THE MALDIVES NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Sustainability Policy

Policy Statement

The Maldives National University (MNU) is committed to fostering a culture of sustainability in all aspects of its operations, education, research, and community engagement. In alignment with MNU's vision, mission and values, this policy affirms MNU's commitment to reduce the university's environmental footprint, promote social responsibility, and ensure long-term economic sustainability while aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the national priorities of the Maldives.

1. Objectives

The MNU Sustainability Policy aims to:

1. Integrate sustainability principles into teaching, research, and campus operations.
2. Promote resource efficiency, waste reduction, and responsible consumption.
3. Foster sustainable transport, energy use, and green infrastructure.
4. Encourage sustainable behavior among staff, students, and stakeholders.
5. Develop partnerships with local and international organizations for sustainability initiatives.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all university activities, including:

- Academic courses, research projects, and research activities.
- Learning and teaching activities, including co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives.
- Campus infrastructure and operations
- Community engagement and partnerships
- Procurement and financial management

3. Guiding Principles

MNU's approach to sustainability is guided by the following principles:

1. **Environmental Responsibility:** Minimise the university's environmental impact through sustainable practices and resource conservation, while striving for a net positive impact through regenerative approaches.
2. **Social Equity and Well-being:** Foster a healthy, inclusive, and equitable environment for all.
3. **Economic Viability:** Ensure efficient use of resources to support long-term sustainability.
4. **Engagement and Collaboration:** Work with students, staff, and external partners to promote sustainability.
5. **Innovation & Technology:** Leverage digital transformation, smart solutions, and emerging technologies to drive sustainable development, enhance resource efficiency, and develop innovative solutions for environmental challenges.
6. **Maldivian Stewardship**: Honor Maldivian traditions of environmental stewardship by integrating local knowledge and cultural values into sustainability initiatives.

4. Key Areas of Focus

4.1. Environmentally Sustainable Operations and Resource Management

- Commit to achieving carbon neutrality by 2035 through comprehensive carbon reduction initiatives.
- Implement energy efficiency measures and transition to renewable energy sources.
- Adopt green building standards for all new construction and renovations.
- Reduce water consumption and improve waste management through the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Promote green procurement by sourcing environmentally friendly products and services.
- Require each faculty to develop sustainability plans aligned with university-wide policy.
- Develop a phased implementation strategy with clear stages: "structuring," "embedding," and "leading."
- Address the unique resource constraints of island settings, including freshwater limitations, waste disposal, and energy independence.
- Enhance on-campus biodiversity through sustainable landscaping and green spaces.
- Implement environmental conservation initiatives such as tree planting and coastal protection programs.
- Ensure responsible resource consumption to preserve natural ecosystems.
- Differentiate between student-focused educational sustainability initiatives and broader community engagement efforts.

4.2. Education for Sustainable Development

- Integrate sustainability into curricula across all faculties and programs.
- Support research on sustainability-related issues, particularly those relevant to the Maldives (e.g., climate change, marine conservation, renewable energy).
- Offer sustainability training for staff and students.
- Encourage research, innovation, and sustainability-focused student projects, along with startup incubation programs that develop environmentally friendly solutions tailored to the Maldives' unique ecological challenges.

4.3. Sustainable Transport and Mobility

- Encourage walking, cycling, and the use of public transport.
- Explore electric or hybrid transport options for university operations and services.

4.4. Sustainable Campus Operations

- Optimize the utilization of existing assets, resources, and human capital through efficiency protocols and institutional practices.
- Mandate and promote digital, paperless workflows and communications to significantly reduce paper consumption and waste.
- Prohibit plastic water bottles and all single-use plastic packaging, promoting instead a reusable culture supported by accessible filtered water refill stations campus-wide.
- Install and maintain clearly labeled dustbins across all campuses and faculties (aligned with national standards) to enable accurate waste separation and maximize recycling.
- Create green zones and wellness spaces within campuses to promote mental and physical well-being.
- Implement mandatory sustainability training and awareness programs for all staff to embed best practices University-wide.

4.5. Sustainable Procurement and Financial Management

- Adopt a life-cycle costing approach in procurement decisions to prioritize long-term value over short-term savings
- Reduce the demand for products and services by promoting the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Integrate sustainability criteria into vendor selection and contract renewal processes.
- Establish transparent financial reporting on sustainability-related expenditures and savings.
- Monitor and evaluate the financial impact of sustainability measures to inform future planning and investment.

4.6. Community Engagement and Partnerships

- Collaborate with local communities to promote sustainability initiatives.
- Build strategic partnerships with government bodies, NGOs, and international organizations to address sustainability challenges.
- Organize sustainability events, workshops, and campaigns to raise awareness.

4.7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to track sustainability progress.
- Regularly review and update the sustainability policy and action plan(s).
- Publish an annual sustainability report to share progress, challenges, and achievements with stakeholders.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Academic Senate:** Provides strategic direction and oversight of the sustainability policy.
- **Sustainability Committee:** Develops, implements, and monitors sustainability initiatives.
- **Staff:** Integrate sustainability practices into their work and support institutional goals.
- **Students:** Actively participate in sustainability initiatives and adopt sustainable behaviors.

6. Implementation and Communication

- The policy will be implemented through a Sustainability Action Plan with defined targets and timelines.
- Regular workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns will be conducted to engage the university community in sustainability practices.
- Sustainability guidelines will be incorporated into university procedures, operations, and procurement policies.

Celebrate and recognise sustainability achievements within the university community.

7. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure continued relevance and alignment with evolving sustainability goals and national priorities.

8. Definitions of Terms

- **Sustainable Development**: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Environmental Footprint**: The total impact of an individual, organization, or activity on the environment, including carbon emissions, water use, and waste generation.
- **Regenerative Approaches**: Practices that restore, renew, or revitalize their own sources of energy and materials, leading to a net positive environmental impact.

Members of the MNU Sustainability Committee

The **Sustainability Committee** shall be a multidisciplinary group representing different faculties, departments, and stakeholders at MNU to ensure a comprehensive approach to sustainability. The structure of the committee is as follows:

Approved Date: 28th September 2025

Approved by: Academic Senate

MNU Sustainability Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Sustainability Committee (SC) is a standing sub-committee of the Academic Senate established under The Maldives National University's (MNU) Sustainability Policy.
The SC serves as the focal point for ensuring that MNU integrates sustainability principles into all aspects of its work, aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and responds to the national priorities of the Maldives. Its main function is to monitor, advise, and support the development and implementation of sustainability initiatives, ensuring that sustainability becomes embedded in institutional culture and practice.

2. Membership of SC

The membership of the QAC shall be as follows:

- Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson)
- Deputy Vice Chancellors
- Registrar
- Representatives from Administrative Departments
    - Campus Managers
    - Facilities Management
    - Procurement Management
    - Quality Assurance
    - Dean of Students
    - Human Resources Management
    - IT Services Representative
    - Communications/Marketing Management
    - Business Development
    - Projects
    - Library Services
    - Finance
- 4 Faculty Representatives (Deans)
- Student Representative (nominated by Student Union)
- Research Office Representative
- Alumni Representative
- Optional External Advisor: Expert in sustainability or climate

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The main roles and responsibilities of the SC are:

3.1. **Policy Implementation & Integration**

- Develop, implement, and periodically review MNU's Sustainability Policy and Action Plan.
- Ensure sustainability principles are integrated into teaching, research, campus operations, and community engagement.

3.2. **Monitoring & Evaluation**

- Develop and oversee Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for sustainability initiatives.
- Ensure regular progress reviews and publish an annual Sustainability Report.
- Evaluate financial and operational impacts of sustainability measures.

3.3. **Capacity Building & Engagement**

- Promote sustainability training and awareness programs for staff and students.
- Encourage student projects, research, and startups addressing sustainability challenges.
- Foster a culture of sustainability through workshops, campaigns, and events.

3.4. **Resource & Infrastructure Management**

- Oversee implementation of carbon neutrality targets and green infrastructure development.
- Promote energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable procurement practices.

3.5. **Partnerships & Collaboration**

- Establish partnerships with government bodies, NGOs, local communities, and international organizations.
- Promote external collaboration for sustainability research and initiatives.

4. Operations and Reporting

4.1 The SC shall meet at least three times per academic year (or as required).

4.2 The Chairperson (Vice-Chancellor) will preside over meetings. In their absence, a Co-Chair may chair the meeting. A Co-Chair shall be elected for the meeting based on the attending members' vote.

4.3 Meeting notices, agenda, and supporting papers shall be circulated at least five working days prior to the meeting.

4.4 A quorum shall consist of half the members including the Chair or Co-Chair.

4.5 Secretariat support will be provided by the MNU Secretariat

4.6 The Committee shall report regularly, but at least once a year, to the Academic Senate, providing:

- A summary of activities undertaken.
- Details of meetings and attendance.
- An annual Sustainability Report including KPIs and outcomes.

5. Election and Tenure of Committee Membership

5.1 Members who are elected based on their responsibilities and designations are *ex officio* members of this committee.

5.2 Student representative(s) shall be nominated by the Student Union and serve for one academic year, renewable.

5.3 Faculty and administrative representatives are appointed by their respective units for a two-year term, renewable.

5.4 External Advisors (if appointed) shall serve for the duration of their engagement as determined by the Academic Senate.

5.5 The Chair may request any other MNU staff and/or external party to attend Committee meetings or participate in certain agenda items.

5.6 The membership will annul:

- if the designation of the members changes
- if the resignation of a member is communicated in writing to the Vice- Chancellor,
- if a member is absent for three consecutive meetings without a valid reason. All apologies for meetings shall be informed in writing to the Secretariat.
- if disciplinary action against the staff has been taken

6. Changes to Terms of Reference

This ToR is subject to periodic review to ensure relevance and effectiveness. The interval between reviews shall not exceed three years.

Revision history:

Academic Senate Approval Date: 26 October 2025

Policy Effective Date: 26 October 2025