



# Sustainable Development Policy at the Maritime University of Szczecin



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## Introduction

The Maritime University of Szczecin (MUS) has adopted the Sustainable Development Policy, based on the concept described in the **UN Resolution 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

The Policy, aimed to improve the quality of life of the present and future generations, has been developed to confront some of the biggest issues of the civilization.



Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Organization

In the face of current geopolitical and economic challenges, the fundamental importance of the 2030 Agenda goals becomes explicit. Higher education institutions are responsible for educating future employees, ensuring that adults have access to continuing education, and transferring knowledge and new technologies. We believe that universities have a special role in the development of appropriate social attitudes.

Building on the assumptions of the UN Resolution and as part of our statutory activities, we have committed to taking care of public health and life quality, promoting equal opportunities, and supporting sustainable and innovative industry. We have become an advocate of sustainable consumption and manufacturing, and are ready to establish global partnerships for this cause.

## University's Mission

The mission of the MUS is to participate in the creation of an international platform for the development of science, research, and education, with a focus on the maritime economy and other complementary sectors. In these endeavours, we believe to be shaping creative and responsible attitudes, which will take into consideration our obligations towards future generations and embrace the paradigm of sustainable development.

## Vision of development until 2030

We are continuously aspiring to win a prestigious, highly regarded and stable position among academic centres in the country and abroad, and become a desired place to study, do research and source training and opportunities for professional growth. We are also committed to influencing the development of the modern society and the maritime economy in the spirit of cultivating the maritime identity and tradition.

## Sustainable development policy – goal selection

All the sustainable development goals are equally important. Achievement of the social and environmental goals requires participation of the entire academic society. The Maritime University of Szczecin is on the path of supporting development at different levels and implementing the principles of social responsibility in its various activities. We have selected the most urgent goals of sustainable development, and the achievement of them is our priority as we keep growing and developing.

## Goal: Ensure everyone, regardless of age, a healthy life and promote wellbeing



Figure 2: Good health and life quality



*'We need to keep combating diseases and public health threats. By ensuring a more effective funding of health care systems, improving sanitary conditions and hygiene, facilitating access to medical professionals and minimising the environmental pollution, we can save millions of human lives'.<sup>1</sup>*

**Our goal is to promote a healthy lifestyle which ensures physical, somatic and mental wellbeing. We provide sporting opportunities and preventive healthcare, which can significantly improve the quality of life.**

1. Access to sport activities

The MUS offers memberships in more than a dozen sport clubs, and its sports facilities are open to everyone in the academic community.

We encourage students and our academic staff to participate in sport activities under projects carried out by the University Sports Association (*Akademicki Związek Sportowy – AZS*).

2. Specialist psychological support

The University Support Centre was established in 2020 in response to the growing need for specialist psychological support among members of the academic community. Assistance is provided free of charge, upon appointment.

3. Preventive healthcare programmes

The MUS implements the National Programme for Preventing HIV Infections and Combating AIDS for 2022-2026. Moreover, we monitor the scene and actively participate in various programmes and initiatives for social health and wellbeing.

**Goal: Ensure sustainable, equal, high quality education and promote continuing education**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel3> (dostęp 04.01.2023)



Figure 3: High quality of education<sup>1</sup>

*'High quality of education is fundamental for a fulfilled life and sustainable development. The right of access to education improves life quality and helps find innovative solutions to the most aching problems of the modern world. (...) A lot has been done to provide easy access to all levels of education and raise the number of students, especially among girls and women.'*<sup>2</sup>

**Our goal is to provide knowledge and skills corresponding to the needs of the diverse social and economic environment.**

## 1. University Social Responsibility (USR)

University Social Responsibility embodies a practical approach to the ideas of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development in the academic community. It encompasses maintaining high educational standards, building an attitude of engagement in social life, and university management. University Social Responsibility refers to various aspects of the university and its educational and scientific activities, internal structure, and the dialogue with stakeholders. It also includes bringing together academics and businesses. The declaration of University Social Responsibility is a giant step on the path of changes at the Maritime University of Szczecin for the good of all. In practice, it means taking actions which meet expectations of our key stakeholders.

### 1. Improved offering for undergraduate and graduate students

We are committed to continuously improving the quality of our degree courses, including those run in cooperation with foreign universities. We extend our offering of degree courses in English, and some of the degree courses in Polish have been modified to include one semester in English. With the 'mobility' semester introduced, students find it easier to participate in an international exchange programme of their choice. Courses of the Polish language are organized for foreign students studying in Polish, and foreign candidates are willingly admitted, with a view to create a diverse international student community. A broad offering of undergraduate and graduate degree courses as well as internships, in cooperation with business partners, is aimed to ensure the alumni a successful start on

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel4> (access on 04.01.2023)

the demanding labour market. We have further plans to introduce new standards as well as classical and innovative teaching methods adjusted to the existing social and economic environment.

## 2. Boosting scientific activity

We intensify our scientific activity by engaging students in research studies. Scientists of the Maritime University of Szczecin participate in interdisciplinary research teams, conduct research jointly with partners from other universities, and collaborate with foreign research partners. Focusing on innovativeness, we seek for research results which have a high potential of implementation.

## 3. Activating scientific societies

The mission of scientific societies is to broaden students' interests, deepen and propagate knowledge, and create an environment conducive to talent development. We encourage students to engage in research projects and help them find a healthy balance between participation in research studies and pursuing their course of study.

For more information on the scientific societies at the MUS, go to <https://www.pm.szczecin.pl/pl/studenci/kola-naukowe/><sup>3</sup>

## 4. Opening research data

The MUS participates in the Open Research Data programme, which facilitates access to thousands of research studies to academic teachers, researchers, and students. The MUS implements the adopted Open Access Policy.

## 5. Scholarship programmes

The MUS runs a number of scholarship programmes and grants one-off hardship benefits to students in a difficult financial situation. The support programmes are financed from funds raised through strengthening the cooperation with businesses. For more information on the scholarships and other support offered, go to <https://www.pm.szczecin.pl/pl/studenci/stypendia/pomoc-materialna/podstawowe-informacje/><sup>4</sup>.

## 6. Internationalizing the University

The MUS uses subsidies from various sources to implement partner projects and foreign exchange programmes, and participates in exchange programmes, such as Erasmus+. We create and continuously develop majors dedicated to foreign students, aiming at strengthening our position internationally.

## 7. Strengthening collaboration with the social and economic environment

Monitoring the prevailing trends and needs of the industry helps us adjust our scientific and research activities to the current market requirements and build relations with local businesses and institutions. We also proudly endorse experts who are our alumni, and publicize their achievements.

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<sup>3</sup> Access on 10.01.2023.

<sup>4</sup> Access on 09.01.2023.



## 8. Openness to new ideas

We have created a database of initiatives for sustainable development.

## Goal: Ensure gender equality and strengthen the position of girls and women

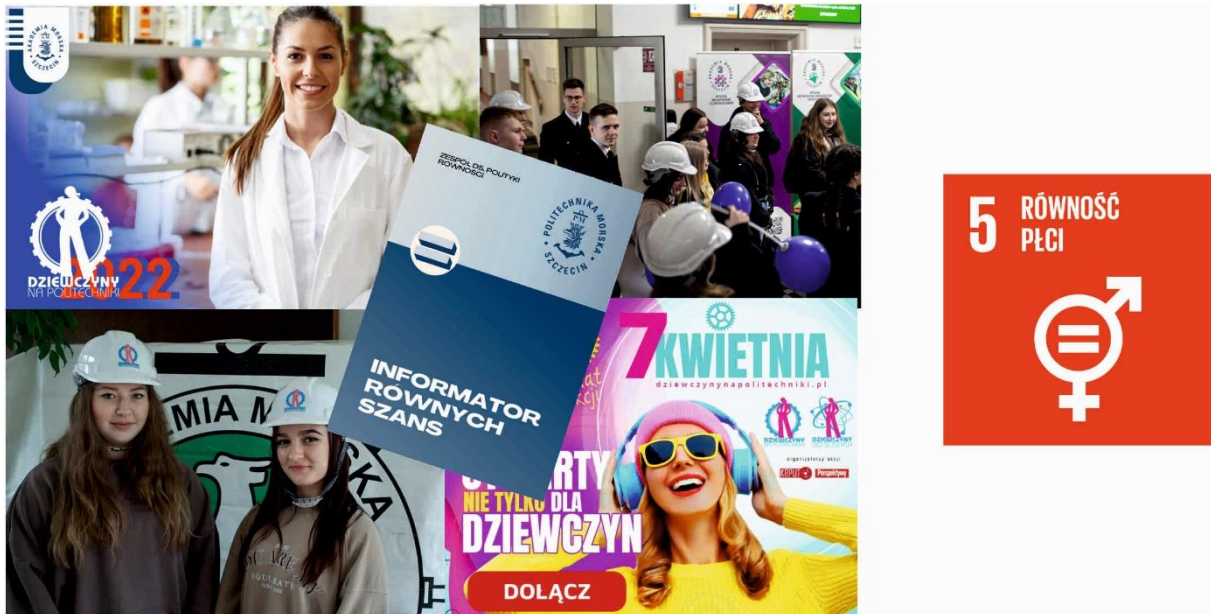


Figure 4: Gender equality

*'Gender equality is not only one of the basic human rights. It is fundamental to a sustainable world where people live in peace and prosperity. (...) Implementation of a new legal framework for equal rights at workplace and combating harmful practices against women is necessary to put a stop to discrimination due to gender, existing in many countries.'*<sup>5</sup>

**Our goal is to create an environment free of any discrimination and recognising the needs of all members of the academic community.**

### 1. Equal Opportunities Policy at the MUS

Having the constitutional principle of equality of men and women in family, politics, society, and economy as the basis of its operation, the MUS has developed and implemented the Equal Opportunities Plan. This document is a statement of our obligation to ensure equal right to education and employment. The Plan is a support tool for members of the academic community, and a guarantee of sustainable and free professional development for employees and students. It promotes standards of equal opportunities and sets guidelines for combating discrimination.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel5> (access on 04.01.2023)

## Goal: Responsible consumption and production



Figure 5: Responsible consumption and production<sup>2</sup>

*'Sustainable consumption and production entail the promotion of effective consumption of energy and other resources, sustainable infrastructure, access to basic services and employment, including employment in the environmental sector, and a better life quality. Such standards help carry out development plans, minimise economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen economic competitiveness and curb poverty. (...) Sustainable consumption and production require a consistent approach and cooperation of all entities in the supply chain, from manufacturers through to consumers. The process involves the delivery of educational activities to raise consumer awareness of sustainable consumption and the related lifestyle (...).'*<sup>6</sup>

**Our goal is to promote responsible consumption and reduce the amount of waste, as well as support the related practices of our stakeholders and advocate a sustainable mindset and lifestyle among students.**

### 1. Less plastic

The MUS aims at reducing the amount of plastic used.

**Installation of drinking water sources** – owing to such sources of drinking water, our students and staff reduce the demand for bottled water.

**'Bring your own cup'** – we encourage everyone to bring their own reusable cup, to reduce the number of disposable plastic cups used at events organised by the MUS.

In our everyday life, we educate, build goal awareness, and promote environmentally friendly attitudes.

### 2. Combating waste of food – foodsharing hub

Bring your spare food to a foodsharing hub, and share it with others. Owners and agents of canteens and bars are encouraged to leave foods with a valid best-before or use-by date, which they would

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel12> (access on 04.01.2023)

otherwise dispose of, in that special fridge. Any spare food left after catered social events can also be left in the foodsharing hub.

### 3. Sustainable procurement

In our requests for proposals and orders for stationery and office supplies, cleaning products and other materials, we are committed to put focus on environmental friendliness. Our terms of reference for suppliers will include the requirement of availability of recycled and environmentally friendly office supplies.

When purchasing computer hardware and other electronic equipment, we take into consideration energy-saving properties and manufacturing in compliance with the environmental standards. We tend to order equipment which is repairable, has replaceable parts, and a long service life.

### 4. Second life of objects

Following the idea of sharing and responsible consumption, before we dispose of any electronic equipment, furniture or other pieces of property, we offer them to other units at the MUS.

The principle of second life of objects should be implemented wherever it is possible.

### 5. Less paper

We have extended the circulation of electronic documents, reduced the required number of hard copies, and adopted the principle of two-sided print-outs. Documents and messages which need not be stored in a hard copy should not be printed out. We reduce the number of printed invitations, posters, conference proceedings, leaflets and other promotional and informational materials. By implementing a system of electronic information boards, we reduce the number of printed communications.

## Goal: Prevent climate changes and their consequences



Figure 6: Preventing climate changes<sup>3</sup>

*'The present climate changes can be seen in every country and on every continent. They disrupt the development of national economies, and threaten human life and the existence of entire societies. (...) Preventing climate changes is a global challenge which knows no country borders. Greenhouse gas emissions in any place on the Earth has an impact on the entire world's population. We need to collaborate across countries and find solutions at a global scale. This is the only way to help the developing countries in the transition to a low-emission economy.'*<sup>7</sup>

### Our goal is to prevent the consequences of climate changes.

#### 1. Educational activities

We are planning on launching a cyclical campaign promoting effective use of energy resources (e.g., turn down the heating for the night).

#### 2. Infrastructure and systems

We make investment decisions with the impact on climate changes as our priority. Future refurbishing and renovation of buildings will include the installation of sanitary equipment which uses a reduced amount of water, and where possible and justified, repeated water circulation systems will be introduced. The MUS is also planning on a transition to renewable energy sources. Where possible, photovoltaic hybrid systems will be installed.

Where possible, lawns will be replaced with wildflower meadows, which are more resistant to drought, need not watering, and are conducive to biodiversity conservation. The watering of lawns will be reduced.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel13> (access on 04.01.2023)

### 3. Research into environmentally friendly solutions

We aim to carry out research into environmentally friendly and economical energy generation from local sources and its delivery in the form of liquefied gas. The use of biogas to run engines and boilers will contribute to reducing pollution of the environment.

## Goal: Protect oceans, seas and marine resources and use them in a sustainable way



Figure 7: Marine life<sup>4</sup>

*'Oceans – their temperature, chemical composition, currents and life deep inside them – drive the world's ecosystems which make life on this planet possible. Rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, shorelines, a lot of the food that we eat, and even the oxygen we breathe, all depend on the seas, which act as a control centre. For centuries, some of the most important trade and transport routes have led through oceans and seas. Mindful management of these unique marine resources is a key to sustainable future. However, the condition of littoral waters is deteriorating due to pollution, and the acidity of oceans is a threat to ecosystems and biodiversity. These phenomena have a negative impact on local fishery. Protected sea areas must be properly managed and financed. Regulations should be introduced to reduce overfishing, marine pollution, and acidity of oceans.'*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel14> (access on 04.01.2023)

**Our goal is to conduct research into solutions ensuring sustainable and optimized use of marine resources.**

### 1. Research projects

Research studies conducted at the MUS are aimed to mitigate the harmful effect of the maritime economy on marine ecosystems.

### 2. What we do for the environment

Clearing wrecks in the Baltic Sea from fishing nets is important for reducing the amount of plastic waste in the Baltic ecosystem. Moreover, it is necessary in order to monitor the wrecks for possible leaks of dangerous substances, such as fuel in the tanks. Clearing wrecks from fishing nets facilitates the monitoring, and is also the first step in the event the fuel needs to be pumped out if the risk of leak occurs.

**Goal: Strengthen and activate global partnerships for sustainable development**



Figure 8: Partnerships for our goals5

*'Effective implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development requires partnerships and collaboration of governments, the private sector, and the civil society. Such inclusive partnerships should be built on strong principles and values and a shared vision and goals, which put the human race and this planet in the centre of attention. We need such partnerships at the global, regional, national, and local levels. (...) The development of the public sector must also set a clear course. The system of monitoring, review, and regulating as well as stimulating such investments must be recalibrated to attract investors and strengthen the sustainable development.'*<sup>9</sup>

**Our goal is to establish partnerships for the sustainable development goals.**

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org.pl/cel17> (dostęp 04.01.2023)

## 1. Partnerships

The MUS co-creates national and international teams. We establish partnerships for innovative research, education, and development. We actively participate in the works of the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley.

The MUS initiates and carries out joint educational, research and development projects in the area of renewable energy.

We closely collaborate with the International Association of Maritime Universities and the International Maritime Organization, as an advisory and expert body, among other roles.



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