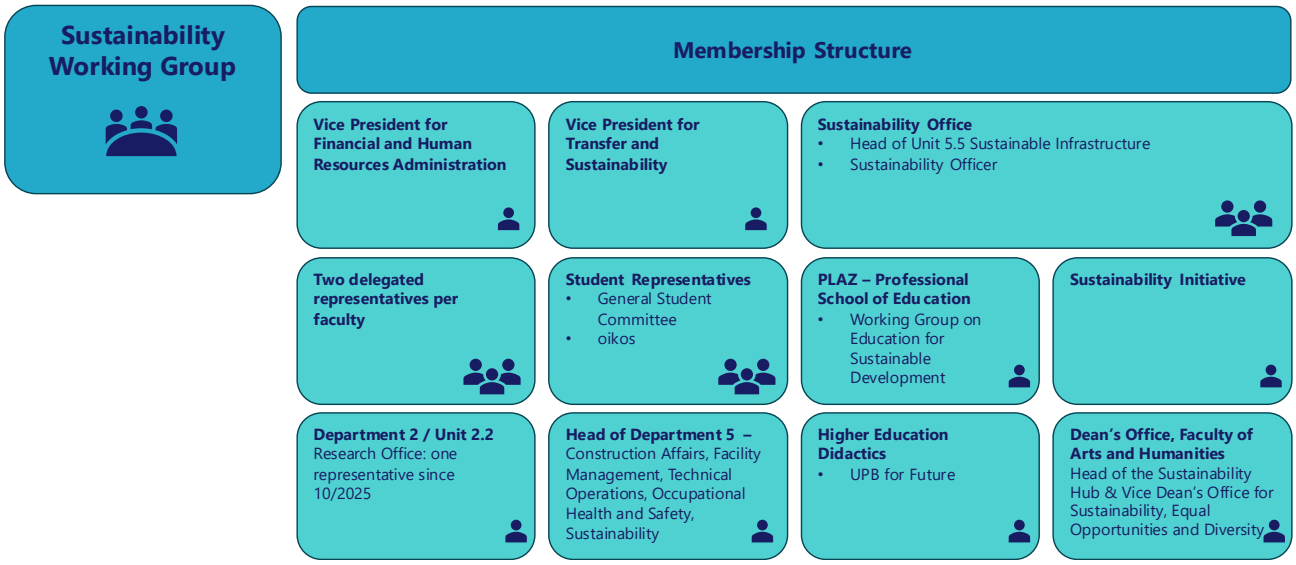

Figure 1: Membership structure of the Sustainability Working Group, as of March 2026

Approach in the Materiality Process

The approach taken in the materiality process at Paderborn University was guided by the methodological principles of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, ESRS, and transferred to the higher education context. The aim was to systematically identify the university's key sustainability topics and prioritize them according to relevance, impact, and scope for influence.
At the beginning, the framework of the process was defined. This included determining the thematic areas to be considered, defining the stakeholders, and establishing the university's value chain, which reflects the university's central processes and interdependencies. This value chain was designed as an input–primary activity–output model: it describes the use of resources, input; the central activities of teaching, research, and transfer, primary activity; and their results and impacts beyond the boundaries of the university, output.
In the next step, a selection of topics was made. The basis for this was a comprehensive longlist of 77 topics compiled from the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, ESRS, and the STARS Technical Manual, Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, 2016.

These topics were initially collected in order to reflect the broadest possible spectrum of potentially relevant sustainability aspects for universities. The longlist was then filtered according to the question of which topics Paderborn University can actively influence.
This process resulted in a shortlist of 20 topics, which served as the basis for the subsequent analyses. These topics include both aspects in which the university itself has an influence on sustainable development, the inside-out perspective, and those in which external factors affect the university, the outside-in perspective.

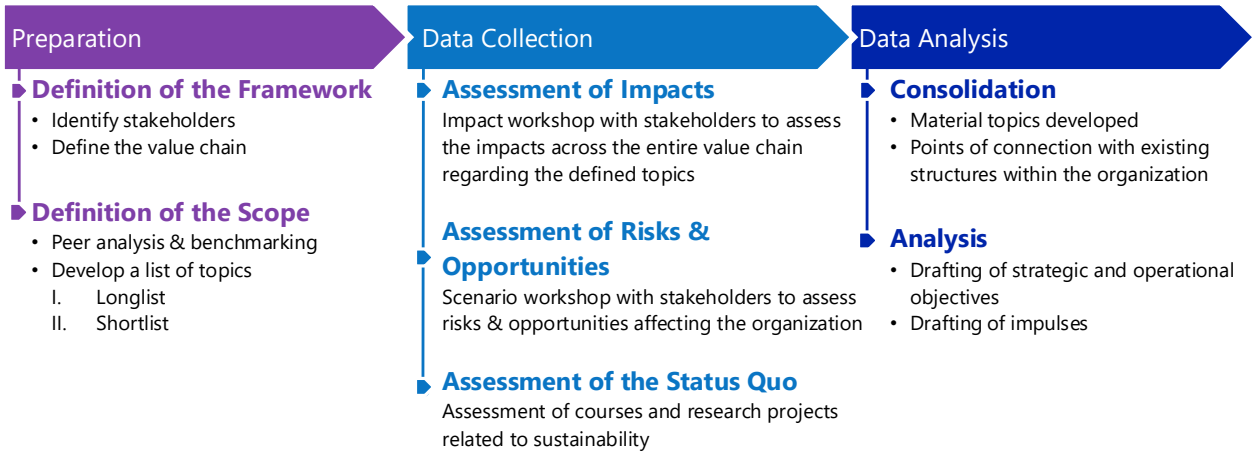

Figure 2: Approach to the materiality analysis at Paderborn University

This was followed by the assessment of impacts, risks, and opportunities, data collection, Figure 2. To assess impacts, an impact workshop, impact materiality, was held with the Sustainability Working Group. The workshop examined which positive and negative impacts Paderborn University has on each of the topics under consideration. The assessment was carried out along the previously defined value chain. Participants were provided with topic-specific cards containing descriptions, challenges, and key terms in order to create a shared basic understanding and enable a comparable assessment of the topics. Impact sheets were used to document the results and were completed in heterogeneous groups. In total, 200 positive and negative impacts were identified across all 20 topics.

The collected impacts were evaluated based on the ESRS definition of materiality:
„A sustainability matter is material from an impact perspective when it pertains to the undertaking's material actual or potential, positive or negative impacts on people or the environment over the short, medium, and long term. A material sustainability matter from an impact perspective includes impacts connected with the undertaking's own operations and its upstream and downstream value chain." (First Set of Draft ESRS, 2023)

The 200 recorded impacts were then digitized and categorized in a form system. The analysis and weighting were carried out by the Sustainability Office, which assessed the individual impacts based on several factors: stage of the value chain, time dimension, current or future, duration of impact, short-, medium-, or long-term, intentionality, intended or unintended, as well as severity and scope of the impacts.
This made it possible to create an assessment for each thematic area that could be sorted according to relevance and impact.
Subsequently, a scenario workshop was held to assess risks and opportunities on the basis of a foresight analysis. In addition, a status quo analysis of courses and research activities related to sustainability, 2024, was conducted in order to identify existing strengths and development potential.
The subsequent data analysis and consolidation led to a systematic synthesis of the material topics from the impact assessment, the scenario workshop, and the status quo analysis.

Building on this, points of connection with existing organizational structures, processes, and strategies of the university were identified.
The insights gathered during the process ultimately formed the basis for defining twelve central thematic priorities, which are addressed as fields of action in the further course of the process and transferred into the strategic and operational target structure:

1. Research
2. Teaching
3. Transfer
4. Entrepreneurship
5. Public Engagement
6. Climate Protection and Operations
7. Procurement
8. Biodiversity
9. Circular Economy
10. Campus
11. Working Conditions
12. Institutional Integration

This successfully completed the first part of the materiality process: positive and negative impacts were identified, risks and opportunities were assessed, and the foundation for strategic goal development was laid. The consolidated results then fed into the development of the strategic and operational goals that form the core of Paderborn University's sustainability strategy.

Participatory Strategy Development

Based on the materiality analysis, the twelve fields of action were defined with thematic priorities, which will be further developed in a participatory manner as part of the sustainability strategy. For these topics, experts within Paderborn University as well as adjacent stakeholder groups, including the student services organization, were identified. The Sustainability Office then developed initial drafts of strategic goals, operational goals, and impulses for each field of action and, in parallel or subsequently, conducted in-depth expert discussions in which the drafts were reviewed, refined, and supplemented with subject-specific perspectives.
In the next step, the enriched draft goals were presented back to the Sustainability Working Group in a first development cycle. There, the proposed goals and impulses were commented on and revised in detail. Based on this feedback, the Sustainability Office prepared a consolidated overall draft of the sustainability strategy, which was discussed and refined again with the Sustainability Working Group in a second development stage.
The present sustainability strategy is therefore the result of a strategic, participatory development process that systematically incorporates the perspectives of the relevant actors at Paderborn University as well as adjacent stakeholder groups and translates them into a consistent structure of goals and actions. The current version of the strategy paper does not mark the end of the process, but rather the beginning of a deeper shared development phase.
With the available resources and prioritized focus questions, a viable framework for orientation has been created in this first phase. At the same time, the strategy creates space for further participation, subject-specific deepening, and cross-sector networking in the coming years. It is to be understood as a living framework that will be continuously developed further in dialogue with the relevant actors. In this way, it creates a binding foundation for shared learning, coordinated action, and the long-term transformation of Paderborn University toward greater sustainability.

Understanding of Sustainability

Sustainable development at Paderborn University has a high strategic value and is an important part of its overall profile. Paderborn University sees itself as an educational institution, multiplier, and driver of innovation that assumes responsibility for actively helping to shape processes of societal transformation.

Sustainable development is a collective task. We therefore strengthen engagement, participation, and a culture of active co-creation at all levels of the university.

We promote equal opportunities and diversity through firmly established structures and a culture of equality, inclusion, and diversity that gives all university members equal opportunities for participation and personal development.

As a public institution, our self-understanding includes future-oriented, responsible, and transparent action that actively helps shape societal transformation.

Within the framework of our educational mission, we embed sustainable development as a cross-cutting topic in all degree programs in order to promote systemic thinking and enable students to contribute reflectively to shaping future societal processes.

Societal challenges form the guiding principle of university research. Our research addresses these challenges through a broad spectrum of academic approaches, from basic research to the analysis and visualization of societal interconnections and inter- and transdisciplinary approaches aimed at developing innovative and future-oriented solution options. The generation of knowledge—understanding how the world works—is both the foundation and the outcome of this research process.

As a cooperation partner for society, business, politics, and educational sectors, we act as a driver and multiplier and rely on close collaboration with both regional and international actors.

We strive to develop a sustainable infrastructure in both ecological and social terms. This includes reducing climate-relevant emissions, increasing the use of renewable energies, and developing social infrastructures that promote participation, health, and well-being.

Through targeted climate adaptation, we are creating a campus that is not only resilient to climatic changes but also offers attractive and livable working and learning conditions for everyone.

These guiding principles form the framework for the twelve fields of action for sustainable development at Paderborn University and underline our contribution to shaping a socially just and future-oriented society.

Fields of Action

This sustainability strategy follows a logic that may differ from certain expectations of a strategy document. Where a catalogue of binding measures, fixed requirements and quantitative indicators is often expected, our sustainability strategy understands itself as a guiding framework for the sustainable and future-oriented development of the University. From this orientation follow both its structure of strategic and operational objectives and the twelve fields of action, which define the scope for shaping development without prescribing individual steps.
In place of a catalogue of measures, the strategy offers impulses. These are to be understood as suggestions that provide a basis for entering into dialogue with the responsible areas, for learning together and for advancing developments towards a future-oriented university. An impulse thus forms a starting point that is taken up within the respective areas, adapted to their conditions and developed further in dialogue, while no conclusive specification of the approach is tied to it.
This gives rise to a process-oriented understanding of strategy, one that sees the strategy as a frame and a shared guide for development. It serves as a foundation that the areas of the University orient themselves by and that is continuously made concrete through dialogue. As a fixed procedural plan that prescribes individual steps in time and content, the strategy is deliberately not conceived. Its effect unfolds where its impulses are taken up in the responsible areas and translated into independent, coordinated action.

Providing orientation, walking the path together.
The twelve fields of action of Paderborn University's sustainability strategy form the core of its strategic orientation. They are the result of the systematic, participatory development process and, as fields of action, represent the university's greatest levers for sustainable transformation.

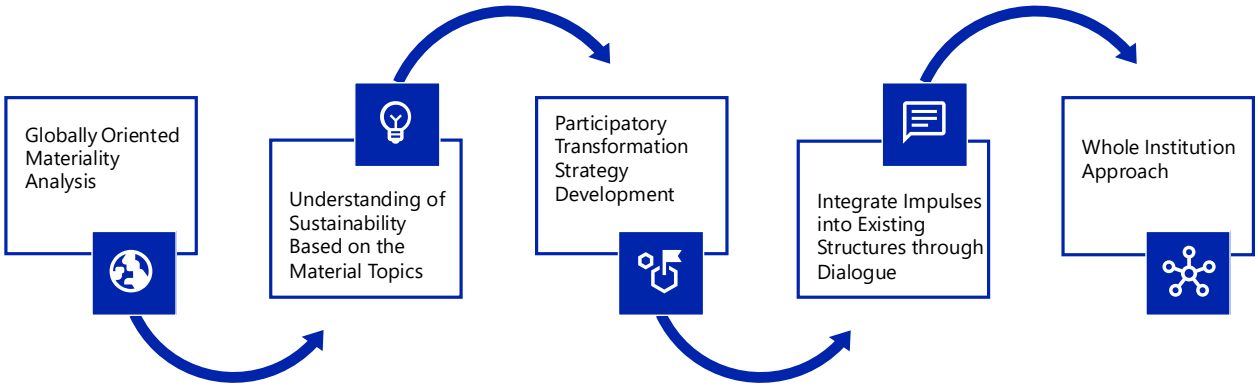

Figure 3: Strategy Development at Paderborn University

Paderborn University's understanding of sustainability—sustainability as an interdisciplinary cross-cutting task and shared responsibility—is reflected in the structure and logic of the fields of action. Each field of action describes a specific area of design in which the university contributes to actively shaping socially just, responsible, and future-oriented development. They combine operational and strategic perspectives by identifying concrete points of action in everyday university life while also highlighting long-term development goals in line with Paderborn University's understanding of sustainability.

Taken together, the fields of action are not to be understood in isolation but rather as an interconnected system. They connect different perspectives on sustainable development and make their interactions visible. In this way, they create a framework within which sustainability is understood as a learning, dynamic, and participatory process that is continuously developed further and adapted to new insights.

For example, the fields of Climate Protection and Operations and Circular Economy address the ecological foundations of sustainable action, while Working Conditions, Equal Opportunities, and Campus place social responsibility and institutional culture at the center. Fields such as Teaching, Research, Transfer, and Entrepreneurship embed sustainability in the core mission of the university in order to work toward the goal of a Whole Institution Approach (see Fig. 3).
By defining the fields of action, Paderborn University lays the foundation for strategic, connectable, and impact-oriented further development. They show where the university stands today, what potential it has, and how—through the collaboration of all its members—it assumes responsibility for a future-oriented society.

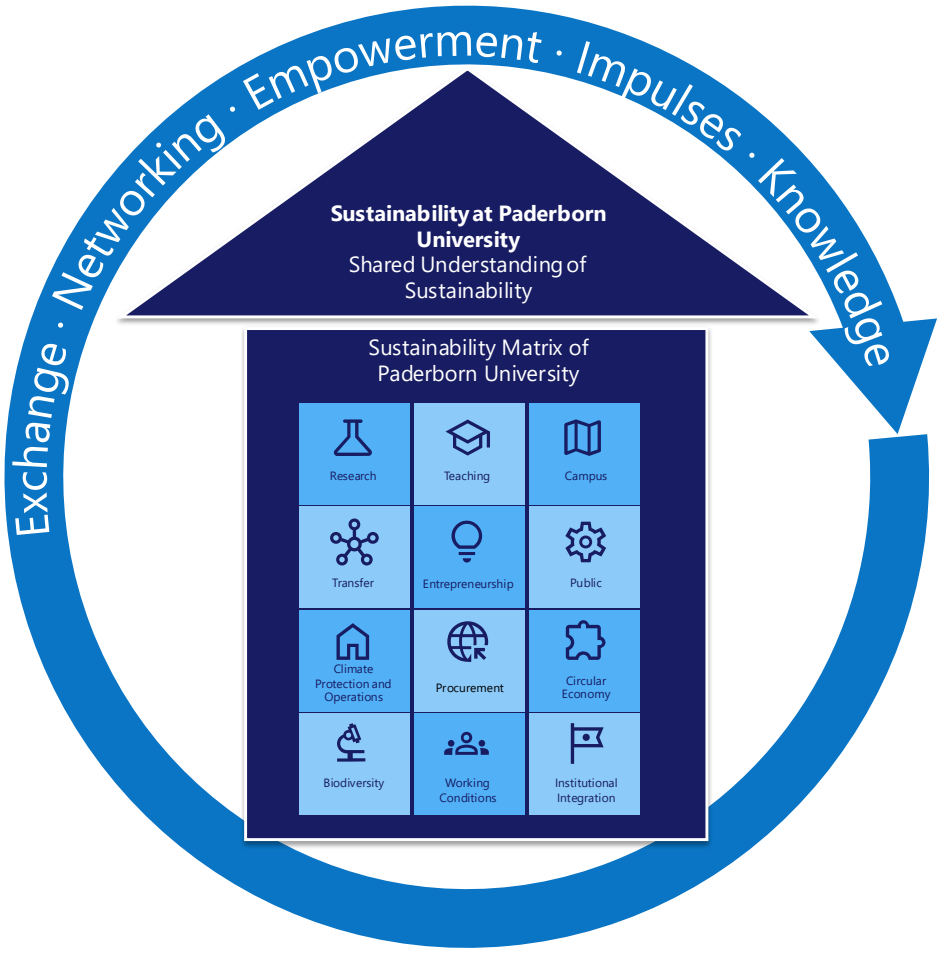

Figure 4: The Paderborn Sustainability Matrix

From Strategic Goal to Concrete Implementation
The strategic and operational goals defined in the fields of action form the framework for the sustainable development of Paderborn University; see "The Paderborn Sustainability Matrix" (Fig. 4). However, for sustainability to become effective not only as a strategic guiding principle but also as lived practice, active implementation at all levels is crucial. Of central importance here is that strategic objectives are translated into concrete processes, projects, and formats that promote joint action and anchor it institutionally.

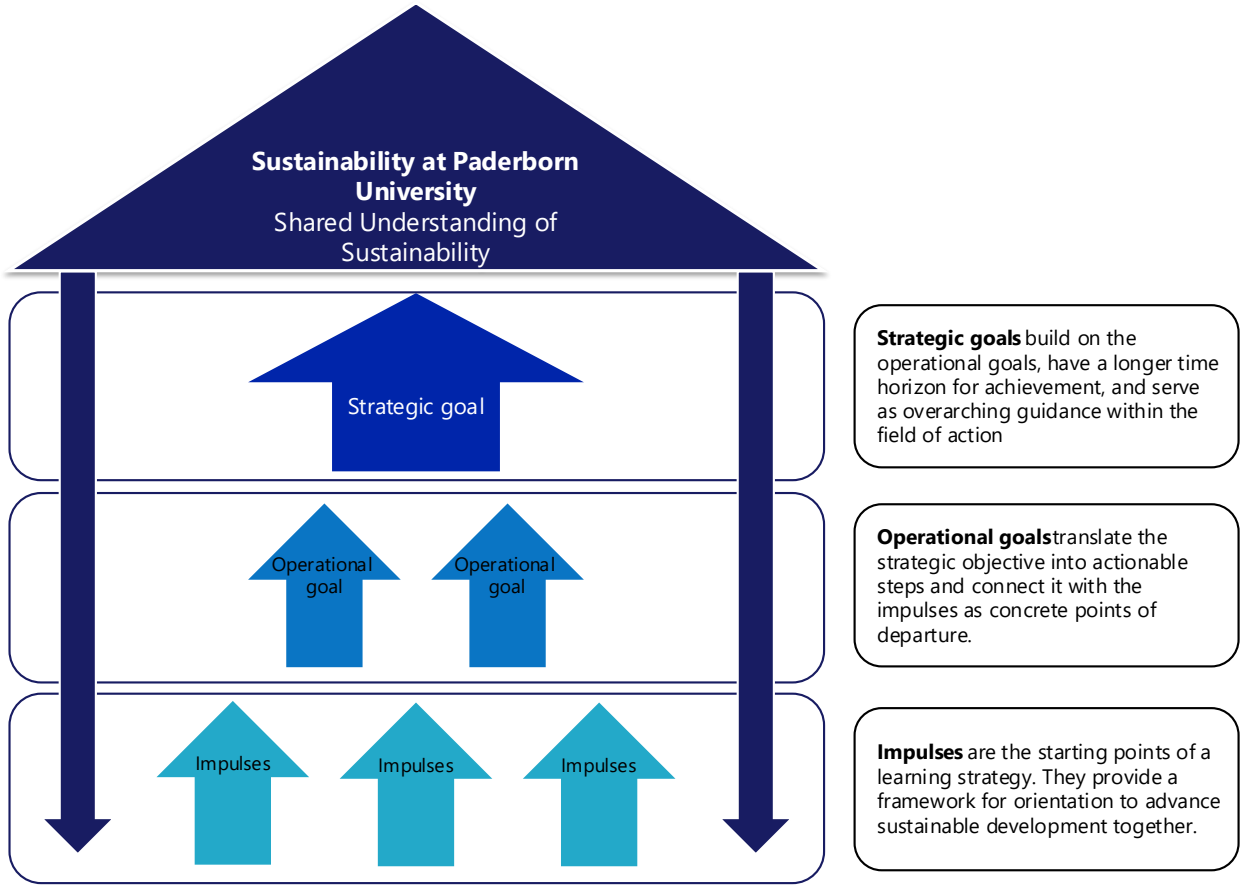

Figure 5: From Impulse to Strategic Implementation

This transition from planning to action (see Fig. 5) takes place step by step and in close cooperation between existing university structures, such as working groups, research centers, teaching initiatives, and administrative units. Examples include thematic workshops, guidelines, or pilot projects that take up strategic impulses and translate them into practice. For instance, the transfer area can work together with the Sustainability Working Group to develop guidelines for sustainable transfer; research centers such as the Paderborn Research Center for Sustainable Economy, PARSEC, can specifically network and support researchers working on sustainability-related topics. In addition, teaching initiatives, for example within the framework of "UPB for Future," can deepen the integration of sustainability into teaching.

What matters is not the format, but the attitude: sustainability becomes effective when it is experienced in everyday life and enables actors to take responsibility independently. In this way, a dynamic implementation process emerges that can be continuously developed, reviewed, and adapted to new requirements.

1. Research

The field of action Research refers here to research in the context of sustainability. The primary focus is on research that addresses sustainability-related topics, but also on the question of how research itself can be conducted sustainably.

In this draft strategy, the field of action Research is deliberately designed as an open field in order not to limit the existing strengths and developments of sustainability-related research at Paderborn University, but rather to develop them further together. The university already has a high degree of disciplinary diversity, international visibility, and substantial research expertise in the field of sustainability.

This open design follows the participatory approach of the strategy, which focuses on connectivity and the development of a shared profile. Sustainability-related research at Paderborn University is strongly decentralized, disciplinary diverse, and thematically dynamic. Against this background, it appears neither meaningful nor effective to prescribe specific thematic priorities or development lines within the strategy. Instead, in the field of Research, the strategy understands itself as a framework for orientation and as a starting point for a shared process of understanding and development. The aim is to make existing strengths in the field of sustainable research visible, to systematically classify existing activities, and to develop them further together with researchers.

Core Understanding of Sustainable Research

Knowledge Orientation
Research at Paderborn University is committed to open, methodologically sound knowledge generation. Sustainability-related research builds on these academic standards and connects basic research with the analysis of complex interrelations in nature, technology, society, and culture in order to create long-term foundations for orientation and decision-making.

Research for Sustainable Development
Research for sustainability addresses societal, ecological, economic, cultural, and institutional transformation processes as well as their interactions. It analyzes systemic interrelations, makes conflicting goals visible, and develops academically grounded orientation and action options in line with a holistic understanding of sustainability.

Sustainable Research Practice
Sustainable research also refers to the way research is conducted. Transparency, academic integrity, diversity, equal opportunities, and the responsible use of resources, data, and infrastructures are integral components of a quality-assured research culture.

Societal Embeddedness and Orientation toward the Common Good
As a public institution, the university is embedded in regional, national, and international contexts. Research is in continuous exchange with societal actors and is oriented toward the common good. It contributes to strengthening societal resilience by providing academically grounded knowledge, opening spaces for dialogue, and acting as a reliable partner in addressing crises, uncertainties, and long-term processes of change.

Contribution to Long-Term Development
By combining academic quality with societal connectivity, sustainable research supports the development of viable, resilient, and future-oriented structures based on a holistic understanding of sustainability.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University strengthens a responsible and interdisciplinary research culture, ranging from basic research to application-oriented, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, that anchors sustainability as a guiding principle of academic activity. The aim is to address societal challenges on an evidence-based basis, promote critical reflection and dialogue, and contribute through cooperative research to the long-term safeguarding of knowledge, progress, and the foundations of life. The sustainability strategy serves as a starting point for a shared process of understanding and development in which sustainability-related research is made visible, classified, and further developed.

Operational Goals

1. **SustSummit Research**
   By establishing a university-wide Sustainability Summit Research, an in-person workshop day, a structured framework for a shared assessment of the current situation is created. In this format, existing sustainability-related research activities are made systematically visible, thematic interfaces are identified, and key questions regarding the development of the university's profile are addressed.
   The Summit serves to reflect on which complex societal challenges are already being addressed, which academic competencies are available for this purpose, and how a recognizable research profile can be developed from this. It opens up a dialogical working process in which perspectives are brought together and development potential is derived from the existing research landscape.
   The focus is not on defining individual topics or priorities, but on bundling existing strengths and creating a shared basis for orientation that preserves academic autonomy while at the same time enabling strategic connectivity. On this basis, internal and external networking structures are strengthened, existing support services are systematically bundled and further developed, and the visibility of sustainability-related research is increased.
2. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration**
   Paderborn University strengthens interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration in sustainability-related research by supporting topic-based cooperation and networking processes between disciplines and with external partners.
3. **Further Developing Professional Exchange and Academic Dialogue**
   Paderborn University strengthens professional exchange and academic dialogue on sustainability-related research by networking researchers within and outside the university.
4. **Systematizing Visibility, Transparency, and Communication**
   Paderborn University increases the visibility of sustainability-related research activities through transparent information structures, a systematic presentation of existing activities, and continuous internal and external communication.
5. **Support in Acquiring Third-Party Funded Projects Related to Sustainability**
   At Paderborn University, the Research Office, Department 2 / Unit 2.2, provides support in acquiring funded projects related to sustainability through information materials, co-advising with the Sustainability Officer, and needs-based networking with experts in the relevant cross-cutting topics.
6. **Bundling and Further Developing Support Structures**
   Paderborn University bundles, strengthens, and further develops existing support services for sustainability-related research in order to ensure their accessibility, effectiveness, and connectivity in the long term.

Impulses

1. **Support and Qualification in Applying for Third-Party Funding Related to Sustainability**
   The Research Office, Department 2 / Unit 2.2, has developed guidance in cooperation with the respective experts at UPB to support the consideration of cross-cutting topics in funding applications. The guidance provides information on UPB's strategic objectives and established university-wide structures. In addition, the Research Office provides suggested text modules and guiding questions for project-specific elaboration.
   The information is incorporated both into funding and application advising and into qualification offers provided by the Research Office, such as workshops on third-party funding in academic careers. The Research Office will further develop materials on considering and presenting sustainability aspects in the context of application processes, as well as information on selected funding opportunities for sustainability in research.
   The Research Office is in regular exchange with experts on cross-cutting topics, including early-career researchers, transfer, internationality in research, equal opportunities, work-life compatibility, diversity, gender aspects in research projects, research data management and open science, and sustainability. The respective experts are involved in application advising as needed. With regard to the cross-cutting topic of sustainability, the Research Office and the Sustainability Officer will in future offer co-advising.
2. **Establishing and Further Developing Interdisciplinary Research Networks**
   Paderborn University supports the establishment and further development of interdisciplinary networks within and outside the university on a voluntary basis. Existing research priorities and cooperative relationships are made systematically visible and integrated into suitable exchange formats.
3. **Systematically Expanding Networking, Exchange, and Visibility**
   Paderborn University establishes and uses suitable exchange formats to network researchers working on sustainability-related topics. Existing event formats are specifically used for professional exchange.
4. **Making Good Practice Visible and Enabling Orientation**
   Successful projects, innovative approaches, and proven procedures in the field of sustainability-related research are systematically documented, prepared, and made accessible across the university.
5. **Strengthening Research Data Management in the Context of Sustainability-Related Research**
   Existing research data management services are systematically integrated, made visible, and further developed by the Research Data Management Team in the context of sustainability-related research.
6. **Enabling the Shared Use of Research Infrastructure**
   The shared use of research equipment and infrastructures is supported through transparent access regulations, information services, and coordination formats.
7. **Sustainably Anchoring Communication and Visibility**
   Sustainability-related research activities are made visible across the university through coordinated communication formats and digital platforms.

2. Teaching

Teaching at Paderborn University is aimed at connecting academic knowledge, competence development, and societal responsibility. Based on the Mission Statement for Studies and Teaching, it promotes activating, participatory, and competence-oriented teaching and learning processes that enable students to critically reflect on knowledge, apply it independently, and situate it responsibly within societal contexts.
Sustainability in teaching builds on this self-understanding. It supports the development of subject-specific and interdisciplinary competencies, promotes critical thinking, interdisciplinarity, and diversity of perspectives, and strengthens the ability to recognize complex interconnections. Digital, international, and accessible learning environments help take diversity into account and enable individual learning pathways.
The teaching of corresponding competencies is of particular importance in teacher education. The sustainability strategy in the field of teaching specifies the ambition formulated in the Mission Statement and strengthens the integration of sustainability-related educational goals in studies and teaching at Paderborn University.(Mission Statement for Studies and Teaching | Paderborn University)
In teacher education programs, the perspective of preparing students as multipliers of Education for Sustainable Development, ESD, represents a particular challenge.

Core Understanding of Sustainable Teaching

Knowledge and Responsibility
Teaching at Paderborn University conveys academic foundations, promotes critical thinking, and strengthens the ability to apply knowledge responsibly in societal contexts.
Competence Orientation
Education for Sustainable Development is promoted through the development of design competencies, systems understanding, future orientation, and reflective thinking.
Disciplinary Diversity
Each discipline makes its own contribution, from technical and economic solutions to cultural and social reflection, through to didactic implementation in teacher education.
Research and Teaching in Dialogue
Sustainability is conveyed in teaching on an evidence-based basis and in close connection with research and teaching innovation projects.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University strengthens the integration of sustainability into studies and teaching in order to enable students and teaching staff to act in a reflective, responsible, and future-oriented manner. Sustainability is made tangible within the different disciplinary cultures and is intended to promote dialogue between disciplines, generations, and societal actors.
The central aim is to design teaching and learning processes in such a way that they foster critical thinking, design competence, and an understanding of systemic interconnections, and encourage students to actively contribute to the sustainable development of academia, business, and society. The university supports the in-depth integration of sustainability into all degree programs and curricula in order to educate students and teaching staff as active multipliers for sustainable thinking and action.

Operational Goals

1. **Integration of Education for Sustainable Development into All Degree Programs**
   Sustainability aspects are gradually and contextually integrated into curricula in order to achieve the goal of enabling students to understand complex interconnections, assume responsibility, and actively help shape future processes. Sustainability-related content is taught on a research-based foundation and, where appropriate to the discipline, integrated into project-, problem-, or research-oriented teaching formats.
2. **Anchoring Sustainability in the Curriculum**
   Sustainability is systematically integrated into teaching as a cross-cutting topic.
3. **Qualifying Teaching Staff as Multipliers for Sustainable Development**
   Professional development and continuing education opportunities for teaching staff on integrating sustainability into teaching are expanded. The active encouragement of exchange on innovative teaching and learning methods, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, best-practice examples for promoting sustainability competencies, as well as the creation of framework conditions for making use of these opportunities, is also pursued.
4. **Developing Criteria and Quality Standards for Sustainability in Teaching**
   University-wide guidelines are developed to ensure the credible and impact-oriented teaching of sustainability-related content. The aim is to create transparency and commitment and to avoid superficial approaches.
5. **Expanding Digitalization in Teaching**
   Accessible, learning-friendly study and teaching conditions for a heterogeneous student body are promoted, enabling accessibility, flexibility, and participation. This includes digital Open Educational Resources, OER, recordings of courses, and a learning-friendly environment for all students, as well as the creation of framework conditions for making use of these opportunities. Digital teaching and learning formats can also open up international perspectives and opportunities for exchange, where this is appropriate in terms of subject matter and organization.
6. **Strengthening Participation and Impact Measurement**
   Students are actively involved in the further development of sustainability-oriented offerings and in the development of instruments for assessing the impact of competence-oriented teaching. Feedback from students and teaching staff is incorporated into quality development and into the orientation of sustainability-related educational goals. Students are involved not only in evaluation, but also in the conceptual further development of sustainability-oriented teaching formats and curricula, and contribute as co-creators of teaching and learning processes.
7. **Promoting Empowerment and Transformative Action Competencies**
   Sustainable teaching at Paderborn University strengthens the ability of all university members to actively help shape processes of change. The aim is to increase individual and collective self-efficacy through empowerment formats, to encourage reflection on values and responsibility, and thereby to promote a culture of co-creation.
   Empowerment is understood as enabling participation in the university's transformation processes and their critical-constructive co-design, in line with the recommendation of the German Rectors' Conference, HRK, to anchor sustainability as a shared learning and design task for all status groups. In addition to design competencies, empowerment formats also promote critical reflection on conflicting goals, ambivalences, and different academic and societal perspectives on sustainability.

Impulses

1. **Advising and Support for Integrating Sustainability into Degree Programs**
   Advising and support services for faculties and teaching staff are developed in order to systematically integrate Education for Sustainable Development into existing and new degree programs. In this way, incentives, exchange, and interdisciplinary cooperation are promoted so that sustainability competencies can be conveyed in a contextualized and practice-oriented manner.
2. **Training and Continuing Education for Teaching Staff**

   The range of regular training and workshop opportunities for designing competence-oriented teaching for sustainable development is expanded. This includes higher education didactics training, train-the-trainer concepts, and low-threshold exchange formats such as an Education for Sustainable Development, ESD, or Sustainability Café, which enables impulses and networking.
3. **Quality Assurance and Further Development of Teaching Practice**
   Instruments for quality assurance in sustainability-oriented teaching are established, and continuous reflection on learning objectives, effectiveness, and design competence is promoted. University-wide guidelines and quality criteria for the credible and impact-oriented implementation of sustainable teaching concepts are also developed. The further development of sustainability-oriented teaching takes place in continuous dialogue between students, teaching staff, and other status groups.
4. **Further Development and Networking of Pilot Projects**
   Interdisciplinary project formats, for example within the framework of the "UPB for Future" working group or through project-based learning, are supported and made visible.
5. **Strengthening Transparency and Communication**
   Regular communication takes place on progress, challenges, and best-practice examples regarding the integration of sustainability into teaching. Clear information channels are established to inform teaching staff, students, and employees about offers, training opportunities, and current developments.
6. **Anchoring Sustainability in Continuing Education Programs**
   Sustainability aspects are integrated into interdisciplinary and subject-specific continuing education programs, for example within the framework of Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development, VETSD. The aim is the continuous competence development of teaching staff and employees in all qualification phases. Concepts in the area of VETSD can become effective as relevant continuing education offerings both within and beyond the university.
   An e-learning tool on the topic of sustainability is introduced for administrative staff. Content from the university-wide understanding of sustainability is integrated into existing continuing education and qualification programs where appropriate. In addition, workshops and seminars on sustainability, societal engagement, and future skills are held regularly.
7. **Development and Implementation of Empowerment Formats**
   Target-group-oriented empowerment formats are established that enable university members—teaching staff, students, and employees—to assume responsibility and shape their own contributions to sustainable transformation. These include continuing education and coaching offers, peer learning spaces, reflection workshops, and trainings across status groups that combine knowledge, value orientation, and action competence.
   These formats promote the experience of self-efficacy, strengthen identification and engagement with the sustainability strategy, and create connections between teaching, personal development, and institutional change. In teacher education, Education for Sustainable Development is taught and reflected upon as an integral component of professional pedagogical action competence.
8. **Training Sessions**
   A workshop for marketing representatives and degree program coordinators on Paderborn University's understanding of sustainability and target-group-oriented marketing is to be implemented.

3. Transfer

Paderborn University's transfer strategy is currently being further developed in a participatory process. The new transfer strategy is expected to be adopted in autumn 2026.
At the University of Paderborn, we view transfer as a reciprocal process of learning and shaping that enriches society as well as research and teaching. Through multilateral transfer activities, the University of Paderborn ensures that it conducts research and teaching on relevant topics and current challenges. In doing so, it has an impact on society as a whole and shapes discourses as well as concrete applications. It initiates development processes and helps shape them.
We view transfer as a core mission focused on shaping the future and, as such, as a key dimension of Paderborn University's performance. In its cross-cutting role, transfer is an integral part of research and teaching. The continuous development of the transfer strategy is permanently anchored at Paderborn University as a strategic, transparent, and participatory process.

Strategic Goal

Sustainable development will serve as a guiding principle for Paderborn University's transfer activities in the future. Sustainability-related transfer activities will be highlighted and promoted through various formats in society, business, politics, and education.

Operational Goals

1. **Integrating Sustainable Development into Transfer Activities**
   In line with Paderborn University's understanding of sustainability, transfer activities are guided to systematically integrate sustainable development.
2. **Making Sustainability-Related Transfer Activities Visible**
   Sustainability-related transfer activities are specifically highlighted.
3. **Integrating sustainability and transfer**
   Ongoing exchange takes place through the Sustainability Working Group and the Knowledge Transfer Circle at the University of Paderborn.

Impulses

1. **Anchoring Sustainability as a Cross-Cutting Theme in Transfer**
   A dialogue will be established between the Transfer Group and the Sustainability Working Group to incorporate sustainability-related ideas into transfer, reflect on experiences, and coordinate results.
2. **Developing guidance for sustainable transfer**
   The Sustainability Working Group, in collaboration with the Transfer Circle, will develop a practical guidance tool for transfer activities in line with the university's understanding of sustainability. The guidance tool will demonstrate how transfer activities can be designed with sustainability in mind.
3. **Increasing the visibility of transfer projects with a strong sustainability focus**
   Transfer projects with a strong sustainability focus will be specifically highlighted in sustainability communications to showcase their contributions to the sustainable development of the University of Paderborn and to the societal impact of transfer.
4. **Expanding public science and dialogue formats**
   Open event formats such as the "UPB for Future" lecture series, participatory discussion series, or contributions to events like the Long Night of Science will be (further) developed or strengthened to make sustainability-related research accessible to diverse social groups.

4. Entrepreneurship

Paderborn University understands entrepreneurship as a contribution to shaping societal transformation processes. This is not only about founding companies, but also about fostering entrepreneurial thinking and responsible action in research, teaching, and transfer. The focus is on initiatives, projects, and start-ups that address current challenges — for example in the areas of education, social justice, or ecological viability — and explore new approaches. The university supports these initiatives through offers in the areas of transfer, consulting, networks, as well as inter- and transdisciplinary exchange formats.
Entrepreneurship also includes the development of competencies that are necessary for implementing such initiatives: self-organization, teamwork, the ability to reflect, and a conscious approach to responsibility. This applies in particular to students, who can gain initial experience in entrepreneurial thinking and action through start-up support or project work.
The aim is to create spaces in which ideas can emerge, be tested, and be further developed — with openness to different disciplines, practical contexts, and societal perspectives.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University specifically strengthens entrepreneurship with a view to sustainable development. It promotes sustainability-oriented start-ups, creates framework conditions for responsible entrepreneurship, and expands inter- and transdisciplinary innovation and transfer structures. Through close networking with business, civil society, and politics, the university contributes to developing solutions for societal challenges and to increasing its attractiveness as a future-oriented and sustainable innovation location.

Operational Goals

1. **Increase visibility and awareness**
   The sustainability-related start-up scene at Paderborn University will be made more visible and further strengthened.
2. **Increase regional networking**
   Innovative start-ups with a sustainability focus will be more closely connected with regional stakeholders.
3. **Accelerate transformation**
   Start-ups from Paderborn University will be used as drivers of sustainable employment in the region.
4. **Competence building for sustainable entrepreneurship**
   Students and founders will be specifically trained in social, entrepreneurial, and sustainability-related competencies.
5. **Enable sustainability in all start-ups**
   Every founder from Paderborn University should be enabled to develop a sustainable business model through access to an information base in the field of sustainable organizational development.

Impulses

1. **Workshops & networking formats**
   Organization of transformation workshops and networking meetings for founders from Paderborn University and start-ups with a focus on sustainable business ideas.
2. **Science communication & visibility clips**
   Target group-specific, science-based communication formats — such as short videos, social media content, and best practices — will be developed to make sustainability topics within the start-up ecosystem easily accessible and to specifically stimulate start-up activities in the field of sustainable innovation.

   The formats will be developed in co-creation with start-ups and practice partners, combining scientific findings with concrete application examples and including clear calls to action, such as access to funding programs, tools, and networks. The aim is to achieve measurable impact in terms of sustainable start-ups beyond mere visibility.
3. **Involvement of experts**
   External experts from entrepreneurship and sustainability will be involved in selected formats. The focus will be on transferring practical experience.
4. **Supporting interdisciplinarity**
   Interdisciplinary projects and exchange formats will be encouraged in order to connect innovation ideas and sustainability knowledge within the university.
5. **Evidence-based framework & tools**
   A practical, evidence-based tool will be developed to support start-ups in translating sustainability goals into concrete action steps and systematically developing impact pathways.
6. **Connecting research, teaching, and start-up activities**
   Transfer will be strengthened by linking research results, teaching formats, and start-up support, including through the infrastructure of garage33 — events, makerspace, media formats — as well as digital platforms and mailing lists to scale the content.

5. Public Engagement

This area describes the university's interaction with the public through events, public lectures, workshops, media, and other activities that contribute to societal networking.

Strategic goal

Paderborn University strengthens its role as a multiplier for sustainability in the region by expanding partnerships and initiatives, as well as by systematically integrating sustainability-related perspectives into existing regional cooperation and networking structures in Ostwestfalen-Lippe. These efforts are intended to promote sustainable development, civic engagement, and transformation.

Operational Goals

1. **Partnerships**
   The number of regional research and project partnerships in the field of sustainability, as well as communication about these partnerships, should be increased.
2. **Sichtbarkeit Visibility**
   The university aims to strengthen the visibility of sustainability-related fields of action on campus and in the region.
3. **University initiatives**
   University initiatives that advance the topic of sustainability will be supported and, where appropriate, established.
4. **Embedding sustainability in regional network structures**
   Sustainability-related topics will be systematically integrated into existing regional cooperation and exchange formats, particularly in the OWL Transfer Circle and in collaboration with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts, and other regional institutions.

Impulse

1. **Expanding networks**
   Cooperations with regional and municipal stakeholders in the field of sustainability — such as the City of Paderborn, the district, schools, cultural institutions, business, and civil society — will be newly initiated, maintained, and expanded.
2. **Regular networking meetings**
   Regular thematic meetings with partner institutions on current sustainability projects will be organized.
3. **Public event formats**
   Publicly accessible events — such as lecture series, science cafés, panel discussions, and sustainability days — will be held to promote societal dialogue on sustainability topics.
4. **Storytelling & good practices**
   Formats for making sustainability projects at Paderborn University visible will be developed, for example through a digital map, staff portraits, and social media posts.
5. **Strengthening the networking of initiatives**
   Networking and exchange formats for university initiatives and external stakeholders will be created, for example through a Paderborn University forum on "Civic Engagement & Sustainability."
6. **Expanding service learning**
   Students will work on sustainability projects with external partners, thereby assuming practical social responsibility.

7. **Bundling communication**
   A central communication structure for engagement, public outreach, and sustainability will be established through the website, press work, and social media in order to make activities visible and tangible.
8. **Strengthening regional sustainability networking in OWL**
   Existing regional cooperation structures such as the OWL Transfer Circle, as well as collaboration with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts, and OWL GmbH, will be actively shaped in order to systematically integrate sustainability-related perspectives into qualification, transfer, and development processes. The aim is to jointly further develop regional competencies, projects, and formats to support sustainable transformation.

6. Climate Protection and Operations

This field of action encompasses all operational areas and processes of the university that are related to climate protection. These include, in particular, greenhouse gas-relevant topics such as energy supply, mobility, and resource management, as well as the structural and technical infrastructure of the campus. The focus is on the climate impacts of the university's technical operations and on developing future-proof, resilient, and responsible university operations. (Climate resilience)

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University aims to design its infrastructure in a comprehensively sustainable and climate-friendly way. Through holistic management of energy, mobility, and operations, as well as the consistent use and expansion of renewable energies, negative ecological impacts are to be minimized. In addition, the social and functional qualities of the campus are to be improved. The goal is low-emission, resilient, accessible, and future-proof university operations that contribute to achieving international, national, and regional sustainability goals.

Operational Goals

1. **Climate-friendly transformation of campus operations**
   The expansion and use of renewable energies across the entire campus are a key focus, as is the consistent reduction of climate-relevant emissions through the energy optimization of technical systems and buildings, more efficient resource management, and environmentally friendly infrastructure. Climate-resilient infrastructure will be initiated.
2. **Sustainable development as a cross-cutting operational task**
   Sustainability standards in all areas of university operations — from procurement and waste management to building technology — will be systematically further developed. Socio-ecological criteria for construction, operation, modernization, and maintenance are to be embedded through participatory design processes. Biodiversity, as well as the quality of outdoor and indoor spaces on campus as part of a liveable and sustainable learning and working environment, will be promoted. The campus is to be used as a testing and learning space for sustainable innovations, involving research, teaching, and administration.

Impulses

1. **Implementation of energy-efficient technologies**
   Existing buildings and technical systems are to be modernized with a focus on reducing energy consumption. Digital monitoring and control systems for managing energy flows will be expanded and optimized. It must be ensured that existing technologies function reliably, such as motion detectors and heating control systems.
2. **Expansion of renewable energies**
   A future-proof, comprehensive property energy concept will be developed. This includes the gradual expansion of regenerative on-site electricity and heat generation, as well as the identification of potential partnerships with regional energy producers to promote sustainable energy infrastructure on campus.
3. **Sustainable and socially equitable mobility strategies**
   Low-emission forms of mobility, such as cycling, public transport, car sharing, and bike sharing, will be encouraged. To strengthen sustainable mobility, close networking with public transport providers such as Deutsche Bahn and Padersprinter, as well as complementary incentives, is required.

4. **Climate adaptation and ecological enhancement**
   Concrete climate adaptation measures, such as unsealing surfaces, greening, or shading, will be identified. The enhancement of campus areas as socio-ecological habitats that promote biodiversity and improve the quality of stay for everyone is to be implemented. Participatory formats for campus design, such as idea workshops involving students and staff, will be integrated.
5. **Campus as a practice-oriented testing and learning space**
   Suitable degree programmes will be involved in practice-oriented implementation projects on campus. The campus is to be used as a visible learning, testing, and exchange space in the areas of climate protection, mobility, and the energy transition, strengthening transfer between research, teaching, and operations. Where the subject-specific and methodological design is appropriate, selected projects can be implemented as real-world laboratories in connection with research and teaching.

7. Procurement

This field of action encompasses the purchasing of goods, services, software, and infrastructures that support the university's ongoing operations as well as research and teaching activities and student engagement. The focus is on the responsible selection and use of resources across the entire supply and value chain.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University designs its procurement practices in line with a holistic understanding of sustainable development. The aim is to promote resource conservation, social justice, and long-term usability through responsible decisions along the entire procurement chain, without disregarding significant economic factors. Future-oriented and reflective procurement not only supports the ecological and functional operation of the university, but also actively contributes to societal transformation and the strengthening of regenerative systems — while taking into account the lowest possible resource consumption and social foundations.

Operational Goals

1. **Strengthening resource-efficient procurement**
   Products and software will increasingly be selected based on ecological production, socially responsible working conditions, repairability, and reusability.
2. **Extending the lifespan and usage cycles of products**
   Measures for the maintenance, reuse, transfer, repair, and, where appropriate, shared use or pooling of devices and materials will be implemented in order to reduce new purchases and additional expenditure.
3. **Embedding sustainability criteria in the procurement process**
   Sustainability requirements will be systematically integrated into tenders, award procedures, and contractual terms and secured within procurement processes through binding environmental standards, positive lists, and supplier declarations.
4. **Ensuring a contribution to social responsibility**
   Human rights and social aspects will be taken into account along supply chains through the targeted demand for ecologically and fairly produced products and by observing recognized standards.
5. **Building awareness and training for staff and students**
   Staff will be regularly informed and trained on sustainable procurement practices, legal frameworks, and available sustainable alternatives; students will be reached via the General Students' Committee, AStA.
6. **Taking life-cycle costs into account**
   When assessing costs, the costs across all life stages of the requested good should be considered, rather than only the initial investment.
7. **Considering sustainability criteria for software and IT infrastructure**
   When procuring and using software, hardware, and IT infrastructures, sustainability aspects such as energy consumption, maintainability, longevity, compatibility, manufacturer support, as well as data protection and IT security will be taken into account. The aim is to strengthen the long-term usability, resource efficiency, and reliability of digital systems and to reduce follow-up costs over the entire usage cycle.

Impulses

1. **Implementing a device-sharing system**
   A system for the shared use of devices between departments and staff members will be introduced.
2. **Measures to reduce standby consumption**
   Information and training will be provided to reduce energy consumption by switching off devices in standby mode.
3. **Encouraging the purchase of refurbished devices**
   The procurement of refurbished devices will be simplified in order to create incentives for their use.
4. **Central material storage**
   By establishing and using a central material storage facility, devices, materials, and equipment can be managed more efficiently, used multiple times, and distributed in a resource-efficient manner.
5. **Raising awareness of sustainability in procurement**
   Staff and students will be sensitized to responsible consumption through the visibility of best practices and targeted information offers. The aim is to critically question the necessity of procurement and thereby develop procurement practices that are as local and sustainable as possible.
6. **Encouraging energy-saving behaviour**
   Staff and students will be enabled to adopt energy-saving behaviour in everyday university life through targeted awareness-raising measures and practical information.
7. **Making resources visible**
   To increase transparency and avoid unnecessary new purchases, a central database of existing devices and resources will be established. The aim is to make better use of existing equipment, enable shared use, and thereby reduce procurement as well as energy and material consumption.
8. **Sustainable procurement practices**
   A university-wide guideline for sustainable procurement will be developed. It will bundle environmental standards, positive lists, and sample wording, and support the consistent application of sustainability-related criteria in tendering and procurement processes.
9. **Orientation framework for sustainable IT procurement and use**
   An orienting catalogue of criteria for sustainable software and hardware procurement will be developed in coordination with the responsible IT, data protection, and procurement units. The catalogue will address, among other things, energy efficiency, maintenance and update capability, lifespan, manufacturer dependencies, data protection requirements, and compatibility with existing systems, and will support transparent, sustainability-oriented decision-making.

8. Biodiversity

This field of action encompasses the responsible and conscious management of natural habitats and species on the grounds of Paderborn University, in their immediate surroundings, and in spaces influenced by university activities. This includes the targeted preservation, expansion, restoration, and maintenance of biodiverisity on campus areas — for example through flower meadows, refuge areas, nesting sites for animals, near-natural design of open spaces, unsealing of surfaces, and green roofs and façades. Biodiversity is thus understood not only as an ecological value, but also as an essential foundation for a liveable and future-oriented society. As an important factor and fundamental building block of climate adaptation, it intervenes in systemic interconnections.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University promotes the biodiversity of ecosystems on campus through climate-flexible and biodiverse design, use, and development of its spaces. Habitats are to be preserved, regenerated, and newly created in order to strengthen the positive environmental impacts of university spaces — for example by expanding species-rich green areas, improving the microclimate, supporting pollinating insects, and increasing soil quality and water retention capacity. At the same time, negative impacts on species diversity, soil, climate, and ecological cycles are to be minimized. In addition to promoting ecological balance, this also contributes to quality of life and to the university's transformative culture of education and research.

Operational Goals

1. **Improving ecological and social quality of stay**
   Near-natural and accessible open spaces will be developed that connect biodiversity with health, recreation, and social participation. A healthy microclimate, better air quality, and refuge areas will be promoted through climate- and biodiversity-sensitive land use.
2. **Establishing exemplary, future-oriented campus design**
   Paderborn University positions itself as a model and learning space for biodiversity-promoting campus design. Ecological measures will be made visible and communicated in order to raise awareness and encourage replication — both within and beyond the university.
3. **Linking with research, teaching, and participatory co-design**
   Biodiversity-related topics will be integrated into inter- and transdisciplinary research projects and study programmes by promoting participatory formats through which university members can help shape biodiversity-friendly spaces.
4. **Promoting a species-rich and resilient campus ecosystem**
   Structurally rich, site-appropriate habitats for increasing species diversity on campus will be preserved, created, restored, and/or maintained. Biodiversity-promoting measures such as green roofs, unsealing of surfaces, and near-natural, insect-friendly design will be integrated into construction and maintenance concepts, taking into account nutrient and host plants for insects.

Impulses

1. **Intensifying biodiversity-promoting roof design**
   Green roof projects on existing and new buildings will be tested, further developed, and systematically implemented.
2. **Near-natural design of campus open spaces**
   Nutrient-rich and flowering meadows, wild perennial beds, hedges, raised beds, and stepping-stone biotopes will be created and maintained to promote insect and plant diversity. Ecologically valuable transition zones, for example between buildings and paths, will be developed as structurally rich habitats.
3. **Unsealing and renaturation of spaces**
   The identification and prioritization of areas suitable for unsealing will be enabled in order to restore ecological soil functions. Infiltration areas and rainwater management will be integrated to promote soil ecology and climate adaptation.
4. **Biodiversity-oriented selection of materials and spaces**
   Plants, building materials, and equipment will be selected sustainably and in an environmentally friendly manner, taking ecological criteria into account — for example, no invasive species and site-adapted planting. Biodiversity-promoting criteria will be integrated into procurement guidelines and tendering procedures.
5. **Strengthening visibility and education**
   Signage, information boards, and digital formats will help communicate biodiversity measures to university members and visitors. The involvement of students and staff in biodiversity projects — such as urban gardening, citizen science, and species monitoring — is to be implemented.
6. **Making biodiversity tangible**
   The university uses its multiplier role and promotes biodiversity in campus recreational areas. Through targeted awareness-raising and low-threshold offers such as the provision of seed bombs, active contributions to greening and species diversity will be encouraged and made visible.

9. Circular Economy

This field of action addresses material and resource flows within Paderborn University — from procurement to use, reuse, and disposal. The focus is on developing holistic resource management geared toward waste prevention, circular use, preservation of recyclable materials, and the promotion of closed material cycles. At the university, the circular economy is understood not only as an operational necessity, but also as an integral part of a future-oriented, learning organization that seeks to respect ecological limits and unlock innovation potential.

Strategic Goal

Through efficient, circular procurement and use of resources, as well as low-waste processes along the entire life cycle of materials, products, and infrastructures, Paderborn University works toward establishing and further developing a circular economic model.
In addition, the university actively contributes to the scientific advancement of circular economy concepts through its research. This includes, among other things, research into new materials, process technologies, circular models, and socio-economic framework conditions. In close connection with teaching and transfer, innovative approaches are tested, reflected upon, and transferred into practice in order to actively help shape the societal transformation toward a resource-efficient future.

Operational Goals

1. **Effective resource use in university operations**
   Closed material cycles will be established through reuse, repair, refurbishment, recycling, and upcycling. Systematic processes — the R-principles — for recording, separating, and returning materials to the usage cycle will be developed and established.
2. **Reducing the ecological footprint through circular procurement and waste prevention**
   Circular economy criteria will be integrated into all relevant procurement and tendering processes, for example life-cycle assessments and reusable concepts. An effective, resource-efficient waste management system focusing on prevention, separation, and return will be established.
3. **Developing a resource-efficient, learning campus**
   The campus will be designed as a model for circular economy practices, with equitable education, communication, and participation formats for university members. Pilot projects on the circular economy in cooperation with research, teaching, administration, external partners, and the student body will be encouraged.
4. **Connecting research and operations to strengthen the circular economy**
   Research on circular approaches, materials, and systems across different disciplines will be made visible and structurally embedded. The application of research results in operational practice to measurably reduce the university's resource consumption will be specifically encouraged.

Impulses

1. **Enabling low-threshold return options and transparent recyclable material cycles**
   The establishment of central, clearly visible collection points on campus, where students and staff can return recyclable materials in a targeted and correct manner, will be pursued.
2. **Establishing intelligent waste and resource management systems**
   Waste separation will be optimized across the entire campus through standardized, clearly labelled collection systems. Circular processes for recycling used products are to be identified and introduced.
3. **Strengthening internal reuse and resource cycles**
   An internal reuse pool for office equipment, devices, and consumables — a "reuse platform" — is to be established. In addition, repair initiatives within the university, such as repair workshops and maintenance teams, will be strengthened.
4. **Training and awareness-raising on the circular economy**
   Educational offers, such as training sessions, information formats, and e-learning modules, for students and staff on circular principles, waste prevention, and resource awareness will be developed and implemented. Circular economy topics will be integrated into general sustainability communication on campus.
5. **Research and pilot projects on the circular economy**
   Research projects on circular materials, design principles, usage models, and urban material fllows are to be supported. Pilot projects and — where accompanied by scientific research — real-world laboratories for implementing and evaluating circular concepts directly on campus are to be developed.

10. Campus

This field of action describes activities and initiatives related to campus life, including student organizations, cultural events, and social interactions that shape life on the university grounds. The campus of Paderborn University offers students, staff, and teaching staff a wide range of opportunities for academic and personal development. In addition to study guidance and career orientation, particular attention is paid to supporting social and cultural engagement. Students should be able to contribute as active co-creators of university life while developing competencies for responsible, democratic, and sustainable participation in societal transformation processes. Cultural offers, student initiatives, and service learning strengthen the sense of community. At the same time, support is essential in order to maintain a balance between increasing performance pressure, psychological stress, and engagement.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University is to become a central place of networking and civic engagement by raising awareness among students and staff for ecological responsibility, social justice, and economic viability, enabling their active participation in transformation processes and in shaping accessible, democratic campus life, and thereby fostering a strong sense of belonging — with the aim of making a long-term positive contribution to everyday university life and regional development.

Operational Goals

1. **University initiatives**
   University initiatives and student projects with a sustainability focus will be supported. In addition, projects that do not explicitly operate under the label of "sustainability" but provide impulses for a future-oriented and just campus will also be supported.
2. **Awareness-raising**
   All university members should be sensitized to global and local challenges and to strengthening the ability to critically question their own attitudes, structures, and practices with regard to their future viability. The focus is not only on ecological aspects, but also on power relations, questions of justice, cultural diversity, and ethical responsibility.
3. **Networking**
   Open and low-threshold meeting spaces — both physical and digital — will be created, as well as cooperation formats that promote interdisciplinary exchange and shared learning among students, teaching staff, administrative and technical staff, and external partners. The aim is a democratic campus where participation and co-creation are lived practice.
4. **Further developing the campus as an experiential space for future-oriented living and working**
   Measures such as green roofs, rainwater retention, the expansion of renewable energies, or the design of social recreational spaces serve not only ecological optimization, but also improve the quality of stay, promote learning opportunities, and encourage active engagement with societal change.
5. **Strengthening cooperation with schools and involving pupils**
   Long-term partnerships with schools in the region are to be established in order to work jointly on future-relevant topics and actively involve pupils in participatory learning and design processes. In this context, the university will be opened up as a place of learning and encounter for young people — for example through project days, school labs, peer-to-peer formats, or joint events with students. The aim is to strengthen transformation competencies at an early stage and to make education tangible as a shared societal responsibility.

Impulses

1. **Encouraging university engagement**
   A digital ideas platform for submitting and developing project ideas for students and staff will be conceptualized, including coordination with the Studierendenwerk regarding shared use and visibility. An integrated communication strategy for sustainability and engagement projects will also be developed.
2. **Strategic outreach to schools and pupils**
   The Central Student Advisory Service, ZSB, will take the lead in coordinating outreach to schools. The university's sustainability topics will be systematically integrated into school outreach, for example by including sustainability references in newsletters for schools.
3. **Cooperation platform**
   Quarterly meetings between the Sustainability Office of Paderborn University and the Studierendenwerk will take place to coordinate interfaces. A cooperation agenda is to be developed on topics such as sustainable campus life, student engagement, housing, and event formats.
   Key questions:
   → At which points can and should the university and the Studierendenwerk cooperate systematically in pursuing sustainability goals?
   → How will this cooperation be organized and made visible?
4. **Increasing the quality of stay**
   Attractive, user-friendly places to spend time on campus are to be created — for example outdoor learning spaces, quiet zones, weather-protected seating areas, or places for spontaneous social exchange.
5. **Creating low-threshold meeting spaces**
   Open, informal places for social interaction, student engagement, and interdisciplinary cooperation are to be integrated — both indoors and outdoors, for example through seating design in campus spaces.
6. **Strengthening digital spaces for participation and collaboration**
   Digital infrastructures that enable collaborative work, hybrid learning formats, and low-barrier participation — such as platforms, virtual meeting points, and digital learning spaces — will be expanded and made more accessible.
7. **Promoting participatory campus design**
   Participatory processes will be carried out to determine what students and staff need for a "feel-good campus," followed by the implementation of concrete suggestions in design and infrastructure.
8. **Accompanying sustainable campus development**
   Early involvement in planning processes together with the Bau- und Liegenschaftsbetrieb des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, BLB NRW, will be pursued in order to incorporate needs and ideas — such as quality of stay, social usability, and ecological aspects — into structural development.

11. Working Conditions

Working conditions refer to the framework conditions and environment in which university staff work. These include aspects such as job security, health, working hours, and the social environment. The objectives and impulses formulated in the field of action "Working Conditions" are understood as an orientation-providing and supportive contribution within the framework of existing responsibilities and decision-making processes. They do not replace responsibilities under personnel, labour, or co-determination law.

Strategic Goal

The aim is to contribute to the further development of university-wide framework conditions that support health, safety, equal opportunities, diversity, work-life balance, as well as transparent and fair working conditions. The activities of the Sustainability Office described in this field of action are explicitly intended as a complementary means of making already existing measures of the respectively responsible units more visible. The Sustainability Office does not claim responsibility for steering or accompanying the corresponding processes in terms of content; this remains with the relevant specialist units.

In this context, the sustainability area assumes a cross-cutting and supportive function by making existing activities visible, connecting them, and complementing them through impulses, awareness-raising, and continuing education offers. Sustainability is not understood here as an additional area, but as an orientation framework that becomes effective within existing structures and strengthens safe, respectful, and discrimination-free working environments. In doing so, the university is guided by European standards of good working, teaching, and research practice. Paderborn University understands attractive and fair working conditions as a central component of future-oriented and responsible university development.

Operational Goals

1. **Strengthening awareness-raising and continuing education**
   Regular training and information offers on topics of sustainability, equal treatment, diversity, anti-discrimination, and responsible leadership will be encouraged and supported in their visibility across the university. The university encourages continuing education programmes that specifically support professional development, the ability to reflect, and awareness of social responsibility.
2. **Protecting health and safety**
   The existing university health management system will continue to be communicated as before. Health-promoting activities such as sports programmes, relaxation offers, and workshops on stress management contribute to supporting the working capacity of all university members.
3. **Enabling equal treatment, diversity, and inclusion**
   The Sustainability Office supports the visibility of existing structures for promoting diversity, gender equality, and equal opportunities in close coordination with the responsible units and on the basis of the applicable gender equality and diversity concepts.
4. **Work-life balance**
   Flexible working time models, opportunities for location-flexible work, and family-friendly structures will remain in place and will be made visible and communicated in order to enable a balanced relationship between professional tasks and private responsibilities.
5. **Ensuring transparent and fair working conditions**
   The Sustainability Office supports the visibility of relevant guidelines on transparent and equal-opportunity recruitment and promotion processes and helps make existing discourses on fair working conditions accessible across the university.

6. **Embedding sustainability in onboarding**
   Institutional sustainability-related content of the university will be integrated into the onboarding of new staff members. New employees will be informed early on about existing structures, contact points, and opportunities for participation.

Impulses

1. **Strengthening awareness and competence development**
   The Sustainability Office encourages training offers on sustainability topics and makes existing offers visible that strengthen awareness of key future-oriented and responsibility-related issues. Opportunities for voluntary participation will be communicated, and links to existing personnel and organizational development for academic and non-academic staff will be highlighted.
2. **Expanding and making visible health promotion and prevention**
   The existing health management system will be supported in its visibility by the Sustainability Office. Existing offers related to physical and mental health — including exercise and relaxation programmes, resilience training in the sense of societal resilience, ergonomic counselling, and information offers on health-conscious work — will be communicated in a bundled form and made easily accessible to all university members.
3. **Promoting diversity, gender equality, and inclusion**
   In close coordination with the Central Equal Opportunities Office and the Family Service, the Sustainability Office supports the visibility of existing structures, offers, and measures related to equal opportunities, diversity, and anti-discrimination. Existing support offers as well as mentoring and guidance programmes will be communicated and made accessible across the university.
4. **V Work-life balance**
   Flexible working time models and location-flexible work options will be made visible and communicated, taking team and presence requirements into account. Existing support offers for employees with care responsibilities, such as childcare, parental leave counselling, or care leave regulations, will be specifically strengthened in their reach by the Sustainability Office.
5. **Digital work concepts**
   Existing digital work concepts and learning offers will be communicated and supported in their reach insofar as they contribute to reducing commuting and to reconciling work, study, and family life. It will be taken into account that digital formats are not equally accessible or suitable for all employee groups.
6. **Developing sustainability-oriented onboarding material**
   The Sustainability Office will develop digital information and orientation materials for new staff members that bundle key content of the sustainability strategy, relevant contact points, existing initiatives, as well as participation and continuing education offers, and make them available as part of onboarding.

12. Institutional Integration

This field of action refers to the organizational structures and processes within the university that serve the implementation of overarching strategies and guidelines. This includes committees, regulations, and administrative processes. At Paderborn University, sustainability is understood by all members and affiliates as a shared task and is to be systematically and permanently embedded in all areas. The aim is to establish sustainability goals not as individual projects, but as an integral part of decision-making processes, mission statements, and steering mechanisms. Participation, responsibility, and transparency are essential for this.

Strategic Goal

Paderborn University strives for the comprehensive institutional implementation of sustainable processes in order to shape the transition toward a future-oriented, just, and ecologically responsible university systematically, structurally, and independently of individual persons. The aim is to embed sustainability as a lasting guiding principle in all university areas — from university leadership to research, teaching, transfer, and operations, as well as governance structures.

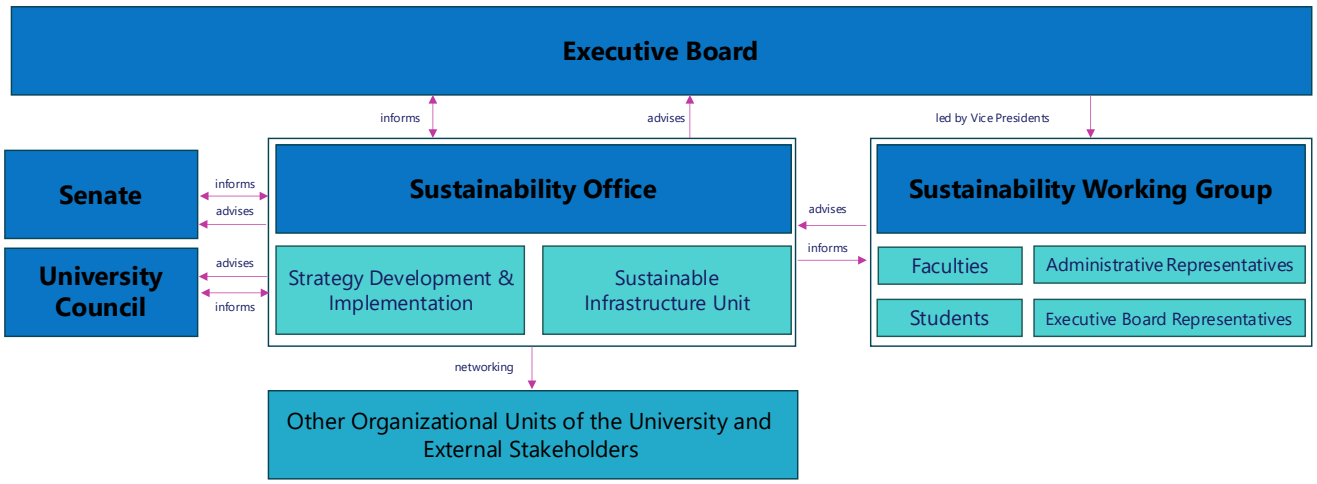

Figure 6 Structured overview of institutional embedding

Operational Goals

1. **Developing a shared understanding of sustainability**
   Within Paderborn University, a university-wide and jointly supported understanding of sustainability will be established as a binding frame of reference for all status groups. On this basis, faculty-specific concretizations will be supported that make the university-wide understanding of sustainability compatible with disciplinary cultures.
2. **Expanding and consolidating the sustainability area**
   The sustainability area will be further developed on a permanent and participatory basis; internal sustainability stakeholders will be systematically networked and coordinated.
3. **Ensuring knowledge retention and continuity**
   Sustainability knowledge and processes will be secured in the long term and continued independently of personnel changes.
4. **Supporting and expanding internal and external sustainability networks**
   Sustainability networks will be actively supported, strengthened, and strategically developed further.

5. **Proactive process and measure development for the Executive Board**
   Through the proactive development, preparation, and prioritization of sustainability-related strategic pathways, the Executive Board will be supported in its steering function and enabled to make well-founded, coherent, and future-oriented decisions in line with sustainable university development.
6. **Networking teaching and research offers on sustainability across the university**
   Sustainability-related teaching and research activities will be systematically networked across the university in order to make synergies between disciplines visible, avoid duplicate structures, and strengthen the visibility of sustainability-oriented teaching and research activities at Paderborn University.

Impulses

1. **Participatory workshops**
   Regular participatory formats will be conducted to further develop a shared understanding of sustainability and to record the impacts and development needs of the sustainability strategy, with systematic documentation of results for qualitative impact monitoring.
2. **University-wide understanding of sustainability**
   A shared understanding of sustainability will be developed, published, and communicated across the university.
3. **Digital sustainability map of the university**
   A digital platform will be established on which existing sustainability projects and activities are recorded, along with the development of a digital sustainability archive for knowledge management.
4. **Integration of sustainability into degree programmes**
   An operational orientation framework will be developed and made available to the faculties for concrete application in module and degree programme development.
5. **Increasing interdisciplinary teaching formats**
   The Sustainability Office will provide organizational support for initiating interdisciplinary teaching formats and will make relevant offers visible across the university.
6. **Good-practice examples**
   Training sessions, materials, and good-practice examples for teaching staff and employees will be developed and provided.
7. **Networking sustainability stakeholders internally**
   Internal sustainability stakeholders will be systematically identified, connected with one another, and supported through regular exchange formats, for example by establishing a regular "Sustainability Forum" to coordinate university stakeholders.
8. **Networking sustainability stakeholders regionally and supra-regionally**
   Regional and supra-regional cooperation with municipalities, companies, NGOs, and other stakeholders will be systematically expanded.
9. **Network activities**
   The university actively participates in cross-university sustainability networks in order to promote exchange, learning, and joint further development.
10. **Sustainability Working Group**
    The Sustainability Working Group will be formally consolidated as a permanent committee and organizationally embedded.
11. **Sustainability communication**
    Shared sustainability goals and activities will be systematically documented and communicated transparently.
12. **Strategic sustainability**
    A clear task profile will be defined for the strategic sustainability area, bundling strategy development, monitoring, and coordination.

13. **Human resources**
    The continuation of the strategy process will be supported by the reliable staffing of the Sustainability Office within the university structure.
14. **Participation in working groups**
    The participation of the Sustainability Office in relevant internal working groups will be actively supported and further expanded.

Impact Monitoring

The impact of Paderborn University's sustainability strategy unfolds through a shared, learning-oriented process shaped by cooperation, exchange, and continuous development. A culture of reflection, participation, and co-creation is continuously reviewed and strengthened. Based on the twelve fields of action, the strategy provides an orientation framework; the strategic and operational directions that have been set are continuously further developed through annual qualitative and quantitative feedback loops.
To ensure transparency of these feedback processes for the entire university community, the website "Sustainability at Paderborn University" is continuously updated. Impact monitoring is carried out in line with the recommendation of the German Rectors' Conference, HRK, which recommends steering through regular, participatory evaluations and continuous monitoring of all performance areas.

Qualitative Impact Monitoring — Participatory

Qualitative impact monitoring follows an open, participatory approach. In the meetings of the Sustainability Working Group, existing impulses of the strategy are reviewed with regard to their effectiveness, implementation status, connectivity, and relevance. Progress, challenges, and new developments within the twelve fields of action are jointly discussed. In these continuous feedback loops, suggestions from the faculties, administration, student initiatives, and external networks are taken up. Existing impulses are jointly prioritized and, where necessary, refined or further developed so that the strategy can respond flexibly to new findings and needs. Qualitative impact monitoring thus serves both the substantive continuation of the strategic directions and the strengthening of exchange, participation, and networking among all stakeholders at Paderborn University.

Quantitative Impact Monitoring — Operations

The operational dimension of the sustainability strategy is accompanied by quantitative impact monitoring. In practice-oriented areas, particularly climate protection, energy, and procurement, relevant developments are documented using measurable indicators. The Climate-Neutral State Administration of North Rhine-Westphalia, KNLV, serves as the binding, state-wide framework. It is integrated into the university's sustainability strategy and represents a mandatory quantitative review instrument for operational sustainability aspects. The data and indicators collected within the framework of this instrument provide an objective basis for classifying and reflecting on progress in the operational area. The results are incorporated into the review of impulses by the Sustainability Working Group and discussed there together with qualitative assessments. This does not create a formal reporting obligation toward the university; rather, the indicators serve as a transparent orientation aid for the participatory further development of the strategy.

Five-Year Framework and Continuation

The twelve fields of action form the binding framework for strategic development over the next five years. After the first five-year period, an overarching strategy review will be conducted, evaluating the results and experiences of the previous years qualitatively and, where possible, quantitatively. Subsequently, if necessary, a new materiality analysis will be carried out in order to reassess Paderborn University's thematic priorities, opportunities, and risks in the field of sustainability. This analysis forms the basis for the continuation of the sustainability strategy and the definition of priorities for the following period.

Communication and Consolidation

The results of the impulse review will be communicated to the university public, for example through public events, internal communication channels, thematic platforms, and the website "Sustainability at Paderborn University." The Sustainability Working Group will remain the central steering and participation body in the field of sustainability at the university on a permanent basis. It connects stakeholders from academia, administration, and the student body, bundles expertise, and contributes to the qualitative further development of the strategy. Its composition deliberately remains open in order to continuously incorporate new perspectives, specialist expertise, and ideas. Institutional continuity and strategic steering are ensured through the Sustainability Office, which safeguards the coordination, support, and substantive consistency of the processes.

Guiding Principle

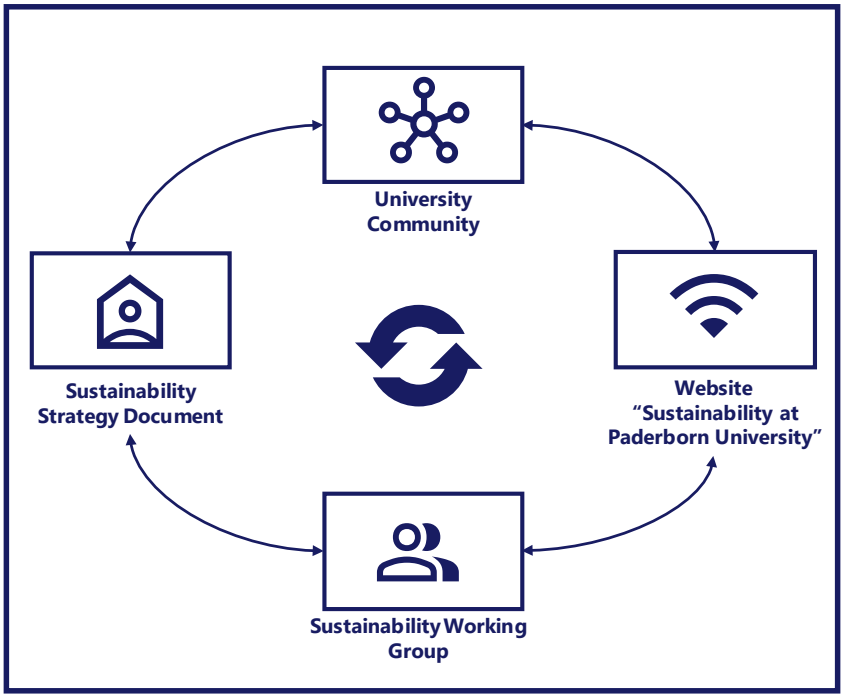

Figure 7 Schematic representation of impact monitoring

Impact arises where people shape, reflect, and assume responsibility together.
Paderborn University's impact monitoring serves as a steering and reflection instrument that ensures the continuous further development of the sustainability strategy through shared learning, exchange, and participation.

Glossary

Sustainability Working Group
Central steering and participation body of Paderborn University for the implementation and further development of the sustainability strategy. The working group includes representatives of all university status groups.

Biodiversity / Biological Diversity
Refers to the diversity of species, ecosystems, and genetic resources. The preservation of biodiversity is central to ecological stability and sustainable livelihoods.

BLB
The Bau- und Liegenschaftsbetrieb NRW is the real estate company of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. It owns most state-owned land and buildings and manages them for universities, authorities, and other institutions. In addition, it plans, constructs, and renovates buildings on behalf of the state and the federal government. Profile and tasks: BLB NRW | Construction and real estate services for NRW: Das Immobilienunternehmen des Landes NRW

ESD
Education for Sustainable Development: A didactic approach that enables learners to engage reflectively with sustainable development and to act responsibly. It forms the basis of competence-oriented sustainability-related teaching in line with international educational goals.

CSRD
Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive: EU directive on sustainability reporting. It requires companies to disclose environmental, social, and governance-related information.

Third-party funding
Third-party funding refers to externally acquired, project-related financial resources that universities receive in addition to basic funding for the implementation of research, teaching, transfer, or qualification activities.

Empowerment formats
Formats that enable university members, through reflective learning and participation processes, to actively contribute to transformation processes and strengthen self-efficacy and a sense of responsibility.

ESRS
European Sustainability Reporting Standards: European reporting standards that define specific indicators and assessment logics for sustainability aspects. They form the basis of EU sustainability reporting under the CSRD.

Financial materiality
Describes financial risks and opportunities arising from environmental and social factors in the sense of the double materiality approach of EU sustainability reporting.

Design competence
The ability to translate knowledge, values, and options for action into reflective design processes. A central learning objective of sustainable higher education.

Governance
Refers to the steering and decision-making structures of an organization. Sustainability governance includes mechanisms, processes, and responsibilities for promoting sustainable development.

HRK
The German Rectors' Conference, HRK, is the voluntary association of state and state-recognized universities in Germany. Member universities are represented in the HRK by their executive boards and rectorates. Englisch - German Rectors' Conference

Impact materiality
Describes the significant impacts of an organization on its environment in ecological, social, and economic terms. This includes actual or potential, short-, medium-, or long-term impacts on people and the environment. A distinction is made as to whether the organization causes the impacts directly, contributes to them, or is connected to them through upstream or downstream processes in the value chain.

Impulse
A proposal, initiative, or project that introduces new ideas and options for action into a field of action. Impulses serve the strategic further development of the strategy.
Climate adaptation
Climate adaptation refers to measures and processes for adapting to the actual and expected impacts of climate change, with the aim of reducing risks, strengthening resilience, and ensuring long-term functionality.
KNLV
Climate-Neutral State Administration NRW: A state programme for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from public institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia. It provides quantitative indicators for the operational sustainability monitoring of Paderborn University.
PARSEC
Paderborn Research Center for Sustainable Economy: With the Paderborn Research Center for Sustainable Economy, PARSEC, the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics is expanding its faculty-wide sustainability activities. It understands "sustainable economy" as long-term-oriented economic development with particular consideration of social, environmental, and cultural phenomena. In doing so, the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics addresses one of the central challenges of future generations and aligns this thematic orientation with the goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development in many respects. Paderborn Research Center for Sustainable Economy (PARSEC) - Paderborn Research Center for Sustainable Economy (PARSEC) | Paderborn University
Participatory strategy development
An open, dialogue-oriented process in which various stakeholders — faculties, administration, students, initiatives — are involved in developing a strategy.
Planetary boundaries
A concept for determining the ecological limits of the Earth. It defines ecological tipping points whose transgression endangers global stability.
PLAZ
PLAZ — Professional School of Education: Shaping the present and future of teacher education innovatively and in close cooperation with stakeholders in the region is the aspiration and motivation of PLAZ, the Professional School of Education. It is the central place for teacher education at Paderborn University for students and teaching staff. In cooperation with the faculties, PLAZ is active in cross-cutting areas and bundles important topics in working groups and research colleges. Cooperation with stakeholders from society and politics ensures the holistic shaping of teacher education. PLAZ – Professional School of Education | Paderborn University
Real-world laboratory
Real-world laboratories are research and learning environments in which academia, administration, and societal stakeholders work together on sustainable solutions. Universities act as places of experimental practice in which measures are tested, reflected upon, and further developed.
Rainwater retention
Rainwater retention refers to measures for storing and delaying the discharge of precipitation water in order to prevent flooding and strengthen ecological functions.
Societal resilience
Societal resilience refers to the ability of a society, in the face of crises, shocks, and profound changes — whether caused by terrorist attacks, climate change, economic instability, or the erosion of democratic values — to maintain its essential functions, structures, and values, to adapt, and, where necessary, to fundamentally develop further.
Hanisch, M. (2016). *Was ist Resilienz? Unschärfen eines Schlüsselbegriffs.* Arbeitspapier Sicherheitspolitik, 19/2016. Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik.
Climate resilience
Persistence — the ability of systems to withstand and absorb short-term shocks while remaining within important thresholds;

Adaptability — the ability to regenerate and adapt to changing external influences while remaining on an existing development path;
Transformability — the ability, where necessary, to cross thresholds in order to pursue new, robust long-term development pathways.
Gabrysch, S., Lotze-Campen, H., & Hattermann, F. n.d. *Climate Resilience — How can climate resilience be increased across sectors and scales through the management of global commons within planetary boundaries?* Climate Resilience — Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research Accessed: 18 March 2026.

R-principles

R0 Refuse: The product is not needed or can be replaced by another solution, for example walking instead of driving.
R1 Rethink: More intensive use through sharing models or new business models, for example bike sharing.
R2 Reduce: Increase efficiency, lower material requirements, consume fewer resources.
R3 Reuse: Pass on products in good condition, for example second-hand use.
R4 Repair: Repair defective products and restore their function.
R5 Refurbish: Overhaul, update, and improve products, for example mobile phones.
R6 Remanufacture: Use individual parts for new products, for example car spare parts.
R7 Repurpose: Use products or parts for another purpose, for example bags made from old tyres.
R8 Recycle: Process materials and return them as secondary raw materials, for example glass or PET.

Scope 1–3 emissions

Categories of greenhouse gas emissions: Scope 1, direct emissions; Scope 2, indirect emissions from purchased energy; Scope 3, upstream and downstream processes, for example procurement and mobility.

Service learning

Service learning refers to a teaching and learning format that combines academic learning with civic engagement and promotes professional and social competencies through practice-oriented projects and structured reflection.

Stakeholders / Interest groups

Persons or groups for whom the way an organization acts is relevant due to their interests, for example students, staff, or partner companies. Relevant stakeholders are actors or their legitimate representatives who have rights or interests in relation to sustainability topics or who are or could be affected by the positive or negative impacts of the organization's activities, products, or services.

STARS

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System: An internationally recognized assessment system for measuring and comparing sustainability performance at universities.

Material flows

Describe the pathways through which materials, energy, and waste flow within an organization or system. The analysis and optimization of material flows is a central component of the circular economy and serves to reduce resource consumption and emissions.

SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals: The 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs, is a global plan to promote sustainable peace and prosperity and to protect our planet. Since 2016, all countries have been working to translate this shared vision of combating poverty and reducing inequalities into national development plans. It is particularly important to address the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable population groups and countries — because only if no one is left behind can the 17 goals be achieved by 2030.

Transformation competence

The ability to critically analyse, help shape, and reflect on societal change processes. A key competence of sustainable higher education.

Materiality analysis

A procedure for identifying the topics that are particularly relevant for an organization in ecological, social, and institutional terms. It forms the basis for goal development.

Impact monitoring
An instrument for the qualitative and quantitative assessment of the impact of the sustainability strategy. It supports steering, evaluation, and further development. Kulturen der Nachhaltigkeit – Hochschulen als Zukunftswerkstätten der nachhaltigen Entwicklung stärken – Hochschulrektorenkonferenz
Whole Institution Approach
The Whole Institution Approach understands sustainable development as a shared task of all areas of a university, becoming effective through their interaction and across all core tasks.

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