



Summary of 2020 Sustainability Report

This English summary gives a brief overview of the sustainability activities and achievements of Leiden University's environmental policy in 2020.

The 2020 reporting year was the final year of the implementation timeframe of the Leiden University 2016-2020 Environmental Plan. Since 2016, the university has worked on improving its environmental and sustainability performance within six quantifiable themes: accommodation (1), energy (2), water (3), procurement and investment (4), waste (5) and mobility (6).

The most important results are:

- Leiden University's environmental impact is in line with that of other broad-based universities;
- More students and staff feel involved in and participate in the university's environmental and sustainability policy;
- The university's CO₂ footprint has been halved, in part due to the achievement of 31 of the 37 sub-objectives of the Environmental Plan.

A number of concrete achievements arising from Leiden University's environmental policies in the 2020 reporting year are discussed below.

Coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic had a favourable effect on Leiden University's CO₂ footprint. This is largely because less energy and water were used in 2020 in university buildings, and commuter traffic and business travel were at a far lower level.

Sustainable housing

Leiden University uses the BREEAM-NL method to assess the sustainability of its real estate portfolio. A preliminary BREEAM-NL score has been determined for 27 existing university buildings, and opportunities for improvement have been identified that the university can work on. The municipality, the university and the West Holland Environment Service have drawn up a biodiversity plan for the Leiden Bio Science Park. One area where sustainable demolition is visible is in the re-use of materials. An example of this is the structural steel from the Gorlaeus Building that has been used in the design of the Bio Partner 5 Building. As a further example, the lower storeys of the Gorlaeus high-rise building were retained during the demolition, and will be used to create a new, green bicycle storage.

Energy

In 2020, Leiden University's energy consumption was 10 per cent lower than in 2018 and 2019. The greening of electricity consumption is achieved by purchasing GOs (Guarantees of Origin), and 1.56 per cent of the total annual consumption is generated by our own solar panels. The use of thermal energy storage in current and future



renovation projects will generate a saving of around a quarter of the natural gas used. The university is making its gas consumption greener by purchasing VERs (Voluntary Emission Rights).

Water

Water consumption in 2020 was 30 per cent lower than in the previous years. This was due to the limited use of university buildings as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and working from home.

Sustainable procurement and investment

All investments and procurement arranged via University Procurement Leiden (UIL, in Dutch) are in line with the procurement criteria of PIANOo (the Dutch Public Procurement Expertise Centre). Over 80 per cent of the University's catering is sustainably sourced and is offered under the Pure label. Cafés in the Kamerlingh Onnes, Lipsius and Pieter de la Court Buildings have a range of food products that are completely vegetarian. Focusing attention on food waste within the restaurants and cafés has resulted in an average food waste of 1 per cent, which is considerably lower than the average (10 per cent).

Waste

Leiden University produced 40 per cent less waste in 2020 than in 2019. The separation of different waste flows is encouraged by having our own recycling centres at the larger university locations.

Mobility

As a result of the restrictions on travel in 2020, the CO₂ footprint from commuting and business travel was just 30 per cent of the 2019 level. In 2020, the last company vehicles of the University Services Department were replaced by 100% electric vehicles, representing an annual saving of 10 tons of CO₂. The distribution hub between university buildings has reduced transport movements, resulting in a CO₂ saving of 65%.

Sustainability in education and research

In 2020, various initiatives, such as the Sustainability Knowledge Workshop, the Sustainable Business Battle, the Learning with the City project and the Sustainability and Law course, have contributed to integrating issues relating to sustainability in teaching programmes at Leiden University. In the area of research, the Liveable Planet incentive programme has started, which encourages interdisciplinary collaboration on sustainability issues. Appendix B of the 2020 Sustainability Report includes an overview of the courses, tracks and programmes on the theme of sustainability.



Sustainability: awareness and involvement

In 2020, efforts were made to raise the awareness and involvement of students and staff by communicating on sustainability initiatives and organising meetings, including online meetings. These include the public symposium on ‘Sustainable Energy’ and a lecture by Diederik Samsom on the Green Deal. The coronavirus crisis meant that less attention was paid to sustainable activities and initiatives within the university, and consequently less was communicated on this issue on the university website than in 2019.

Activities of the Leiden University Green Office (LUGO)

Since September 2020, LUGO has organised an online event for students and staff every month on different sustainability themes. LUGO has also initiated a partnership with the student and staff participation councils, and has written a Green Paper setting out its input for the Strategic Plan. Since September 2020, LUGO has offered an online Sustainability Network for staff via MS Teams.