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THE MALDIVES NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

MNU Environment and Climate Action Plan 2026–2030

Approved Date: 20th October 2026

Approved by: MNU Sustainability Committee

1. Aim and Purpose

The Maldives National University (MNU) is committed to embedding sustainability and climate action as core principles across all aspects of university life, including academic programmes, research, campus operations, community engagement, and institutional governance. The Maldives is highly vulnerable due to its low-lying geography (0.5–2.3 m above sea level), limited land area (1% of 90,000 km^2) and highly dispersed islands (~1,192). The Maldives faces severe vulnerability to sea-level, coastal erosion, flooding, and extreme weather events. As the national university, MNU recognises its unique role and responsibility in addressing these climate and environmental challenges facing the Maldives as a Small Coral Island Developing State. The university strives to reduce its environmental footprint, enhance resource efficiency and contribute actively to national climate adaptation, mitigation and sustainability proirities.

MNU is committed to complying with applicable environmental laws and regulations and aligning its activities with national climate commitments and international best practices. The University will integrate climate considerations into institutional planning and operations to promote a safer, cleaner, more sustainable and climate-resilient environment for staff, students, and the wider community.

This Plan builds upon MNU's existing sustainability-related frameworks, including the MNU Strategic Plan 2026–2030, MNU Sustainability Policy and the Climate and Environment Research Framework 2025–2030. Implementation will be supported by institutional coordination, continuous monitoring and improvement and active engagement of the university community.

2. Climate Action Commitments

MNU strives to build on its existing achievements to become a national leader in environmental sustainability and climate resilience. The University is committed to

demonstrating responsible climate action across its academic, research, operational, and community engagement activities.

Recognising the unique vulnerability of small coral island environments, MNU will integrate climate mitigation, adaptation, and sustainability considerations into relevant institutional policies, operational guidelines, and codes of practice.

a. Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Resilience

MNU aims to enhance and conserve biodiversity across its campuses and field sites through responsible landscaping, native planting, and protection of local ecosystems. In partnership with local councils, NGOs, and environmental agencies, the University will promote green spaces, mangrove rehabilitation, and coral restoration initiatives that contribute to ecosystem resilience and climate adaptation.

b. Carbon Emissions Reduction

MNU will actively measure, monitor, and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions across university operations. In alignment with national climate commitments, the University establishes a target to **reduce its Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2035**, relative to an established institutional baseline. MNU will develop a greenhouse gas inventory in accordance with the GHG Protocol and progressively assess relevant Scope 3 emissions, including those associated with transportation, waste management, and procurement.

Through energy-efficient infrastructure, renewable energy initiatives, waste reduction programmes, and sustainable travel planning, MNU will strive to become a model for low-carbon institutional practice within the higher education sector of the Maldives.

c. Energy and Water Management

MNU is committed to promoting resource efficiency and reducing the consumption of energy and water across all its campuses and facilities. Recognising the heavy reliance on imported fuel and the vulnerability of its freshwater resources, MNU prioritises sustainable resource management as a key component of climate mitigation and adaptation.

The University will work to reduce demand through the efficient use of building systems, equipment, and utilities, guided by the energy management hierarchy—to avoid unnecessary use, reduce demand, improve efficiency, and explore renewable alternatives. MNU will implement energy and water efficiency initiatives, including upgrading lighting and cooling systems, introducing smart metering and monitoring, exploring renewable energy, harvesting rainwater, and promoting water reuse where appropriate.

Energy-efficient buildings. All new university buildings and major renovations will be designed and delivered to recognised energy-efficiency standards, including passive cooling and natural ventilation, shading, efficient building envelopes, LED lighting, high-efficiency air conditioning and provision for rooftop solar. Energy performance will be a required criterion in the design, approval and procurement of all capital projects.

Upgrading existing buildings. MNU will carry out a phased programme to upgrade existing buildings to higher energy efficiency, prioritising those with the highest consumption. Measures will include replacing inefficient lighting and air-conditioning units, installing controls and timers, improving insulation and shading, and retrofitting metering.

Energy review and audit. The Facilities Department will conduct energy reviews of all campuses at least [every two years] to identify where energy is being wasted. Findings will be prioritised, assigned to responsible units, and tracked to completion.

Transition to renewable energy. MNU will increase the share of its energy drawn from renewable and low-carbon sources, including rooftop solar on suitable university buildings, with the aim of reducing carbon emissions by 25% by 2035.

Through awareness campaigns, staff and student engagement, and continuous monitoring, MNU aims to foster a culture of resource conservation across the institution.

Energy action beyond the campus. MNU will share its energy expertise with the wider community by running energy-efficiency and clean energy awareness programmes for local communities and councils, and by providing energy-efficiency advice and services to industry and public utilities. MNU staff will contribute to national policy development on clean energy, and the University will support start-ups, student projects and research that develop low-carbon and clean energy innovations.

d. Investment and Financial Responsibility

MNU is committed to ensuring that its investment and financial practices are economically viable, transparent, socially responsible, and supportive of environmental sustainability and climate action. MNU upholds the highest standards of ethical and financial integrity in its decision-making. The University will seek opportunities to invest in and collaborate with organisations and financial institutions whose activities align with MNU's mission and values, particularly those supporting climate mitigation, adaptation, renewable energy, environmental protection, innovation, and community resilience. MNU will not invest in companies whose primary business is the extraction or production of carbon-intensive energy, such as coal and oil, and will review any existing holdings with a view to divesting from them.

e. Sustainable Procurement

MNU is committed to embedding sustainable and climate-conscious procurement practices across its purchasing and supply chain activities. MNU will ensure that goods and services are procured in ways that support social, ethical, and environmental responsibility. The University will work proactively with suppliers and contractors to encourage responsible sourcing, fair labour practices, low-carbon operations, reduced packaging, and alignment with circular economy principles. MNU will also promote local procurement where feasible, supporting Maldivian businesses and reducing transport-related emissions. Procurement decisions will consider whole-life costs and sustainability criteria alongside financial considerations.

f. Waste Management

MNU is dedicated to promoting a zero-waste culture across all campuses through responsible waste reduction, reuse, and recycling practices. Recognising the limited land availability and waste management challenges in the Maldives, the University will prioritise waste minimisation and resource efficiency to reduce environmental impacts and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

MNU will implement initiatives that reduce waste at source, encourage reuse and recovery of materials, and promote sustainable disposal methods in accordance with the waste management hierarchy.

g. Climate Resilience and Environmental Management

MNU is committed to the protection of the environment and the prevention of pollution to air, freshwater, marine environments, and land. The University recognises its duty to operate responsibly within the fragile ecosystems of the Maldives and to lead by example in environmental stewardship.

To fulfil this commitment, MNU will:

- Prevent pollution and manage risks: Take measures to prevent and control pollution, monitor potential sources of emissions and discharges and manage university operations and estates in an environmentally sensitive and climate-resilient manner. Identify and assess climate-related risks affecting university campuses, infrastructure, staff, and students, and implement appropriate adaptation measures.
- Apply the precautionary principle: Implement appropriate precautions where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, ensuring that environmental protection is prioritized in decision-making.

- Set and review improvement targets: Establish, monitor, and periodically review environmental improvement objectives and targets, with progress reported through the university Sustainability Committee.
- Ensure legal compliance: Meet applicable national environmental legislation, regulations, and relevant climate-related obligations.
- Build competence and awareness: Strengthen staff and student knowledge and engagement in climate mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable practices through effective communication of sustainability commitments and awareness initiatives. Promote genuine climate action and environmental sustainability across the University, ensuring that sustainability commitments are supported by meaningful actions and transparent reporting to avoid greenwashing.
- Integrate into teaching and research: Promote environmental and climate education, interdisciplinary research, and innovative solutions to national environmental and climate-related challenges, in alignment with the MNU Climate and Environment Research Framework 2025–2030.
- Engage in community-based environmental action: Actively participate in and support local and national environmental and climate initiatives, collaborating with government institutions, local councils, NGOs, and communities to promote environmental conservation, climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience across the Maldives.

3. Governance Roles and Responsibilities

Environmental sustainability is a shared responsibility across the University.

Vice-Chancellor – Provides overall leadership and accountability.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) – Provides strategic oversight for environmental sustainability and climate action.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) – Provides curriculum guidance and integration of environmental sustainability concepts across university wide courses.

Sustainability Committee – Coordinates implementation, monitors progress, and provides strategic advice.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance) – Leads environmental management of campus operations, including resource efficiency, waste management, and environmental monitoring.

Deans, Directors, Heads of School, Heads of Department, and Managers – Integrate this guideline into planning and operations and ensure compliance within their areas.

Staff and Students – Support implementation by adopting sustainable practices and participating in sustainability initiatives.

4. Implementation

a. Climate Risk and Environmental Incident Reporting

Climate-related and environmental incidents affecting university operations, infrastructure, staff, or students will be reported through established institutional reporting mechanisms.

These may include flooding, storm damage, pollution incidents, infrastructure failures, and other environmental risks.

The Sustainability Committee, in coordination with the Facilities Department and relevant units, will oversee reporting and follow-up actions.

b. Codes of Practice

As the University strengthens its sustainability governance, additional documents, including Codes of Practice, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and Guidance Notes, will be progressively developed.

In the interim, Faculties, Schools, Centres, and Administrative Units are encouraged to develop local procedures and good practice guidelines appropriate to their activities while aligning with the University's sustainability and climate action commitments.

c. Training and Awareness

MNU will assess the training needs and provide appropriate opportunities to strengthen staff and student awareness and capacity relating to environmental sustainability and climate action through training programmes, workshops, educational activities, and student engagement initiatives.

d. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

MNU will progressively establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The Sustainability Committee, in coordination with relevant academic and administrative units, will oversee the collection and reporting of operational data.

Key monitoring activities will include:

- Tracking Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions and progress towards the 2035 reduction target.
- Monitoring energy (total energy consumption, energy from renewable sources and energy use per square metre of floor space), and water consumption, waste management, and resource efficiency.
- Assessing environmental and climate-related risks and adaptation measures.
- Recording environmental incidents and implementing corrective actions.
- Tracking environmental and climate-related education, research, partnerships, and community engagement.

MNU will progressively strengthen internal monitoring, auditing and reporting procedures, prepare periodic progress reports, and make relevant information publicly available.

e. Stakeholder Engagement and Sharing of the Climate Action Plan

MNU will collaborate with government institutions, local councils, NGOs, communities, and international partners to promote environmental sustainability and climate action. The Environmental and Climate Action Plan will be published on the University's website and shared with relevant local authorities and community groups to encourage coordinated action.

f. Implementation matrix

The Implementation Matrix below outlines the key actions required to achieve MNU's environmental sustainability and climate action commitments:

Priority Area	Key Action	Indicator / Target	Timeline
GHG Emissions	Establish baseline inventory and implement emissions reduction measures	25% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2035	2026–2035
Energy Efficiency	Establish energy baseline; upgrade lighting, cooling and equipment in existing buildings; apply efficiency standards to all new builds and renovations	25% reduction in energy use per m^2	2026–2030
Renewable Energy	Install rooftop solar and other low-carbon energy sources	25% of electricity from renewable sources by 2035	2026–2035
Energy Audit	Conduct energy reviews of all campuses to identify waste	Energy review completed every two years	2026, 2028, 2030

Energy Outreach	Deliver community energy-efficiency programmes and support industry and clean energy innovation	Number of outreach events, industry engagements and supported projects	Annually
Climate Resilience	Assess climate risks affecting university campuses	Climate-risk assessments for priority campuses	2027–2029
Climate Education	Integrate climate action into teaching and awareness activities	Climate-related education and awareness initiatives	Annually
Climate Research	Implement priorities of the MNU Climate and Environment Research Framework	Climate research projects, publications, and policy outputs	2026–2030
Partnerships	Strengthen collaboration with government, NGOs, and communities	Documented climate partnerships and community activities	2026–2030
Monitoring and Reporting	Monitor implementation and publish progress	Periodic climate action progress reports	Annually