Maastricht University

Sustainability Report

July 2026

Foreword by Jan Smits, Rector Magnificus

Sustainability is not a destination; it is a continuous commitment to making better choices, every single day. As a university, we have a unique responsibility and a unique opportunity. We educate the next generation of professionals and leaders. We conduct research that shapes policy and practice. And we operate a campus and an organisation that can demonstrate what sustainable institutional life looks like in practice.

At Maastricht University, we take that responsibility seriously. The challenges we face — climate change, resource depletion, growing inequality — are not abstract. They are felt in our region, across Europe, and around the world. And they demand a response that is both ambitious and grounded.

This sustainability report reflects where we stand, what we have achieved in 2025, and where we still need to go. It covers our progress across education, research, operations and governance; because sustainability touches everything we do. We are proud of the steps we have taken, and we are equally clear-eyed about the distance that remains.

Universities exist to create knowledge and to put it to use for the benefit of society. In a world facing profound sustainability challenges, that mission has never been more urgent. I invite you to read this report not just as an account of our progress, but as an expression of our ongoing commitment — to our students, our staff, our region, and our planet.

Jan Smits (Rector Magnificus, UM)

Table of content

Sustainability at Maastricht University

Ambitions

Sustainability at Maastricht University (UM) is guided by the UM Sustainability Roadmap, a strategic framework built around three interconnected themes: climate, circularity and community. These themes reflect the understanding that sustainability extends beyond environmental impact alone and also encompasses social responsibility (e.g., diversity, equity and inclusion) and institutional practices.

The Roadmap is underpinned by four concrete sustainability ambitions that steer the university's direction. The UM aims to embed sustainability structurally in decision-making across all levels of the organisation. In addition, the university is committed to achieving climate-neutral operations by 2035 and to becoming a fully circular campus by that same year. A further ambition is to realise a green, healthy, and thriving and inclusive campus by 2030. Together, these ambitions provide clear targets that inform planning, investments, and accountability through reporting.

In 2025, the UM reached two important institutional milestones. The formal establishment of the UM Sustainability Office created a permanent organisational anchor for coordinating and advancing sustainability efforts across the university. In parallel, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity and Sexual safety (DEI+) Office was founded, recognising that social sustainability, including diversity, equity, inclusion, and sexual safety, is integral to the broader sustainability agenda. Throughout this report, social sustainability is therefore addressed alongside environmental and operational topics, reflecting the UM's integrated approach to sustainability.

A personal reflection on sustainability

There is much to be proud of – the people involved in sustainability, the Sustainability Roadmap, and the sustainability ambitions set for the years ahead. At the same time, it is important to openly acknowledge something that can easily be overlooked: sustainability is not yet self-evident.

Looking at the challenges facing society, it may seem logical to assume that 'doing the right thing' becomes easier over time. In practice, the deeper challenge lies not in knowledge or ambition, but in integration. Sustainability is not a separate programme or a single department. It cannot simply be added from the outside. For it to truly take root, it needs to become part of everyday decisions, routines, and ways of working across the entire institution. Progress is being made in that direction, but this kind of change takes time.

Not everything unfolds exactly as planned. Projects sometimes take longer than expected, resources are limited, and the urgency of sustainability challenges does not always align with what an institution can realistically deliver at a given moment. Embedding sustainability in culture, operations, and governance requires persistence, reflection, and a willingness to learn along the way.

What continues to motivate those involved is a shared conviction that this work truly matters. The people working on sustainability at the UM – in operations, in education and in research – do so with dedication and purpose. It goes beyond formal responsibilities; it reflects a commitment to leaving this university, this city, and this world in better shape for future generations. That commitment lies at the heart of this report.

Jeroen Warnier
(Sustainability Director,
Sustainability Office)

Sustainability in Governance, Strategy and Reporting

Sustainability is increasingly embedded in how UM plans, steers, and accounts for its performance. In 2025, steps were taken to integrate sustainability in the broadest sense more explicitly into the university's institutional strategy and its annual reporting cycle. As a result, sustainability targets and outcomes are no longer positioned as separate topics, but are increasingly linked to the UM's broader strategic objectives and governance processes.

To better understand how sustainability is experienced across the university, the UM conducted a sustainability survey among staff and students in 2025. The survey explored levels of awareness, attitudes, and behaviour related to sustainability. Its results provide an important baseline for understanding engagement across the institution and serve as input for further developing communication, education, and participation initiatives within the UM community.

Sustainability considerations are also becoming more firmly embedded in formal decision-making processes. In 2025, a dedicated sustainability paragraph was introduced as a standard element in proposals and memos submitted to key governance bodies, including the Executive Board, the Management Team, and the Board of Directors. This structural inclusion helps ensure that sustainability implications are systematically considered in institutional decisions, rather than addressed on an ad hoc basis.

The Sustainability Supervisory Board (SSB) plays a central advisory role in this governance landscape. The SSB provides strategic guidance to the Executive Board on sustainability related topics and was further expanded in 2025, strengthening both its expertise and its engagement with university leadership.

Institutional Foundations for Sustainability

Sustainability requires not only concrete action, but also a strong institutional foundation. The UM upholds several codes and policies that support transparent, responsible, and ethical governance. The Code of Good Governance promotes accountable leadership and sound decision making, the Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity safeguards the quality and reliability of research, and the Whistleblower Policy provides a safe channel for reporting concerns. Furthermore, several policies are implemented at the UM aimed at specific topics, such as the animal welfare policy ensuring the welfare of animals that are used for research at the UM. Together, these frameworks help ensure a resilient and future proof organisation. An overview of UM's codes of conduct and governance policies is available online: www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/about-um/organisation/gedragscodes-reglementen.

Our People: Team, Volunteers and Green Communities

Realising the UM's sustainability ambitions depends on the commitment and collaboration of people across the university: dedicated professionals, engaged volunteers, and students who bring energy, creativity, and new perspectives to sustainability efforts.

The UM Sustainability Office comprises 7.0 FTE, covering a broad range of roles, including Director of Sustainability, Sustainability Adviser, Adviser Sustainable Operations, Adviser Sustainable Research and Education, Academic Lead Sustainability, Project Manager Transition Platform, Sustainability Communications Officer, and Data Analyst. Together, this team coordinates strategy, supports faculties and service departments, and leads the projects that make up the university's sustainability programme.

In addition to the professional team, the UM Green Office, staffed by students and accounting for 0.8 FTE, plays a key connecting role between sustainability policy and student life. The Green Office helps translate sustainability ambitions into concrete, student-driven initiatives and ensures that student perspectives remain central to sustainability activities.

At faculty level, six Green Teams operate across all UM faculties, bringing together approximately 50 staff and student volunteers. These teams help embed sustainability within daily academic life by organising initiatives, raising awareness, and ensuring that sustainability is experienced as a shared and tangible part of the university community.

Resources

In 2025, the UM allocated a budget of €1,350,000 to the Sustainability Office and €880,000 to DEI+ for the coming years. This funding supports staffing, the operation of the Green Office and Green Teams, and the implementation of projects across the Sustainability Roadmap themes. The structural nature of this allocation underlines UM's commitment to sustainability as a long-term institutional priority rather than a temporary programme.

Next to ecological topics, sustainability encompasses social topics as well. Some of these social topics are Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity and Sexual safety, which are managed by the DEI+ Office at the UM. Alongside the Sustainability Office, the DEI+ Office plays an essential role in realising UM's vision of a sustainable and inclusive community. The office comprises 7.2 FTE, including a Director DEI+, Policy Advisor, and Programme Managers and Coordinators, and works across the university to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in policy, practice, and everyday institutional life. The DEI+ Office is supported by a vibrant network of staff and student communities, including FEM (Female Empowerment Maastricht), UM Pride, ACMUS, and UnliMited, each contributing to a university environment where everyone feels welcome, represented, and empowered to participate in shaping a sustainable future. More information about DEI+ is provided in a separate chapter of this report.

Sustainability in Research at UM

Research at UM is a core pillar of the university's commitment to a sustainable future and is closely aligned with the ambitions of the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030. The ambition is to further strengthen sustainability-related research across all UM faculties, addressing pressing societal challenges such as climate resilience, circular economies, biodiversity, and social equity. By embedding sustainability principles in both research content and research practices, UM intends to generate knowledge and innovations that contribute to a more sustainable world, while simultaneously advancing its ambitions for climate neutrality, circularity, and a thriving university community.

Before highlighting specific initiatives and examples, the figure below shows an overview of some of UM's research institutes, centres, and platforms that are actively engaged in sustainability-focused research.

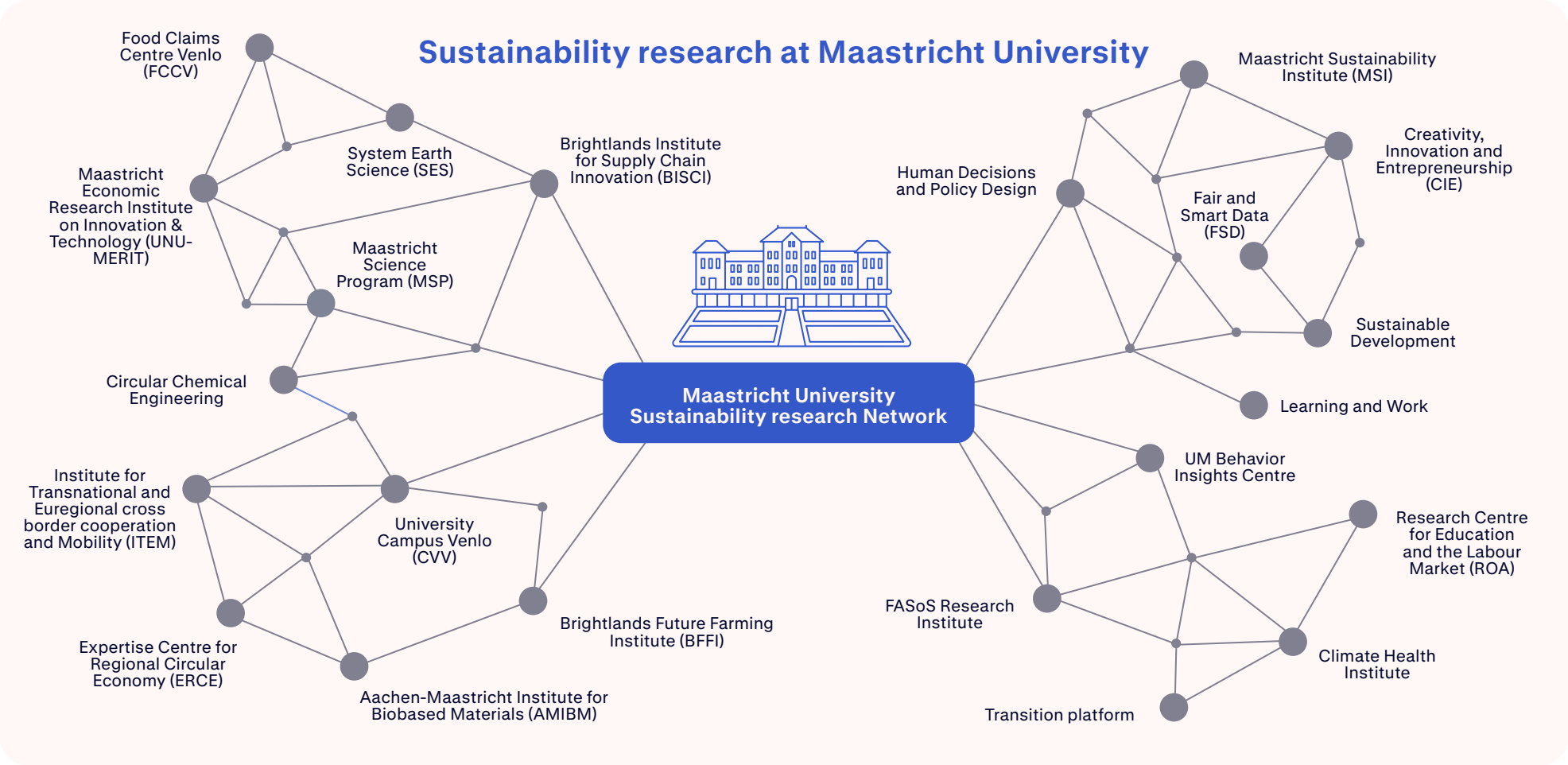


Figure 1 – Non-exhaustive overview of UM research institutes, centres and platforms related to sustainability

Seed Fund Research Calls

The Sustainability Office supports interdisciplinary sustainability research at the UM through dedicated Seed Fund Research Calls, stimulating cross-faculty collaboration on climate, circularity, and community well-being. The Seed Fund enables researchers to initiate new projects or expand existing lines of inquiry, thereby strengthening interdisciplinary networks and increasing readiness for larger national and international research grants. A key objective of the Seed Fund is to foster collaboration across disciplinary boundaries and to encourage engagement with external stakeholders in the region. Selection criteria therefore focus strongly on inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation, team complementarity, and relevance to the UM's sustainability ambitions.

"Thanks to the support of the Sustainability Office Seed Funds, we were able to develop and pilot an innovative, interdisciplinary project that uses optimism as a driver of climate action. The funding enabled us to integrate evidence-based positive psychology interventions with participatory approaches and to fine-tune our project idea for use in education and public engagement. This initial support was crucial in helping the project grow and attracting further competitive funding." — Nicole Geschwind (Assistant Professor Clinical Psychological Science, FPN) & Marjolein Hanssen (Assistant Professor Section Experimental Health Psychology, FPN)

In 2025, a total budget of €590,000 was made available for sustainability-related research. Funded topics span a range of operational and societal challenges, including sustainable catering, energy solutions, and material flow analysis. By translating theoretical insights and proof-of-concept research into practical applications, these projects contribute to the valorisation of academic knowledge and support the UM's transition toward a more sustainable future.

To stimulate collaboration, two matchmaking events were organised, providing researchers from across the UM with opportunities to connect and develop joint proposals. Following assessment of research quality, interdisciplinary expertise, potential impact, portfolio balance across sustainability challenges, alignment with Expertise Centre for Regional Circular Economy (ERCE) objectives, and relevance to the UM sustainability strategy, the Selection Committee, together with the Sustainability Supervisory Board and the Management Team, recommended funding for eight research projects within two research lines:

- One research line focuses on the transition to a circular economy in Limburg through material flow analyses, with a total budget of €320,000. Four projects received the maximum funding of €75,000, while one pilot project received €20,000. These projects align with ERCE's data-driven vision and support UM's ambition to function as a living lab for circular economy principles across education, research, and operations. In this manner, UM collaborates with regional stakeholders across the Limburg region, contributing to the evidence-base to link academic insights with real-world impact.
- A second research line, Path to a Sustainable UM: Research Call for Transformative Solutions, allocated €225,000 to three projects, each funded up to €75,000. These projects focus on advancing climate-neutral and circular UM operations while strengthening community well-being, with particular attention to sustainable food systems and resilience to climate impacts related to heat, energy, health, and well-being.

"Our project engages students in measuring the environmental footprint of UM's learning environments, first by quantifying greenhouse gas emissions from chemistry laboratory activities and later by expanding to indoor air quality across tutorial spaces while explicitly studying the relationship between measured conditions and students' perceived comfort and concentration. Through this progression, the initiative evolves from an extracurricular awareness activity into a cross-disciplinary, curriculum-connected sustainability intervention linking authentic measurements, lived experience, and institutional sustainability goals." — Jurica Bauer (Associate Professor at Institute for Technology-Inspired Regenerative Medicine, MERLN, FHML)

"While executing a research project on sustainability in 2024, we discovered that Dutch family businesses have hardly invested in certified water systems. The research grant of the Circularity Seed Fund 2025-2026 allows us to further explore circularity in water practices of (family) SMEs in the Limburg Region, and to develop tools to enhance this behaviour." — Anita van Gils (Professor in Family Business and Strategic Entrepreneurship, SBE)

"The seed funds provide a strong signal about the will of UM in terms of finding out what is possible in terms of sustainability across the entire organisation. Our Fork2Future project investigates the boundaries of healthy diet uptake and aims at bringing together all interested parties across all UM campuses and beyond, in order to accelerate the transformation of our eating patterns. This affects many aspects of our university, from the health of individuals and all the way to performance." — Michalis Moatsos (Assistant Professor, SBE & Project Lead Fork2Future Project)

Fossil Assessment Framework

The UM Fossil Assessment Framework supports researchers and staff in assessing whether research partnerships align with the transition toward a fossil-free society. At the heart of the framework are two guiding questions: whether the prospective partner is part of the fossil fuel industry, and what impact the project has on the transition to a fossil-free society. During the pilot phase at the School of Business and Economics (SBE) and the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE), 32 cases were screened via the Research Project Services (RPS) Platform since October 2025.

The implementation of the framework is supported by the Sensitive Partnerships Unit (SPU), a dedicated team that assists researchers throughout the assessment process. The RPS platform guides users through the evaluation and indicates whether consultation with an independent Fossil Assessment Committee is required before proceeding with a project or partnership. Of the 32 reviewed cases, two projects were referred to the committee and both received a positive assessment.

Transition Platform

The UM continues to strengthen its regional engagement through the Regional Transition Platform, established in collaboration with the Municipality of Maastricht as a knowledge hub to accelerate the transition toward a sustainable society. In 2025, the platform brought together government bodies, businesses, civil society organisations, citizens, and researchers to exchange experiential knowledge, stimulate new collaborations, and develop practical tools for sustainable practices through a series of thematic gatherings.

Two expert meetings held in February and June 2025 focused on sharing insights from the shock scenario analysis conducted within the ***Shocks and transition to a fossil-free society*** research project. In addition, the "Break the Routine" workshop in October invited professionals to critically reflect on unconscious assumptions embedded in local sustainability approaches. Across all activities, the Transition Platform engaged a total of 90 experts, including researchers from FSE, SBE, FPN (Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience), FASoS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), FHML (Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences), and Studio Europa, alongside a diverse group of regional stakeholders.

"Everyone is working on sustainability transitions. It is a waste if the wheel is invented in many places, independently of each other. Regional cooperation works more efficiently and effectively." — Erwin de Bruin (Cluster Coordinator for Sustainability, Municipality of Maastricht)

In parallel, SBE contributed actively to an intermunicipal circular economy trajectory in collaboration with six Limburg municipalities, Heerlen, Maastricht, Sittard-Geleen, Roermond, Venlo, and Weert, as well as the Parkstad Limburg region. This trajectory focused on exploring the circular potential of Limburg and included five in-depth thematic sessions organised throughout the year.

Expertise Centre for Regional Circular Economy (ERCE)

The UM recognises the urgency of accelerating the transition to a circular economy, both within the university and across the Limburg region, in line with its ambition to become a circular campus in the coming years. To support this transition, the Expertise Centre for Regional Circular Economy (ERCE) was launched in September 2025.

Initiated by UM researchers following an intensive cocreation process with regional municipalities and societal partners, ERCE represents a significant investment in Limburg's knowledge infrastructure. The centre functions as a hub that connects stakeholders from industry, government, and civil society to jointly develop practical solutions for circular challenges. By linking UM's interdisciplinary academic expertise to regional initiatives, ERCE builds a robust knowledge base tailored to local needs while connecting these efforts to national and international developments.

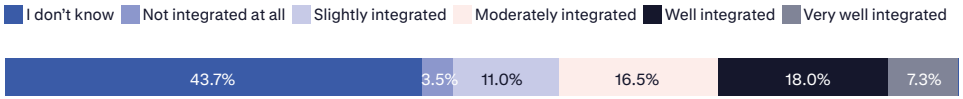
Through interdisciplinary research, transdisciplinary collaboration, and close alignment with societal initiatives, ERCE strengthens regional innovation capacity and contributes to a coherent and futureproof circular transition in Limburg. The project is supported by a budget of €1.8 million and is staffed by one Director (Professor), two Postdoctoral researchers, two PhD candidates, and one Project Manager.

"The Expertise Centre for Regional Circular Economy (ERCE) is a strategic investment from UM to bolster its expertise and link it directly to questions from regional stakeholders in the public and private sectors. The circular transition is a key challenge for Dutch society, and firms, governments and citizen initiatives in Limburg are working hard to shape this transition. ERCE brings together and deepens the evidence-base for this transition by providing insight into the material flows in the region and the way they relate to economic domains such as housing, food provision, mobility, clothing, leisure, and health. It works with its wide network of regional stakeholder to deliver impact, mobilising the expertise from all UM Faculties." — Frank Boons (Director ERCE)

Perception and Integration of Sustainability in UM Research

Survey results[1] highlight the need to further strengthen the integration of sustainability in research. A survey among students and staff shows that 25.3% perceive sustainability as (very) well embedded in UM research, while 43.7% feel unsure (n=226).

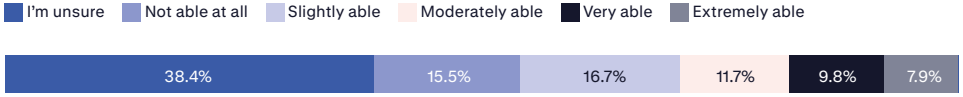
In your opinion, how well is sustainability currently integrated into UM's research?



Graph 1 – Employees' and students' opinions on integration sustainability in UM's research

In addition, a survey among UM employees indicates that only 17.7% feel (very) capable of integrating sustainability into their research, whereas 38.4% indicate they are unsure (n=114). These findings underline the importance of continued investment in training, guidance, and support to enhance researchers' confidence and capacity to embed sustainability in their work.

To what extent do you feel able to integrate sustainability into your research at UM?



Graph 2 – Employees' perceptions of feeling able to integrate sustainability in UM research

1 The sample is not statistically representative of the UM population; therefore, a non-response analysis was conducted, and weighting adjustments were applied to correct for under- and over-representation within the respondent group.

Sustainability in Education at UM

Education at UM plays a central role in preparing future leaders to address global societal challenges. UM aims to equip all students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to act as responsible global citizens. This ambition goes beyond learning *about* sustainability and focuses increasingly on learning *for* sustainability, empowering students to make a meaningful contribution in their future professional roles and communities. Guided by the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030 and the Global Citizenship for Sustainable Development (GCEd) Framework, and aligned with the UM's identity as a European University, principles of sustainability and global citizenship are being embedded throughout curricula, teaching approaches, and learning experiences, with an international orientation that extends beyond Europe.

"Together with many teachers and students from different faculties, we developed what we call a hospitable framework of global citizenship education at Maastricht University based on three main pillars: global competence, social responsibility and transformative engagement." — Herco Fonteijn (Associate Professor, FPN & Coordinator for GCEd Framework at UM)

Sustainability Integration in Curricula

Embedding sustainability principles across all UM bachelor programmes is a key educational objective, aligned with the GCEd Framework. UM Ambitions as presented in the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030 further specify that all graduates should complete at least one course that explicitly provides them knowledge, skills and competences to reduce the climate and material footprints of organisations. To support this ambition, several strategies for curriculum integration have been explored, with emphasis on ensuring that sustainability is incorporated in a way that feels natural and meaningful rather than an additional burden. A competency-based approach guides this process across all six faculties.

In 2025, the Sustainability Office initiated a comprehensive inventory of existing sustainability-related education across 27 bachelor programmes at the UM. This inventory (that adopted a broad sustainability lens, including ecological, social, and governance aspects) aims to identify current strengths and opportunities for further integration, and to create a shared overview that enables all faculties to collectively assess whether and how additional curriculum development is required to meet the goals of the Sustainability Roadmap 2030. Following this inventory, next steps will be developed and implemented in close coordination with programme coordinators of the bachelor programmes. The Sustainability Office will facilitate this process and provide targeted support where further enhancement is needed. This includes the development of new sustainability-related teaching materials for existing courses, with the objective of embedding sustainability structurally across all UM bachelor programmes by 2030.

Sustainability Minor

The Sustainability Minor approaches sustainable development from a multi and interdisciplinary perspective. It addresses environmental, social, economic, and institutional dimensions and links theory to real-world sustainability challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals. In the academic year 2024/25, 26 students completed the minor, compared to 18 students in 2025/26. Uptake remains limited, largely due to administrative and curricular barriers. These include restricted accessibility for students in several programmes, the minor's extracurricular status in some curricula, and limited enrolment opportunities for exchange students.

Sustainability Education Grants

Each year, the Sustainability Office offers Sustainability Education Grants to support course coordinators and teaching staff who wish to integrate sustainability topics and related competencies into existing or new courses. These grants provide the time and resources needed to (re)develop educational modules or course components that embed sustainability in a meaningful way.

"The UM Sustainability Grant gave me the opportunity to collaborate with a BSc student to co-create materials for a Calculus course, including lecture slides and assignments. This not only enhanced the course with sustainability topics but also helped me develop myself. I learned what true co-creation means, partnering with a student, letting them decide and have impact, and letting go of my need to control everything." — Martijn Boussé (Assistant Professor Applied Mathematics, FSE)

In the second round of the academic year 2024/25, three course coordinators each received €5,000. The same funding level was awarded to three recipients in the third round in 2025/26. Across both rounds, a total of €30,000 was allocated to support curriculum development focused on sustainability.

> "Financing biodiversity is one of the defining challenges of the next decade. This grant from the Sustainability Office enables our students at the School of Business and Economics to engage directly with practitioners and develop investment solutions that support the preservation of nature at scale, applied to real-world cases in Africa."
> — Juan Palacios (Assistant Professor Finance, SBE)

Professional Development of Teaching Staff

To support the professional development of teaching staff, a workshop titled "Integrating discussion on climate change in your course" was organised in collaboration with EDLAB, the UM's Centre for Teaching and Learning. The workshop aimed to deepen participants' understanding of climate change mechanisms and impacts, while exploring practical approaches for integrating this topic into teaching. Teaching staff from all six faculties participated, reflecting broad interest in strengthening sustainability education.

Workshops – Climate Fresk and Circular Economy Collage

Interactive workshops such as the Climate Fresk and the Circular Economy Collage (CEC) are offered throughout the year to both students and staff, based on requests from the UM faculties. These workshops raise awareness of climate change and circularity through participatory learning formats. Participants are subsequently invited to take part in facilitator training, enabling them to organise and lead workshops within their own faculties and thereby further expand internal capacity.

In 2025, the Climate Fresk workshops reached more than 300 participants, including both students and staff. Through collaborative discussion and evidence-based learning, participants explored the causes and impacts of climate change and reflected on the role of organisations and individuals in addressing these challenges. To strengthen understanding of circularity and highlight opportunities to reduce the university's climate footprint, the CEC was introduced to students in 2025. Approximately 20 Green Network volunteers participated in the workshop, engaging deeply with circular economy principles through an interactive, game-based format grounded in scientific sources. The workshop stimulated lively discussions and resulted in a visual representation of pathways away from the linear "take-make-waste" model. Additional CEC workshops will be made available to the UM community in the coming years.

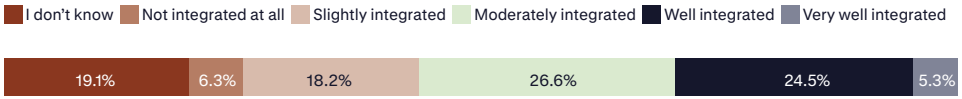
In 2025, the Sustainability Office also began coordinating with the HRM department to integrate these workshops into the UM onboarding programme, further embedding sustainability awareness from the start of the employee journey.

UM staff participating in Climate Fresk workshop

Perception and Integration of Sustainability in UM Education

Survey results[2] among the UM community indicate that 29.8% of respondents consider sustainability to be (very) well integrated into UM education, while 6.3% feel it is not integrated at all (n=226).

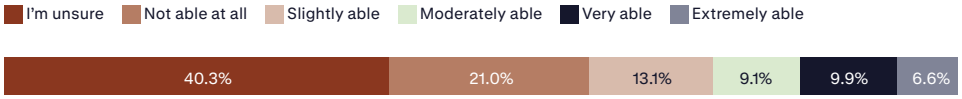
In your opinion, how well is sustainability currently integrated into UM's education?



Graph 3 – Employees' and students' opinions on integration sustainability in UM's education

Among UM teaching staff, 16.5% feel very or extremely capable of integrating sustainability into their courses, while 21.0% indicate they are not able to do so and 40.3% remain unsure (n=114). This highlights the continued need for targeted training, resources, and support to build confidence and capability in embedding sustainability within education.

To what extent do you feel able to integrated sustainability into your course curriculum at UM?



Graph 4 – Employees' perception of feeling able to integrate sustainability in UM's curriculum

2 The sample is not statistically representative of the UM population; therefore, a non-response analysis was conducted, and weighting adjustments were applied to correct for under- and over-representation within the respondent group.

Sustainability in Operations at UM

The UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030 places strong emphasis on embedding sustainability into daily operations. The university aims to achieve climate-neutral operations by 2035 and reach a fully circular campus in the same year. Furthermore, operational processes should actively support the well-being of the entire UM community and of everything that lives, works, and studies on our premises.

This chapter outlines how sustainability is integrated across operational domains. It also presents indicators and, when available, objectives that guide progress in sustainable operations. In addition, several ongoing and emerging projects illustrate how the UM advances these ambitions in practice.

In 2025, the UM initiated a broad set of projects that translate the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030 into concrete action. These efforts include calculating the carbon footprint of the UM, a sustainability-focused catering tender, and a comprehensive real estate action plan. A university-wide survey and focus groups with staff and students have provided further input for shaping sustainable operational strategies.

On the next page, you will find an overview of the sustainability projects the Sustainability Office is working on.

Close collaboration with internal partners such as Facility Services and the Procurement Department plays a central role in making daily operations more sustainable. These discussions help identify barriers, opportunities, and shared priorities across UM services.

Integration of Sustainability in Procurement

Procurement plays a pivotal role in shaping the sustainability performance of UM operations. Because many products and services used across the university pass through procurement channels, sustainable purchasing practices directly influence progress toward a climate-neutral and circular UM by 2035.

The UM encourages its suppliers to actively pursue sustainability within their business operations. In tenders, the Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) requirements of PIANOo are taken into consideration as a guiding framework. While these requirements are systematically reviewed as part of the tendering process, their application may vary depending on the specific context, objectives, and feasibility of each procurement. In areas where PIANOo has not yet defined standards, the university develops its own requirements and criteria to incentivize sustainability improvements. In 2025, UM awarded contracts in 53 tenders[3], with sustainability officers contributing to the formulation of requirements and criteria in 14 of these procedures. Where applicable, every tender included a requirement related to ensuring zero-emission city logistics in Maastricht's inner city.

Circularity is a core focus in procurement. The UM uses the R-ladder framework as a guiding principle for reducing resource use and improving material loops across the entire life-cycle: procurement, use, reuse, and end-of-life. To embed circularity structurally, the UM intensified collaboration with supply chain partners in 2025. Several suppliers were asked to provide information on emissions and circularity performance, with the long-term goal of making this a standard part of the procurement process. Circularity is already incorporated into tenders as a relevant consideration and is explicitly included in UM's procurement policy.

A recent example is the tender for workplace equipment. Here, circularity was included as a 10% award criterion, requiring bidders to explain how they apply R-ladder principles and extend the lifespan of equipment. This approach stimulates suppliers to adopt circular practices and to innovate toward longer-lasting, repairable, and reusable products.

The UM also supports the municipality of Maastricht's initiative to introduce Zero Emission City Logistics in the city centre. Suppliers are encouraged to prepare for the zero emission zone in 2025 by switching to zero emission vehicles or by collaborating with logistics hubs. This transition not only aligns with necessary climate goals but also improves air quality, safety, and accessibility in Maastricht.

> "Procurement activities play a key role in shaping our sustainability impact. The integration of sustainability requirements into procurement and supplier management processes, including contractual arrangements, is essential for achieving UM's long-term ambitions."
> — Emilie Pijls (Head of Procurement)

3 European and multiple private ("meervoudig onderhandse") procurement procedures.

From here...

...To a sustainable university in 2035

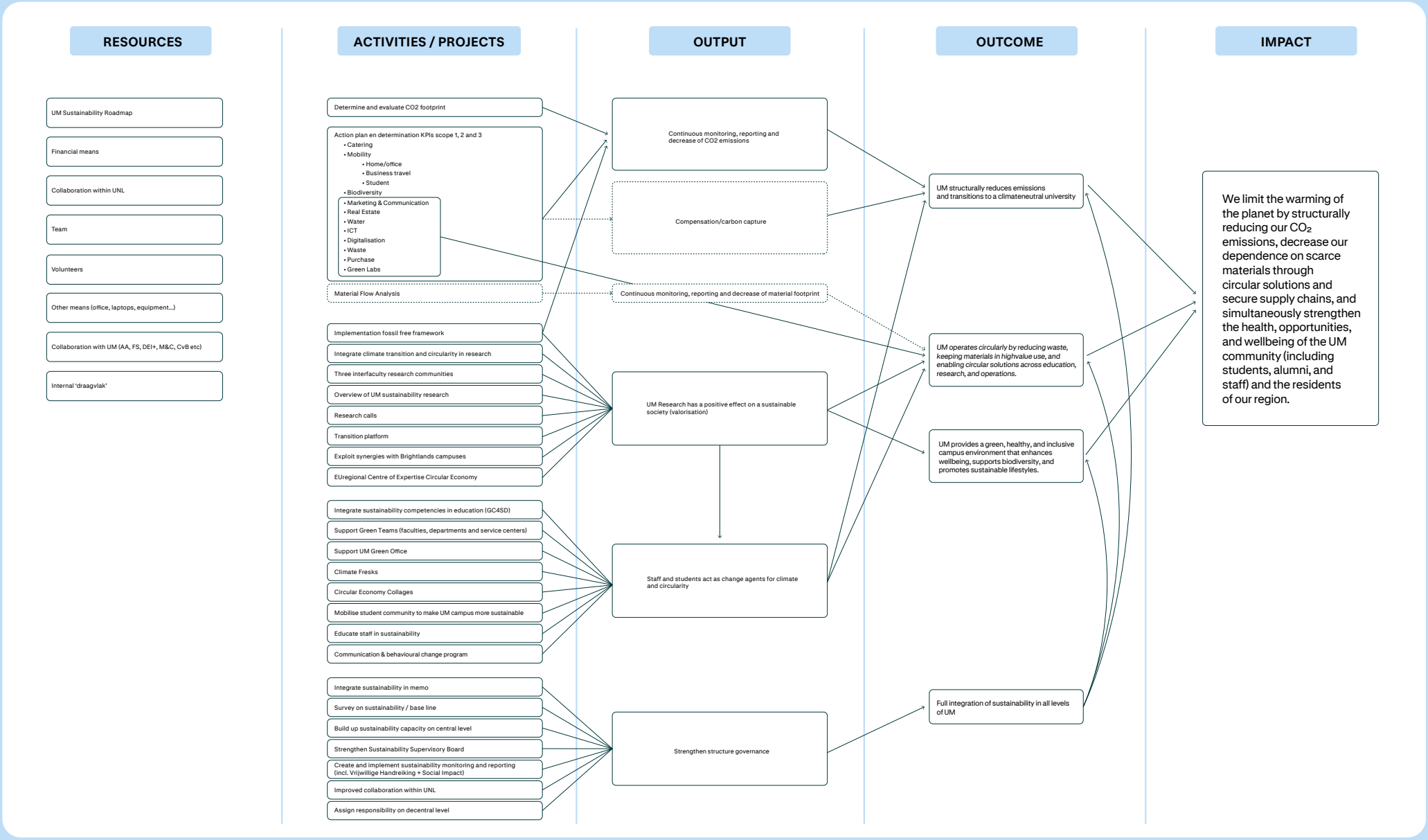


Figure 2: Project overview Sustainability Office

Sustainability in UM Operations - Climate

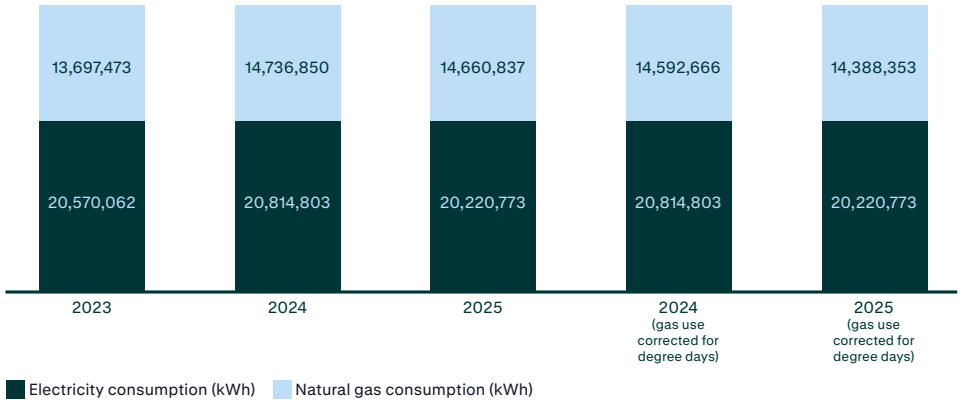
Climate is one of the central themes of the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030. For operational activities, this means working toward climate-neutral operations by 2035[4]. Achieving this ambition requires reducing emissions across all scopes as much as possible. Before presenting UM's emissions, this chapter first focuses on energy consumption, a major driver of operational emissions.

Energy Consumption[5]

The UM monitors its energy consumption by distinguishing between electricity use and natural gas use, as both contribute differently to the university's operational impact. Graph 5 presents UM's total energy consumption for 2023–2025 and shows that electricity use decreased by 2.85% in 2025 compared to 2024, while natural gas consumption[6] decreased by 0.52% in the same period. In 2025, the UM used 34,881,610 kWh of energy, compared to 34,267,535 kWh in 2023 and 35,551,653 kWh in 2024. This represents a 1.88% decrease in total energy use between 2024 and 2025. Per student/employee, energy consumption decreased by 0.85% in 2025 (1,280 kWh) compared to 2024 (1,291 kWh).

Graph 5 also compares UM's natural gas consumption corrected for degree days[7], showing that the total energy use decreased by 2.25% in 2025 compared to 2024, corrected for degree days.

Energy consumption (in kWh) UM 2023-2025



Graph 5 – Energy consumption UM 2023-2025 (electricity and natural gas)

Use of Renewable Energy

In addition to reducing overall energy consumption, the extent to which the UM's electricity use comes from renewable sources strongly influences the university's climate impact. The UM therefore aims to green its electricity consumption as much as possible through a combination of on site generation, renewable supply contracts, and investments in external solar projects. In 2025, 9% of the electricity used by the UM was classified as grey (1,757,787 kWh), originating from the combined heat and power plant used within the Maastricht hospital (MUMC+). The remaining 91% (18,444,405 kWh) was considered green electricity and derived from several components: renewable energy generated by UM owned solar panels (0.03% of total consumption), renewable electricity supplied directly by the UM's energy provider (58.66%), and green energy certificates purchased by MUMC+ (32.52%). As of 2024, the UM has an agreement with the electricity supplier to deliver renewable electricity directly (Dutch wind energy).

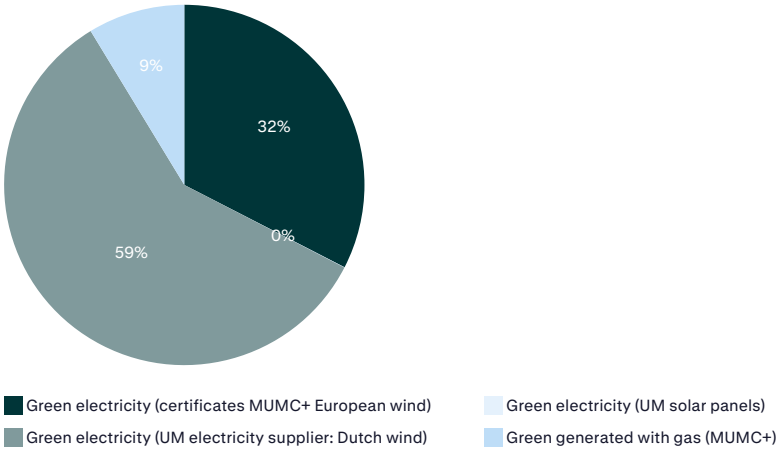
4 In 2026, we started a project to define 'climate neutral operations' in which also UM students are involved.

5 The results (also with respect to renewable energy) exclude the energy use of the following locations: Boschstraat 24, Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 22, Dr. Tanslaan 10, Peter Debyelaan 25, Brouwersweg 100 (Guesthouse), and Vijverdalseweg 1.

6 Natural gas volumes were converted from m^3 to kWh using the formula gas consumption (m^3) × 31.65 (MJ/m^3) × 0.27778 (kWh/MJ) to ensure consistent reporting (https://pure-energie.nl/kennisbank/m3-gas-omrekenen-naar-kwh/). The natural gas consumption includes heat delivered by MUMC+ (for UNS40 and UNS50), generated with natural gas.

7 The colder the days, the higher the degree days and the more energy is required for heating. The following unweighted degree days were applied: 2,429 for 2023, 2,453 for 2024, and 2,475 for 2025. 2023 Was used as baseline year to correct the natural gas use for degree days for 2024 and 2025. For example, the corrected natural gas use for 2025 was calculated as follows: 14,660,837 (natural gas use 2025) * 2,429 (degree days 2023) / 2,475 (degree days 2025).

Share green / grey electricity 2025



Graph 6 – Electricity mix UM in 2025

In addition, the UM invested in the Belvédère solar park and buys certificates from this solar park every year. In 2025, Belvédère certificates were bought representing 4,364,770 kWh, which is more than the grey electricity consumed by the UM that year (i.e., 1,757,787 kWh). In 2024, certificates were bought representing 4,309,936 kWh, which was also more than UM's grey electricity consumption in that year (i.e., 1,730,174 kWh). Although the electricity generated by the Belvédère project is not consumed directly on campus, it contributes to renewable energy production. Graph 6 illustrates the electricity mix for 2025, excluding the Belvédère certificates.

Energy Efficiency and Real Estate Strategy

The UM recognises that behavioural change can contribute to energy reduction, but the largest impact lies in improving the energy performance of its buildings. An extensive assessment identified opportunities for insulation upgrades, energy efficiency improvements, and the expansion of on-site renewable energy generation. These insights have been translated into a long-term plan built around five pillars:

1. Integrated renovations
2. Sustainability improvements during natural maintenance cycles
3. Quick wins
4. New construction when unavoidable
5. Disposal of buildings

The UM aims to reduce total energy consumption by 25% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels and to reduce natural gas consumption by 44% in the same period.

In 2019, electricity consumption was 18,392 MWh and natural gas consumption 19,559 MWh, resulting in 37,951 MWh of total energy use. In 2025, electricity and natural gas consumption were 20,221 MWh (+9.9%) and 14,661 MWh (-25%) respectively, leading to a total use of 34,882 MWh (-8.09% compared to 2019). The UM expects that the planned real estate projects in the coming years will play a key role in achieving the university's objectives for reducing natural gas consumption and total energy use.

Our most sustainable building: Tapijn

Emissions of the UM

Emissions are the greenhouse gases released through activities that support UM's operations and contribute to climate change. Together, they form the university's carbon footprint. Calculating these emissions is essential for understanding our impact and identifying effective reduction measures. The Greenhouse Gas Protocol distinguishes Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions, all of which are presented in this report for the UM.

In 2025, the UM initiated comprehensive and structured calculations of its greenhouse gas emissions. The figures presented in this report represent the outcomes of this first consolidated assessment. While these calculations do not yet cover all possible emission categories, the focus was placed on the scopes and categories expected to be most material to UM's operations, with the aim of estimating these emissions as accurately as possible. In the coming years, the UM aims for further refinement of its methodology and expansion of the scope of calculations to build a more complete picture over time.

Detailed methodological information for all scopes (including impact factors used) is provided in a separate footprint report[8].

Scope 1

Scope 1 emissions include all direct greenhouse gas emissions from sources that the UM owns or controls. Because these emissions originate directly from operational activities on campus, they form an essential part of the UM's carbon footprint. Reducing scope 1 emissions is therefore a key step toward achieving climate-neutral operations and improving the environmental performance of our university.

UM's scope 1 emissions were calculated using a lifecycle analysis (LCA) model developed specifically for the university. For the UM, scope 1 includes emissions from natural gas consumption and diesel aggregates in 2025. In 2025, we did not have scope 1 emissions from university vehicles and refrigerant leakages. Total scope 1 emissions amounted to 2,519 t kg CO_2e in 2025, compared to 2,368 and 2,511 t kg CO_2e in 2023 and 2024 respectively. Although the 0.32% increase in scope 1 emissions in 2025 compared to 2024 is small, a decrease will be required to reach climate-neutrality in 2035.

The UM purchased green gas certificates to compensate for part of its natural gas consumption. These certificates are not included in the emission calculations. The UM purchased certificates representing 1,616, 1,735, and 1,740 t kg CO_2e in 2023, 2024, and 2025 respectively.

Scope 2

Scope 2 emissions cover the indirect greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of purchased electricity used by the UM and heat delivered by MUMC+ to the UM. Although these emissions occur off-campus at electricity generation facilities, they are a direct consequence of the university's operational energy demand and therefore form an important part of the UM's carbon footprint. Reducing Scope 2 emissions through energy efficiency and by increasing the use of renewable energy is essential for progressing toward climate-neutral operations.

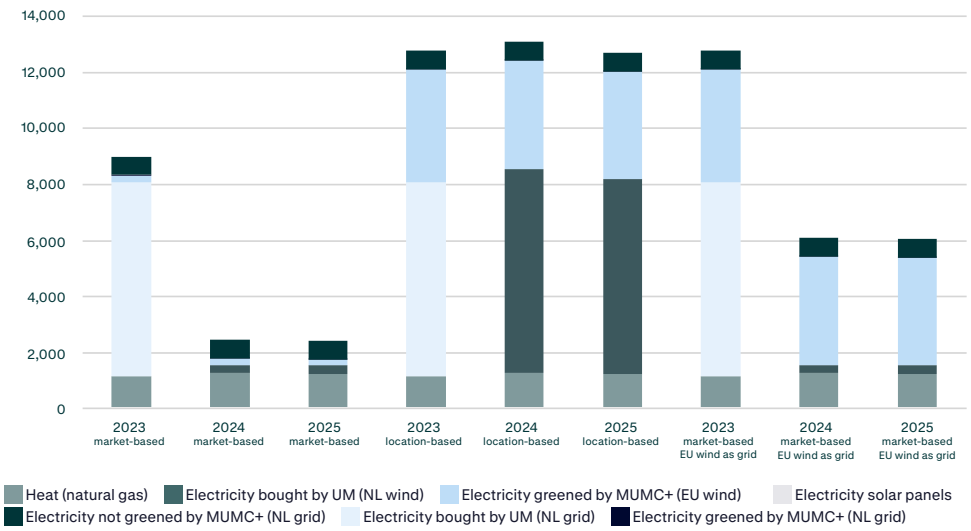
Scope 2 emissions were also calculated using the UM's LCA model. Emission factors differ for grey and green electricity, and both market-based and location-based emissions have been calculated. Market-based and location-based emissions provide two complementary perspectives on Scope 2 emissions: market-based emissions reflect the emissions associated with the electricity procurement choices made by the UM, while location-based emissions reflect the average emissions intensity of the electricity grid from which electricity is physically consumed.

In 2025, UM's Scope 2 emissions amounted to 2,434 t kg CO_2e (market-based) and 12,690 t kg CO_2e (location-based). Compared to 2024, this represents a decrease of 1.1% in market-based emissions and a decrease of 2.97% in location-based emissions (2024: 2,461 and 13,078 t kg CO_2e respectively). Graph 7 presents the development of Scope 2 emissions for 2023–2025. It also includes an alternative scenario in which green electricity supplied via the MUMC+ hospital, generated from European wind energy[9], is treated as national grid electricity, as applied in some methodologies.

8 https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/file/carbon-footprint-reportum2025pdf

9 Because the LCA-program used to calculate our emissions did not contain a dataset for European wind energy, we selected Wind ROW (Rest of the World) as dataset for the green energy (market-based) from the MUMC+ hospital.

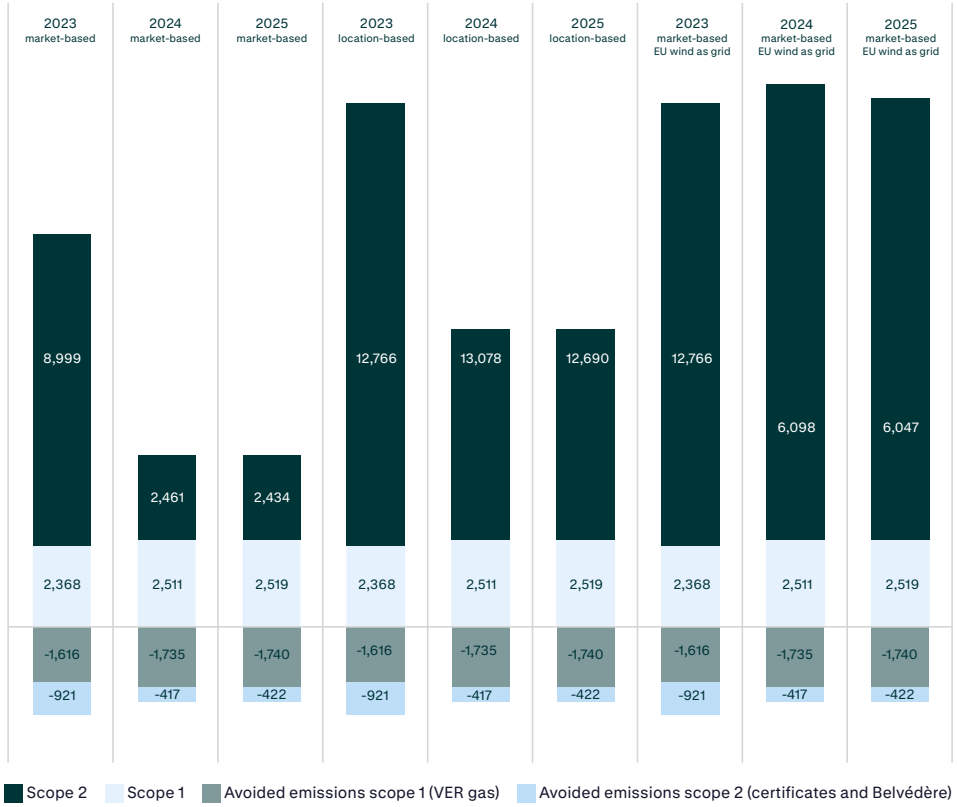
Scope 2 emissions (in t kg CO_2e) UM 2023-2025



Graph 7 – Scope 2 emissions UM 2023-2025 (market-based and location-based)

A pronounced reduction in market-based Scope 2 emissions between 2023 and 2024 is visible in Graph 7 and is largely explained by the UM's transition in 2024 to direct procurement of renewable electricity from Dutch wind energy. In 2023, the UM purchased green certificates, which are not included in Graph 7 but are shown as avoided emissions in Graph 8 presenting total Scope 1 and 2 emissions. These avoided emissions include electricity generated through the Belvédère solar project (503, 417, and 422 t kg CO_2e in 2023, 2024, and 2025, respectively) as well as avoided emissions resulting from green gas certificates related to Scope 1.

Scope 1 and 2 emissions (in t kg CO_2e) UM 2023-2025



Graph 8 – Scope 1 and 2 emissions UM 2023-2025 (market-based and location-based); and avoided emissions

Combined, Scope 1 and 2 emissions decreased slightly from 4,972 t kg CO_2e in 2024 to 4,953 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (-0.38%).

Scope 3

Scope 3 emissions include all indirect emissions that arise from activities connected to UM's operations but occur outside its direct control. These emissions typically form the largest share of an organisation's carbon footprint. The UM applies the GHG Protocol for Scope 3 emissions. As detailed emission calculations only started in 2025, reporting is currently limited to a number of key categories: purchased goods and services, waste, business travel, and employee commuting. Although not required by the GHG Protocol, the UM also calculated emissions related to student mobility to gain a more complete understanding of its wider impact.

Purchased Goods and Services

Emissions from purchased goods and services reflect the environmental impact of producing, transporting, and processing the materials, products, and services the UM relies on. These emissions form a substantial part of UM's operational carbon footprint. Procurement plays a vital role in influencing these emissions, as purchasing decisions determine which suppliers, materials, and production methods are supported. Strengthening sustainable procurement is therefore essential for reducing these Scope 3 emissions.

The UM conducted a spend-based analysis, which provides a high-level indication of emissions linked to procurement. Based on the spend-based analysis, emissions related to purchased goods and services (excl. depreciations) were 58,482 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (and 59,028 t kg CO_2e in 2024). A comparison or trend analysis for these emissions does not make much sense as the spend-based analysis gives a too rough indication of the emissions. Still, we decided to include these emissions to give an idea about its significance.

Because spend-based methods are only rough approximations, additional activity-based calculations were made for water, paper, and lab gases because we had data related to actual use for these goods:

- Water: 21.4 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (compared to 18.8 t kg CO_2e in 2024)
- Paper: 29.6 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (compared to 30 kg CO_2e in 2024)
- Lab gases: 72.6 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (compared to 78.2 kg CO_2e in 2024)[10]

Catering

Furthermore, for catering, supplier-data indicate emissions of 340 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (compared to 347 t kg CO_2e in 2024). Per euro of purchasing value, emissions decreased from 0.32 t kg CO_2e in 2024 to 0.27 t kg CO_2e in 2025 (-15.63%).

Plant-based proteins, which could reduce the carbon footprint, accounted for 44.7% of the total proteins in 2025 (compared to 39.4% in 2024) according to the data provided by our catering supplier. In 2025, we started the tender procedure for a new catering contract that aims for at least 60% plant-based proteins by 2030.

Waste

Emissions related to waste arise from the collection, transport, and treatment of discarded materials from UM locations. Reducing waste volumes and improving separation (to enable recycling) are therefore important steps in lowering these Scope 3 emissions. Waste emissions were calculated using the UM's LCA model[11] and amounted to 499 t kg CO_2e in 2025 compared to 451 t kg CO_2e in 2024 (+10.7%), which is explained by the increase in several waste streams as presented in the circularity chapter of this report.

Business Travel

Business travel emissions arise from the transportation used by staff to, amongst others, engage in academic collaborations, conferences, and research activities. Although essential for academia, this travel generates significant indirect emissions and therefore contributes to the UM's operational carbon footprint. Reducing and improving travel choices is key to lowering these Scope 3 emissions. The UM offers sustainable travel guidelines ("Take the green seat") to encourage eco-friendly travel choices. Policy development is ongoing to further strengthen sustainability in international mobility.

Business travel emissions were calculated using two approaches. The first, an LCA-based calculation, included only business trips for which distance-based data were available from travel agents. This resulted in emissions of 680 t kg CO_2e in 2025, covering 52.26% of total business travel costs, compared to 731 t kg CO_2e in 2024 (covering 51.78% of total business travel costs). To obtain a more complete picture, an additional extrapolated distance-based analysis was performed by scaling these

10 The gases used at campuses outside Maastricht are excluded from the calculations.

11 Emissions for the waste streams "metal" and "animal by-products" are not included in the LCA-model as no suitable corresponding flows were found in the Ecoinvent database.

results to total business travel expenditures. This analysis estimated emissions of 3,708 t kg CO_2e in 2025, compared to 3,371 t kg CO_2e in 2024.[12] While these figures provide useful insight, incomplete distance-based data limit their accuracy.

Employee Commuting

Employee commuting emissions stem from the daily travel of staff between their homes and the university. In 2025, employee commuting generated 4,470 t kg CO_2e compared to 4,789 t kg CO_2e in 2024. Encouraging low-carbon commuting options is important for reducing these Scope 3 emissions. The UM promotes low-carbon commuting by supporting bicycle purchases, offering high-quality bike parking, and limiting parking permits for staff living within 10 km of campus.

Student Mobility

Although the GHG Protocol does not require reporting of student commuting, the UM includes it because student mobility is essential to university life.

Three types of student travel were analysed: 1) Yearly travel between home country and Maastricht (two way); 2) weekly commuting between Dutch residence and the UM (three days per week, corrected for holidays); and 3) travel to other universities for their studies.

In 2025, the emissions related to student mobility were 19,633 t kg CO_2e including yearly travel and 13,622 t kg CO_2e excluding yearly travel (2024: 20,465 t kg CO_2e and 14,461 t kg CO_2e respectively). In the total overview of UM's emissions in graph 9, we present the emissions excluding yearly travel.

12 For 2025, the emissions from domestic and car travel were not available yet. Therefore, we assumed the same amount of those emissions as in 2024 (i.e., 588 t kg CO_2e). If we would exclude this from the business travel emissions for 2025, the total business travel emissions for 2025 would be 3,120 t kg CO_2e.

Total Emissions

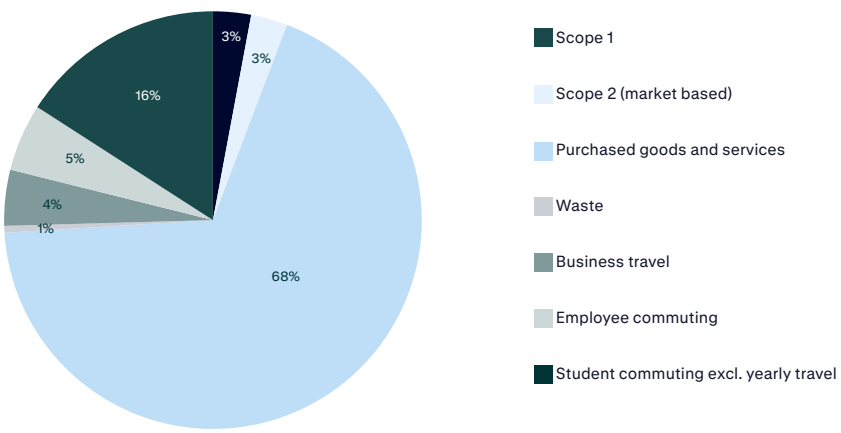
Graph 9 shows the total emissions of the UM in 2024 and 2025 based on the information presented in this report so far. For scope 2 emissions, we included the market-based emissions. For purchased goods and services, we included the (rough) spend-based emissions. Finally, avoided emissions related to the certificates of the Belvédère solar project and to the green gas certificates are shown separately as avoided emissions.

UM's total emissions decreased between 2024 (87,072 t kg CO_2e) and 2025 (85,734 t kg CO_2e) by 1.54%. However, it should be noted that a comparison is difficult to make because we had to make assumptions, especially for business travel and purchased goods and services, for which we also made a spend-based analysis (partly for business travel), which only provides an indication. Graph 10 shows the percentual share of the different emission categories for the UM in 2025.

UM emissions (in t kg CO_2e) 2024-2025

Graph 9 – Total emissions overview UM 2024 and 2025

UM emissions 2025



Graph 10 – Emission shares UM 2025

This report marks the first time the UM has calculated its emissions in such detail. These results provide a solid foundation for identifying emission reduction potential and determining future actions and objectives. The insights gained will guide the UM in prioritising effective measures and progressing toward climate-neutral operations.

Bike repair activities contribute to circularity at UM

Sustainability in UM Operations – Circularity

Circularity is an essential pillar of the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030, directly linked to the ambition to reduce the university's material footprint. The material footprint reflects the total amount of raw materials extracted, processed, transported, used, and discarded throughout the life cycle of the products and services the university relies on. For a large educational institution with offices, laboratories, teaching facilities, and catering, circularity helps minimise environmental pressures while promoting responsible use of materials.

Waste

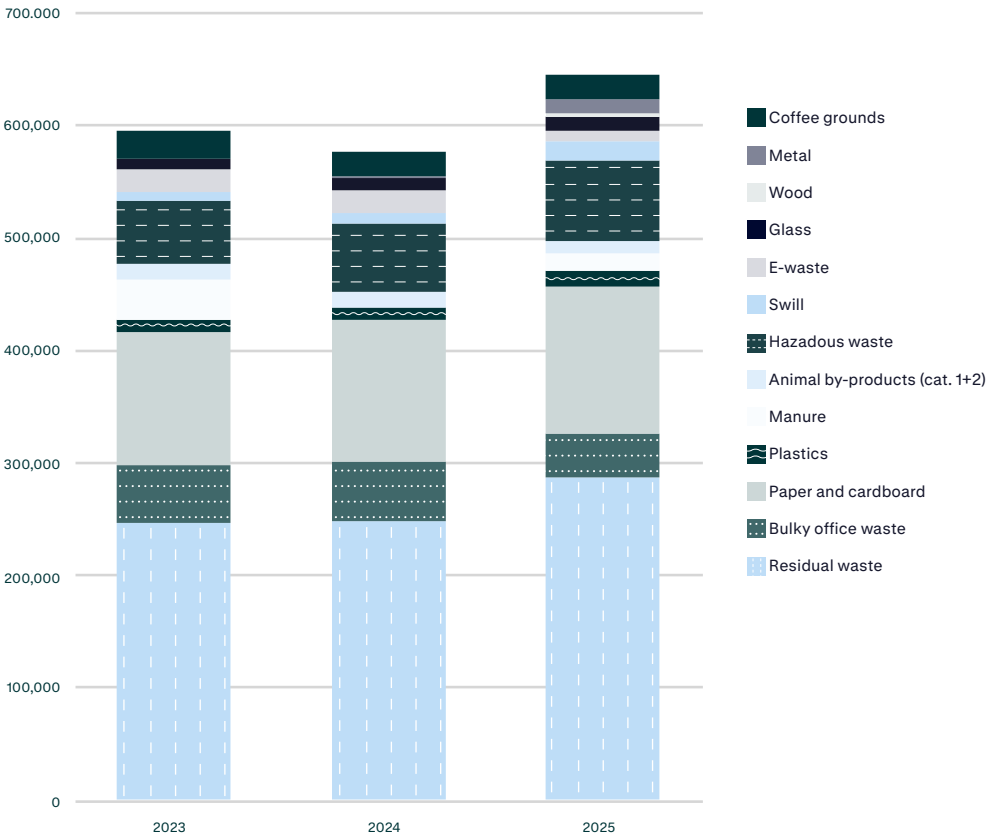
Waste is a key topic within circularity because every discarded material represents lost resources. By reducing residual waste and improving recycling, the UM keeps materials in the loop for longer. Effective waste management is therefore essential for building a more circular and resource-efficient university.

The UM works closely with its waste processor, PreZero, to monitor the weight and composition of its waste streams and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement. These opportunities are discussed on a structural basis, ensuring that insights from waste data translate into practical action. As part of this partnership, PreZero supports both the UM and MUMC+ with a dedicated zero waste advisor for one day per week.

Waste performance is mainly assessed through two indicators:
1. Weight of residual waste; and
2. Waste separation rate.

These two indicators combined indicate how much material can be diverted from disposal and reintroduced in the resource cycle.

Waste streams (in kg) UM 2023-2025



Graph 11 – Waste streams UM 2023-2025[13]

The waste figures shown in graph 11 include all waste collected at UM locations in Maastricht by PreZero and waste collected by the MUMC+ on behalf of the UM. The data exclude construction waste, outdoor waste, catering grease and oil, the guesthouse, and UM locations outside Maastricht.

In 2025, residual waste per student was 12.77 kg, based on 22,473 students. The UM aims to reduce this to 10.5 kg per student by 2030 so more waste can be recycled (i.e., residual waste is not recycled but incinerated with energy recovery). Furthermore, the residual waste per person (22,473 students and 4,782 staff members altogether) and the total waste per person was 10.53 and 23.72 respectively in 2025.

The increase in the total amount of waste in 2025, and in some waste streams such as residual waste, still needs to be analysed. Some likely registration errors have already been detected, which may explain at least parts of the increase.

Improvements in Waste Separation

Alongside policy development, the UM actively implements circular measures in practice. In 2024, additional bins for separating food waste (swill) were introduced in all UM buildings. This expanded swill separation beyond catering kitchens into office and educational settings. Consequently, compared to 2024, 93% more swill was collected in 2025 (+132% compared to 2023). Furthermore, the UM provides information about waste separation on large information boards combined with a digital waste guide.

These, and other, measures contributed to an increase in UM's waste separation rate[14] from 39.9% in 2024 to 40.6% in 2025 (excluding waste from the guesthouse[15]). The UM aims to reach a 65% waste separation rate by 2028 for waste collected at UM Maastricht locations (excluding certain specialised streams[16]). To achieve this goal, the UM is expanding waste separation options, including glass recycling and is preparing for the collection of deposit-bearing packaging ("statiegeld").

13 Animal by-products (cat. 1 and 2) is waste conforming regulation (EG) nr. 1069/2009 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32009R1069).

14 The waste separation rate is based on the VANG Buitenhuis method and presents the volume of all non-hazardous waste streams excluding residual waste and bulky office waste divided by all non-hazardous waste streams including residual waste and bulky office waste.

15 Residual waste from student housing.

16 Being construction waste, outdoor waste, and catering grease and oil.

“Waste is not just something we remove; it is something we can rethink. That is why contributing to UM’s circular transition means building a campus where smarter choices today create lasting impact tomorrow.” — Abdul Aydinli (Zero Waste Advisor, PreZero)

Water

Water consumption is an important circularity topic because water is a finite resource which use should be managed responsibly. Using water efficiently reduces pressure on natural systems and supports a more resource-conscious operational model. Responsible water management therefore contributes directly to a more circular UM.

Total water consumption at UM Maastricht locations rose to 65 million litres in 2025, a 13.6% increase compared to 2024 (57.2 million litres). This rise is mainly explained by higher water use at the Randwyck locations, which together accounted for approximately 7 million litres of the increase. The largest changes occurred at Peter Debyeplein (from 1.1 to 4.1 million litres), Paul Henri Spaaklaan (from 2.5 to 3.8 million litres), and Universiteitssingel 50 (from 16.3 to 18.8 million litres). Water use in the inner city buildings also increased but less compared to the Randwyck buildings mentioned.

Overall, the water consumption per m² functional gross floor area[17] (i.e., 234,256 m²) increased from 244.32 in 2024 to 277.50 in 2025. Causes for the increase in water consumption are still under investigation but might have something to do with changes in occupancy rates and opening times of particular buildings.

Circular Principles in Facility Services

Circular initiatives across UM’s operations demonstrate how practical actions can extend product lifespans, reduce waste, and strengthen a more resource-efficient campus. Within facility services, the furniture depot enables the redistribution and reuse of existing furniture items, directly supporting the R-ladder principles of reuse and reduce (i.e., purchasing less new furniture). In 2025[18], reused furniture (share of reused furniture in total furniture requested) represented 3.65% of office chairs (2024: 1.98%), 5.73% of desks (2024: 4.46%), and 6.32% of total furniture (2024: 8.37%)[19].

Circularity is also promoted in ICT through the introduction of the Fairphone 6 in UM’s core assortment in 2025. This modular mobile phone encourages the use of repairable and longer lasting equipment. An example of a supply chain innovation is given by our cleaning services, where circular Gloovy gloves reduce material consumption and demonstrate how operational partnerships can accelerate circular practices.

Community engagement further supports circularity, with initiatives such as the Swap Room, where students exchange clothing and accessories and help reduce textile waste. Looking ahead to 2026, the UM Sustainability Office will work with the Procurement Department to explore additional ways to embed circular and sustainability strategies into procurement processes, including aligning tender requirements with circularity principles and encouraging supplier-driven innovation and sustainability.

The sustainability initiatives mentioned in this chapter mark only the start of embedding sustainability in UM’s operations. Many additional projects will follow in the coming years, ranging from greening our labs to water management, and from developing green event guidelines (in 2025, more than 200 events with over 100 participants were organised) to performing a material flow analysis.

17 The functional gross floor area is a UM-specific variable closely similar to the net floor area. Buildings that are managed but not used by the UM, being Oxfordlaan 55 and Oxfordlaan 70, are excluded.

18 The percentages presented for 2025, might contain errors because of a change in registration systems.

19 The percentages of office chairs and office desks do not add up to the percentage mentioned for total furniture because total furniture also include other furniture items, such as closets, cabinets and regular chairs.

Sustainability
Community

Community is the third sustainability theme in the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030. This theme emphasises strengthening the sustainability-minded community within the university and creating an environment in which students and staff jointly contribute to a more sustainable institution. Cultivating such a community helps embed sustainability in daily academic life, encourages behavioural change, and ensures that everyone – students, researchers, lecturers, and professional staff – can participate in shaping a sustainable future. Integral to this vision is the recognition that a truly sustainable community is also an equitable and inclusive one, which is why diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI+) are considered an essential dimension of sustainability at UM, not a separate agenda.

A vibrant network of 92 student organisations contributes to this objective. These student organisations contribute across a wide range of topics, including climate action, circularity, social sustainability, nature protection, and behavioural change on campus.

Our Community in Numbers

The indicators presented in this section provide a quantitative snapshot of UM's community. They highlight the university's strongly international character.

Students

On 1 October 2025, Maastricht University counted a total of 22,113 bachelor and master students, with 69% enrolled in bachelor programmes and 31% in master programmes. The student population represented 128 nationalities, underlining the UM's international profile. Dutch students accounted for 38.3%, EEA- other students 54.4% (European Economic Area, excluding Dutch students), and non-EEA students 7.3%. Female students made up 59.7% of the population, male students 39.9%, while 0.4% identified as other or were not registered. The early dropout rate at the start of the academic year stood at 14.4%.

Staff

At the end of the reporting year, the UM employed 5,611 staff members, representing 93 different nationalities. The staff composition consisted of 57.6% women, 42.2% men, and 0.2% other or not registered, with an overall staff turnover rate of 9.9%. Together, these figures provide essential context for shaping inclusive policies and targeted interventions across the university.

UM Green Office

The UM Green Office was the first of its kind in the world and served as the original model that has since inspired more than 100 Green Offices globally. Since the adoption of UM's first sustainability policy in 2012, sustainability efforts have evolved into a comprehensive and integrated structure across the university. The UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030 has been instrumental in advancing the vision of embedding sustainability into the DNA, with the Green Office being one of the main catalysts for student activities and initiatives. It serves as a one-stop destination for student-led sustainability initiatives.

The Green Network, managed and coordinated by the UM Green Office, organises on average more than 300 sustainability-related community events each year. The Network consists of six Green Teams supported by an active volunteer network of over 100 students from all faculties, as well as 20 student organisations based at the Sustainability Hub. Each of the five highly motivated student assistants within the Green Office is responsible for a specific portfolio, ensuring effective coordination and delivery of the Network's activities. Through these efforts, the Green Network drives a culture of sustainability across the university by raising awareness, fostering collaboration, and empowering the UM community to actively engage in environmental initiatives.

A thriving UM community contributes to our sustainability ambitions

Figure 3: Green network overview 2025

The Green Network was highlighted as one of the best practices for enhancing community engagement across the ten YUFE universities. UM also recognised and acknowledged civic engagement (volunteering) with the digital Edu badge of Global Citizenship for the Green Network volunteers who dedicated at least 30 hours in total, making a meaningful contribution to the community. For example, one of the volunteers highlighted:

"Volunteering with the FPN Green Team has been an enriching experience and strengthened my passion for sustainability and community engagement. Particularly engaged in Marketing and Branding, the creation of campaigns and organisation of the Sustainability Days and monthly clothing swaps to raise awareness and encourage sustainable behaviour was especially rewarding. This role helped me to develop key global citizenship competencies such as critical thinking and action-oriented leadership. I will carry these skills and values with me into the future, and I am grateful for how the experiences I gained shaped me as a person." — Arlène Oldenburg (FPN Faculty Team, UM Green Network)

The UM Green Office, in collaboration with the Faculty Green Teams, organised another edition of Sustainability Days across all six faculties. Throughout the programme, a variety of events, workshops, discussions, and community initiatives highlighted sustainability topics connected to research, education, and everyday practices across the university. Each faculty brought its own unique vision to the table, proving that sustainability is not just about climate, it is about connection and everyday choices.

In 2025, roughly 2,000 students (including staff/employees) attended or participated in a wide range of activities, including Sustainability Days, the Sustainability Festival, Thrift Markets, Climate and Circularity Fresks, lectures, panel discussions, focus groups, dialogues, Sustainability Hub events and workshops, movie nights, and Green Team initiatives.

In addition, the Sustainability Hub, a characteristic historic building, serves as a dedicated physical space for student-led sustainability initiatives and is home to around 20 student organisations. It functions as a central meeting point where students collaborate, initiate projects, and organise events that raise awareness about sustainable practices. In 2025, the Circularity Projects at the Hub were expanded to six, now including the Swap Room, Library of Things, Skillshare (Bike Repair), Community Garden, Craft Market, and Book Swap.

"My time at the Green Office has been a deeply enriching experience, reminding me of a truth we often overlook, in the sustainability realm, we frequently focus on data and policy, forgetting that community is the heartbeat of real change.

It has been incredibly inspiring to witness firsthand so many people who are genuinely passionate about our planet. Seeing this level of engagement has been a powerful reminder how human we all are and how it is the strength of our connections and our shared passion that truly drive us forward."
— Senalda Sunil Allukal (Administrative Chair, Green Office UM)

Student Sustainability Challenge

An initiative that further strengthened student engagement with sustainability at the UM is the Student Sustainability Challenge. The UM participated in the 2025 Brightlands Startup Challenge with a dedicated sustainability challenge. This initiative invited UM students to design implementable ideas that contribute to the university's sustainability ambitions and that can be realized before the end of the 2025–2026 academic year. Approximately 20 teams participated in the sustainability challenge, proposing ideas ranging from technical innovations to social and behavioural interventions. The strongest ideas will receive funding to implement their projects in 2026 at the UM. By giving students a leading role in developing and executing their ideas, the challenge is a powerful instrument for engaging the university community in themes such as climate, circularity, and community.

"By involving students directly, the Sustainability Challenge strengthens their role in shaping a more sustainable UM, while the university benefits from their creativity and fresh perspectives."
— Roy Broersma (Managing Director, Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation)

Biodiversity and the UM Community

Finally, biodiversity is closely linked to community wellbeing, as it concerns the quality and resilience of the ecosystems on UM premises. Healthy ecosystems provide clean air, water, food, and a stable climate, and contribute to an attractive and liveable campus environment.

Several biodiversity initiatives were undertaken in 2025 including:

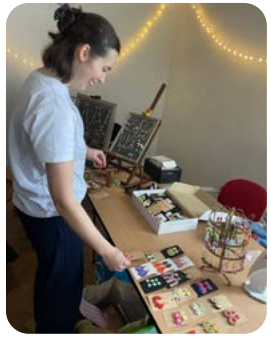
- Biodiversity inventory at Duboisdomein: A student assistant mapped biodiversity conditions at one of UM's locations using the biodiversity yardstick. This assessment produced valuable insights into current ecological conditions and identified opportunities to strengthen biodiversity on site. One of the Sustainability Office staff members completed a training about the use of the biodiversity yardstick.
- Bioblitz: A Bioblitz is an event focused on observing and identifying as many species as possible within a specific area and timeframe. Between 22 May and 22 June 2025, the UM invited all students and staff to explore the wildlife around Maastricht University campuses. Through an app, participants photographed wild plants and animals. More than 50 participants contributed, and the app registered over 2,500 species based on their observations.













Snapshot of sustainability community events

Social Sustainability

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Sexual Safety

In 2025, Maastricht University took important steps to further embed diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI+) across the organisation. With the approval of the five-year DEI+ Strategy and Advisory Plan, the Executive Board reaffirmed that DEI+ is a foundational element in shaping how the UM supports and develops its students and staff through education, research, leadership, policies, and everyday interactions. Responsibility for advancing DEI+ is shared across the university, at both central and decentralised levels.

During the reporting year, the Diversity and Inclusivity Office was renamed the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion + Office (DEI+ Office). The addition of the "plus" reflects the integration of the Sexual Safety Programme, bringing inclusion, equity, and safety together within a single organisational structure. To further strengthen outreach and awareness, the team was expanded with a communications officer, enhancing the visibility of DEI+ themes within and beyond the university.

Across the UM, departments increasingly engaged with the DEI+ Office for guidance on embedding DEI+ principles into policy and practice. This included contributions to the revised Code of Conduct, initiatives to improve the physical accessibility of university buildings, and projects promoting inclusive language in campus signage.

Monitoring DEI+

With regard to gender representation in management and supervisory bodies, the current female-to-male-ratio stands at 63.3% to 36.7%. The UM aims for balanced representation across all organisational levels.

At present, the adjusted gender pay gap between women and men in equivalent roles within the same salary scale has not yet been fully assessed. In 2026, the UM plans to explore this issue in line with forthcoming Dutch government guidelines for calculating gender pay gaps. In the meantime, the university continues to take active measures to prevent and address potential structural disparities.

To protect individual privacy, the UM does not register whether staff members have a disability, chronic illness, or neurodivergence. At the same time, visibility and representation of these groups are being strengthened through the establishment of the Disability Inclusion Group, a formal advisory body originating from the Policy for Working with Disabilities, adopted in March 2025. The group contributes to policy development and awareness raising across the university and forms part of one of the eleven communication projects within the UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030, supporting the long-term institutional embedding of disability inclusion.

There are several areas where the UM's monitoring and data availability are still evolving. Strengthening this data basis is essential for setting meaningful benchmarks, tracking progress over time, and identifying where additional or targeted action is needed to support evidence-based decision-making.

Initiatives and Impact

During the reporting year, the activities of the DEI+ Office spanned policy development and advisory work, as well as community building, awareness raising, and the promotion of visible symbols of inclusion. Together, these efforts contributed to embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, and sexual safety more firmly across daily university life.

Community Networks and Visibility

The DEI+ Office continued to actively support a range of staff and student networks that foster belonging and representation within the UM community. These include UM Pride, the LGBTQIA+ network; UnliMited, the network for students and staff with a disability, chronic illness, or neurodivergence; ACMUS, a student community for African and Caribbean students; and Ölelve, a student organisation focused on sexual safety. Through this support, the DEI+ Office helps strengthen peer connections, amplifies voices, and creates spaces for dialogue and mutual learning.

As a visible expression of commitment to inclusion, Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride flags now fly permanently at seven locations across the Randwyck campus and in the city centre. These visible symbols underline the UM's ambition to offer a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for everyone.

Inclusive Facilities and Procedures

Practical steps were also taken to improve physical and procedural inclusion. In collaboration with Facility Services, the DEI+ Office helped secure structural funding for Bloody Serious, a project addressing period poverty among students and staff, accompanied by a university-wide awareness campaign. In addition, a user experience survey was introduced for lactation and resting rooms to identify improvements and enable the sharing of best practices across UM buildings.

Inclusive procedures were further strengthened through a pilot project aimed at making scholarship selection more inclusive, developed in collaboration with the Scholarship Office using the Brightlands Talent Scholarships as a test case. For Diversity Day 2025, the campaign *"Who Has a Seat at the Table?"* encouraged reflection on inclusive meeting practices within the university.

Sexual Safety

On sexual safety, the UM remained active at both institutional and European levels. The "Are You Okay?" introductory sessions were again delivered to all incoming students, reinforcing awareness and shared responsibility. In addition, the report *"Culture Shift in Progress: Two Years of the Sexual Safety Programme at Maastricht University"* documented progress and learning since the programme's launch.

External recognition of UM's approach is reflected in two successfully awarded projects: a national collaboration with seven higher education institutions to develop e-learning modules on preventing sexually transgressive behaviour, and the European project INSPIRE (Innovative Networks and Strategies for Prevention, Intervention, and Research on Sexual Violence in European Higher Education), carried out with four partner universities, both scheduled to start in 2026.

Data and Accountability

Finally, in collaboration with Female Empowerment UM (FEM), the DEI+ Office published the first FEMonitor report[19]. This report presents intersectional data on diversity at the UM and provides an empirical baseline for future policy development, reinforcing the university's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

19 https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/sites/default/files/2026-01/UM%20FEM%20monitor%20and%20recommendations%202025.pdf

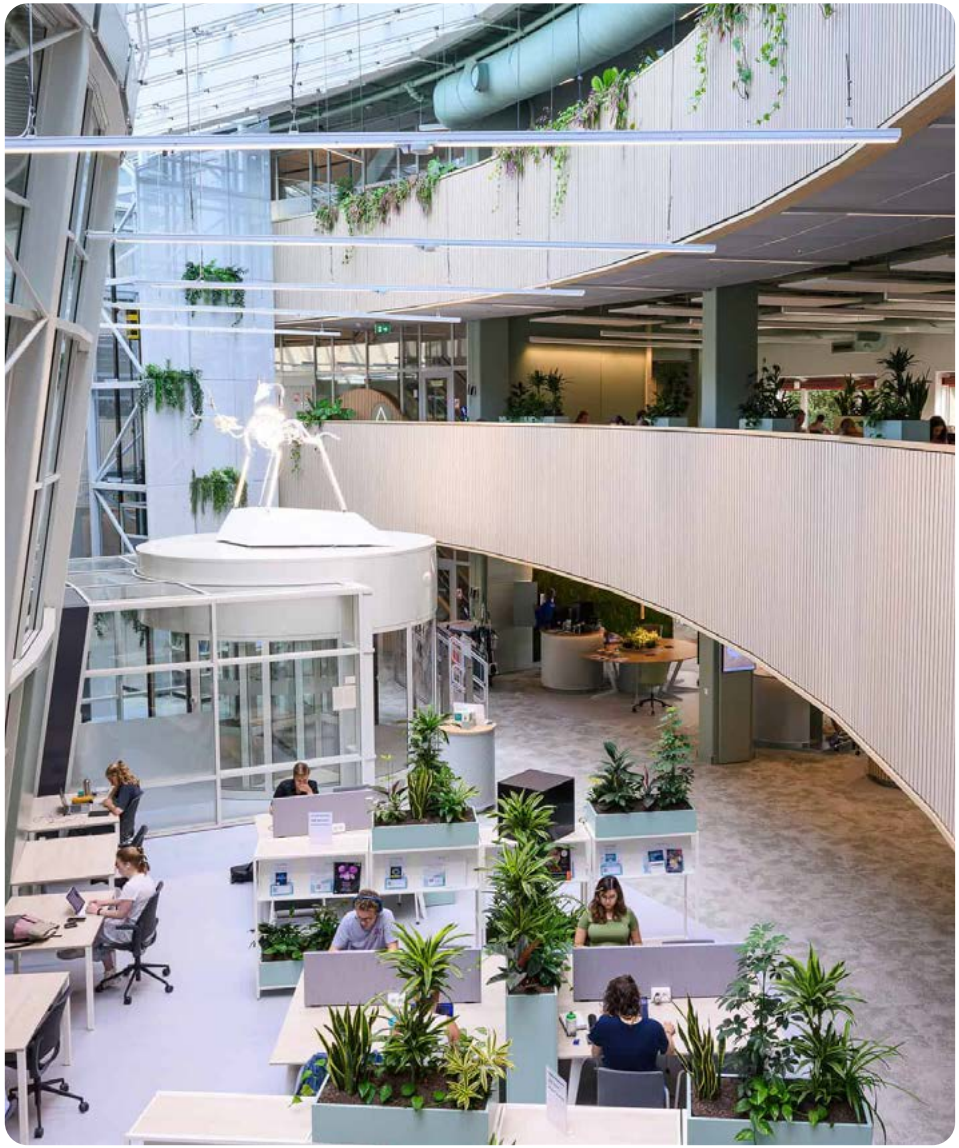
Sustainability Outlook 2026

This Sustainability Report reflects the progress achieved in 2025 – a year in which we gained first insights into many aspects of our sustainability performance. These baselines give us a clearer picture of where we stand, and where we need to go. In 2026, we will build on these foundations and translate insights into action.

Several initiatives are planned to advance our ambitions:

- Further embedment of sustainability considerations across UM's management layer, including procurement.
- Development of a Climate Transition Plan based on our emissions calculations, informed by a student assignment on defining climate-neutrality, to be completed in Q2 2026.
- Initiation of a Material Flow Analysis to deepen our understanding of UM's material footprint.
- Implementation of the winning ideas from the Student Sustainability Challenge, translating student-driven solutions into tangible campus impact.
- Establishment of Green Team Labs to support more sustainable laboratory practices.
- Completion of a Double-Materiality Assessment to prioritise sustainability efforts and strengthen future reporting.
- Further embedding sustainability within research activities through targeted seed funding and the development of interfaculty research communities, starting with a focus on the circular economy.
- Strengthening the valorisation and impact of sustainability research through the Transition Platform and ERCE.
- Advancing the integration of sustainability and related competencies within bachelor programmes across UM, building on ongoing curriculum development efforts.
- Providing training and capacity-building opportunities for staff to strengthen sustainability-related knowledge and skills via UTQ and CPD workshops.
- Creating more extracurricular sustainability opportunities for students and staff through events, workshops, and community activities organised throughout the year.

Together, these steps will support continued progress in 2026 and beyond.



Maastricht University

Colofon

Authors: This report has been written by the Sustainability Office of Maastricht University. The data used for this report is collected by several departments of the UM. AI has been used for proofreading and editing the text. It has not been used for analyses purposes or data handling.

Photography: Harry Heuts, Paul van der Veer, Philip Driessen, Dewi Hombergen pictures taken by students and employees themselves.

Design and Lay-out: The Creative Hub

Editor: Sustainability Office; Maastricht University

Contact information: sustainability@maastrichtuniversity.nl