

IV. OTHER REGULATIONS

IV/1. Institutional Sustainability Strategy

At its meeting of 3 May 2010, the Senate supported the adoption of the Institutional Sustainability Strategy by its Resolution No. 63/2009/10.

Institutional Sustainability Strategy

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Introduction

The concept of sustainable development was introduced to the world in the 1987 report of the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (*Our Common Future*, the so-called Brundtland Report). The aim of the report was to identify the environmental and social problems threatening human society and to propose solutions to address them.

In the more than 20 years since the publication of the report, the concept and principles of sustainable development have become a key idea among environmental, economic and social development specialists and have also become mainstream.

Sustainable development sets out different expectations for different social groups and calls for their cooperation and dialogue with each other in order to achieve a development that “meets the needs of present generations while preserving the conditions for future generations to meet their own needs”. Since the 1980s, the principles of sustainable development have been reaffirmed by a number of international conferences (e.g. the 1992 Rio Summit) and by the European Union and its Member States. Hungary is currently in the process of developing its Sustainable Development Strategy, which, in line with international experience, summarises the most important sustainability goals and requirements as well as the resources needed to achieve them.

A key feature of sustainable development is that all social groups and organisations must be involved in its implementation. Beyond the non-profit sector concerned with environmental and social issues, companies are now also recognising the need for sustainable development and the business opportunities it offers. Similarly, more and more government bodies, municipalities and many NGOs are setting sustainability targets. The education sector can be no exception to this, as one of the most

important requirements for achieving sustainability is to educate and raise the awareness of upcoming generations.

The role of educational institutions is emphasised by the fact that the United Nations designated the period 2005-2014 as the “United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”, which aims to strengthen the role of educational institutions in achieving sustainable development.

All these developments mean that our university, Corvinus University of Budapest, must also play an active role in promoting the principles of sustainable development, and must formulate its commitment in this regard as well as a concrete action plan and the resources needed to achieve it.

As a sign of the seriousness of its intentions, Corvinus University of Budapest has joined the Talloires Declaration¹, an initiative of the world's leading universities, which aims to set the path towards the creation of sustainable universities.

Taking all this into account, this document first presents the most important characteristics and requirements of sustainable development, and then explains how the principles of sustainable development can be interpreted in the context of the activities carried out within the University. Finally, we outline the objectives of Corvinus University of Budapest to promote sustainable development, the measures to achieve them, the necessary human and other resources, and the monitoring of results.

¹ <http://www.ulsf.org/about.html>

Principles of sustainable development and its interpretation for the operation of the University

The concept of sustainable development implies that it covers many aspects of life, most commonly described by the triple category of economy, society and the natural environment. The economic pillar of sustainable development focuses on economic growth, with the primary aim of raising the standard of living of disadvantaged social groups and people in developing countries. The social pillar focuses on reducing inequalities in quality of life between social groups and supporting disadvantaged groups, while the environmental pillar focuses on reducing damage to the natural environment and preserving natural habitats.

However, all these areas are interlinked, as, for example, environmental damage usually causes economic damage and affects different social groups differently.

The environmental requirements for sustainable development can be formulated as follows:

- reducing the use of depleting resources, replacing them with renewable ones,
- use of renewable resources on a scale that does not make renewal impossible,
- minimising waste and other harmful emissions.

Sustainable development in universities is reflected in the following key areas.

Incorporating the principles of sustainable development into instruction programmes. The most important impact of universities on the natural and social environment is indirect: through education and training, it takes the form of students' future behaviour. It is therefore essential that students have at least a basic understanding of the main environmental and social problems in their field of expertise and are able to solve them.

Application of the principles of sustainable development in research activities. Many aspects of sustainable development can be investigated using scientific methods, which is expected to keep university researchers busy for many years to come. Furthermore, research work in other directions must also take into account the principles of sustainable development.

Operating and developing university infrastructure in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The environmental impact of university buildings, IT and other equipment and

other infrastructure needed for teaching and research is both significant in itself and an important part of the environmental education of students and lecturers.

The integration of the University as an institution into society. Through its activities, the University is already connected to various sectors of society in a number of ways (e.g. to other higher education and research institutions and the corporate sector through its research and consultancy activities); however, in the future, new relations and forms of cooperation will have to be sought and implemented. Thus, the role of the University in local development should be increased and outreach activities improved.

Sustainability goals of Corvinus University of Budapest

The aim of Corvinus University of Budapest is to become a regional leader in the commitment to the principles of sustainable development and their practical implementation, and to become a sustainable university in the medium term.

To this end, the University sets itself the following objectives.

Protecting the natural environment:

1. Improvement and extension of the environmental education of students.
Integrating sustainable development principles into science and social studies education. Increasing the number of students and the range of subjects on environmental protection and integrating the principles of sustainability into the various subjects.
2. Aligning research and consultancy activities with the principles of sustainable development.
Researching the different aspects of sustainability (social, economic, natural environmental context), examining the different stakeholders and developing and promoting possible solutions. Sustainable research.
3. Economical use of resources and favouring the use of renewable resources in the running of the institution.
Reducing the use of energy, water and other resources, both in specific and absolute terms (e.g. by purchasing energy-saving light bulbs or IT equipment and improving operational efficiency, etc.). Environmental training for students and staff members to help conserve resources. Taking environmental considerations into account in procurement.

4. Minimising harmful emissions from infrastructure operation and work-related transport emissions, with a particular focus on carbon dioxide emissions.

Reducing emissions through resource use. Efforts to change the lifestyles of students and staff members, encouraging them to use energy-efficient modes of transport (e.g. public transport, bicycles) to meet their individual and institutional transport needs.

In the field of social justice:

1. Ensuring equal treatment/opportunities: supporting the integration of disadvantaged students, lecturers, researchers and administrative staff members, and eliminating discrimination.

Supporting talented students and staff members with disabilities and disadvantaged backgrounds through scholarships, alternative learning opportunities and work methods.

2. Supporting and improving the situation of women and minorities.

Representing the interests of women and minorities, ensuring their equal rights and increasing their role in decision-making.

3. Facilitating the integration and work of international students and lecturers.

4. Promoting the career development of young colleagues and offering long-term opportunities.

Career planning and developing incentive schemes to recruit and retain young and talented colleagues.

5. Engaging with local communities and working together to solve local problems.

6. Cooperation with other stakeholders such as municipalities, employers, other educational and research institutions, etc.

In terms of economic performance:

1. Creating the financial resources needed to run the University, improving its security and safeguarding it in the long term.

2. Improving the remuneration of lecturers, researchers and administrative staff members.

3. Improving University infrastructure and working conditions.

Achieving the sustainability goals

Corvinus University of Budapest undertakes the following activities to achieve the above objectives:

1. Appointing a committee responsible for the formulation and implementation of the Institutional Sustainability Strategy and ensuring the necessary conditions for its work. The committee would be composed of a leader and people with active responsibility in different areas (education, research and infrastructure management), who would work together in planning and implementation.
2. Continuous review of the Institutional Sustainability Strategy, development of an institutional sustainability programme, which defines the tasks, the persons responsible for their implementation and the funds allocated to the tasks.
3. Providing the financial and other resources needed to achieve the above objectives.
4. Evaluating the results of the activities carried out, monitoring the achievement of the objectives and intervening along the discrepancies.

In carrying out the above tasks, following the principle of continuous development, the University's operation can become more and more sustainable and its social role more and more valuable, which will also have a positive impact on the image of Corvinus University of Budapest in the long run.