



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Green Charter

Guidelines and examples of good practices

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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Green Charter¹

Guidelines and Examples of Good Practices

The MSCA Green Charter constitutes a code of good practice for all recipients of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) funding – individuals as well as institutions – aiming at promoting the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in all aspects of project implementation. The present document is a revised version of the MSCA Green Charter Guidance Material: it aims to complement the MSCA Green Charter by providing updated guidelines, examples of good practices and other resources for the development of greener policies and practices in research and project management.

To elaborate this document, the European Commission has been largely relying on input from experts on greening and sustainability in higher education institutions and systems. The Guidelines and Examples of Good Practices relating to the MSCA Green Charter are provided for information purposes only, and the European Commission (or any person acting on its behalf) cannot be held responsible for the uses made of them.

A. General Guidelines

In order to reduce the environmental impact of their research projects, MSCA beneficiaries and fellows are encouraged to:

A1. Implement the European Commission's guidelines for greener events

European Commission's 7 steps for greener events

The "7 steps for greener events" guide covers in a clear and fun way all the main points an event organiser should consider delivering a green event. It is encouraging and empowering to reduce the environmental impact of operations. In the area of conference management, it gives, among other things, advice on easy actions to make events more sustainable.

The guide is designed as a practical tool to help event planners maximise the positive environmental impacts and minimise the potential negative ones in the course of planning and delivering meetings and events. It has been produced for European Commission staff, but many of the ideas and approaches are equally relevant for any event planner. The guide provide easy to use checklists to help assess the sustainability of venues, promotional material and catering, as well the environmental friendliness of accommodation and transport, and provides practical advice on ways to reduce/reuse/recycle or share environmental awareness.

A.2. Choose Ecolabel/EMAS hotels while organising professional trips/conferences/events

The EU Ecolabel for Tourist Accommodation Catalogue

¹ <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-green-charter>

Surf the EU Ecolabel Tourist Accommodation Catalogue to find out more information about environmentally friendly services and to locate an accommodation. Established in 1992 and recognised across Europe and worldwide, the EU Ecolabel offers a range of tourist accommodation, from campsites to hotels, which are guaranteed to be sustainable.

A.3. Register for the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) Register

Environmental management systems are one of the possible tools for companies and other organisations to improve their environmental performance whilst saving energy and other resources. The EU EMAS is a premium management instrument developed by the European Commission for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance. The EMAS register is an online database hosted by the European Commission which lists all EMAS registered organisations and sites. Only those organisations and sites that have achieved EMAS registration are listed in the register, so you can feel confident that organisations found there are committed to improving their environmental performance.

Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) User's Guide

The EMAS User's Guide, which was developed in 2013 and updated in 2017, is a user-oriented tool which translates the EMAS Regulation into practical steps. The Guide provides clear and concrete advice for organisations interested in EMAS to facilitate and encourage their registration and make participation in EMAS as simple as possible.

EMAS – Toolkit instruction manual (EMAS Implementation Tools)

The EMAS implementation tools are part of a pilot project aiming to support all organisations, but especially small and medium-sized organisations (SMEs), in their implementation of EMAS. The tools aim to help find out what environmental aspects organisations have, decide which persons in organisations are responsible for which tasks related to the environmental management system (EMS), and to collect and analyse environmental data.

A.4. Implement the European Commission's Green Public Procurement Guidelines and Toolboxes

Buying Green Handbook

This Handbook is the European Commission's main guidance document to help public authorities buy goods and services with a lower environmental impact. It is also a useful reference for policy makers and companies responding to green tenders.

Guidance for bio-based products in procurement

The guidance is developed for anyone implementing bio-based products in organisations or procurement – why they should be used, how to implement them in organisations and what product groups to focus on. The guidance aims to be practical and contains case studies providing examples of, and ideas on the uptake of innovative bio-based products in procurement.

A.5. Use the Green Deal Going Local Handbook

Green Deal Going Local Handbook

This Handbook produced by the European Committee of the Regions aims at supporting the implementation of the Green Deal at the local and regional levels. It provides a step-by-step guidance and is adapted to each local context (from urban to rural, mountain and coastal areas, among others). It provides information on targeted financial and technical instruments based on geographical and institutional assets and vulnerabilities. It also provides best practices that illustrate how the adaptation objectives of the EU Green Deal can be implemented by local and regional policymakers.

A.6. Use Carbon Footprint Calculators

Erasmus Goes Green

The Erasmus+ Goes Green (EGG) project aims to find solutions to reduce the transport-related carbon footprint of higher education students taking part in mobility within Europe and that of staff participating in transnational project cooperation activities.

Green Algorithms

The Green Algorithms project aims at promoting more environmentally sustainable computational science. It regroups calculators that researchers can use to estimate the carbon footprint of their projects, tips on how to be more environmentally friendly, training material, and past talks.

Consumer Footprint Calculator

The Consumer Footprint Calculator allows EU citizens to calculate the environmental impacts of their consumption patterns and to evaluate how changes in their lifestyle may affect their personal footprint.

A.7. Make a Pledge and Get Involved in the European Climate Pact

Climate Pact Pledge

The European Climate Pact is bringing people together to build a more sustainable Europe for all. People, organisations, businesses, and cities can get involved in the Pact by making a pledge to take a real action. As an individual, one can, for example, pledge to take fewer flights, or move money to a bank that does not invest in fossil fuels. Businesses, organisations, and cities can make one of two types of pledges: a Pathway pledge, which represents a range of different climate-friendly actions, or the more ambitious North Star pledge, which involves significant and measurable actions that contribute to greatly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The North Star pledge is exactly what the European Commission has committed to do.

B. Examples of Good Practices

B.1. Institutional practices

UN Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Some relevant UNEP initiatives for higher education and research institutions are:

- UNEP Sustainable University Framework
- UNEP Greening Universities Toolkit V2.0
- Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals (Go for SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Actions Platform

The UN SDG Actions Platform is a global registry of voluntary policies, commitments, multi-stakeholder partnerships and other initiatives made by governments, the UN system, and a broad range of stakeholders to support acceleration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sustainable European Laboratories Network (SELS)

The Sustainable European Laboratories (SELS) Network was launched in 2022 with a clear vision of creating a collective identity that advocates for sustainable research practices in Europe. It is organised as a network of local sustainability teams as well as independent 'green labs' networks, SELS aim to transform the way science is done so that it better responds to the environmental challenges of our era. Through high-quality reporting and the establishment of common standards and goals, SELS aims to increase the support and demand for sustainable actions in research.

Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD) Portal

This global portal is a tool developed by the International Association of Universities (IAU) for its members, partners, and the public. It provides access to university actions and more initiatives developed around the world to promote sustainability. The portal lists numerous news items, events, and a great number of actions from more than 1000 universities and several organisations globally. <https://www.iau-hesd.net/>

International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN)

The International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN) is a global forum that supports leading colleges, universities, and corporate campuses in the exchange of information, ideas, and best practices for achieving sustainable campus operations and integrating sustainability in research and teaching.

Green Guide for Universities by the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU)

The IARU Green Guide for Universities presents key issues, recommendations, and lessons learned by the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU). It addresses the challenges and opportunities of campus sustainability, with a particular

focus on environmental aspects. The guide includes inspiring cases that have made a difference at the IARU universities.

Green Office Movement

The Green Office Movement stands for institutionalising sustainability in higher education by empowering students and staff as change-makers. With a Green Office, a sustainability office is established to inform, connect, and support students and staff to act on sustainability. Green Office is funded and approved by university management and is jointly led by students and staff.

Greener Mobility IRO Kit | Movetia

The Greener Mobility IRO Kit aims to assist international relations offices in higher education institutions with handling mobility by increasing student and staff awareness regarding choosing a means of transport that generates less CO₂ than the plane when travelling abroad. Each institution is free to use this tool in accordance with their sustainable development strategy.

Climate Action Network for International Educators (CANIE)

CANIE is a volunteer grassroots initiative formed by international education practitioners from around the world who see the need for our sector to step up and act on climate. CANIE serves as a platform to bring the sector together to act as a catalyst for action.

B.2. Certifications

Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF)

LEAF, developed by UCL, is an independent standard which aims to enable science laboratories to improve their sustainability and efficiency. By joining the LEAF programme, laboratories reduce their carbon emissions and create an environment that supports research quality. LEAF programme comprises four elements: framework, online calculators, toolkit and resources, and user engagement and training.

My Green Lab Certification

Recognised by the UN Race to Zero campaign as a key measure of progress towards a zero-carbon future, My Green Lab Certification is considered the gold standard for laboratory sustainability best practices around the world. The programme provides scientists and the teams that support laboratories with actionable ways to make meaningful change.

B.3. Travel Guidelines

University Alliance for Sustainability (UAS) Travel Guidelines

Within the framework of the University Alliance for Sustainability (UAS), Freie Universität Berlin, and its four strategic partner universities focus on sustainability as an overarching theme for collaboration in research, teaching, and campus management. These travel guidelines can be used to inform and inspire the wider academic sustainability community to take appropriate steps of their own.

Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS) Travel Guidelines

These travel guidelines apply to all staff and guests associated with LUCSUS, with an eye to creating a working and learning environment in which environmental sustainability is

prioritised. They can be used to inform LUCSUS teaching and inspire students to take corresponding steps of their own.

Tyndall Centre Travel Strategy

The Tyndall Travel Strategy was developed by researchers at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. It aims to help individual researchers and the Centre as a whole to reduce their emissions through time. It includes a code of conduct, and a system to monitor and justify travel emissions and to support individual commitments to reducing emissions. It is a code of conduct to support a low-carbon research culture.

Sustainable Travel Policy by Ghent University

This Sustainable Travel Policy summarises different measures implemented by multiple departments at Ghent University in Belgium. It includes measures such as choosing not to fly to cities easily reachable without an airplane, by compensating CO₂ emissions and by adding an extra check-up when it comes to the value of faraway conferences.

Sustainable Mobility and Transport Policy by Politecnico di Torino (PoliTO)

PoliTO promotes integration of sustainability principles in its activities including teaching, research, third mission and campus management. It is aimed at developing principles of sustainability in a shared and systematic strategy, in acknowledgement of the SDGs adopted with the 2030 Agenda by the UN.

Sustainable Travel Policy of KU Leuven University

Sustainable travel policy is one of the priorities of the strategic plan laid out by KU Leuven University in Belgium, and part of its efforts in moving toward becoming truly sustainable and climate-neutral by 2050. To reduce CO₂ emissions, the university implements its travel policy regarding all staff members. The travel policy focuses on three action points: avoiding transportation, taking the train more often, and compensating for CO₂ emissions.

Guidance for Sustainable Business Travel for Staff and Postgraduate Researchers

This guidance lays out recommendations and actions to reduce carbon emissions from the University of Glasgow's business travel. This includes all travel associated with the university's work, including for research and for recruitment and teaching.

Bookdifferent.com

Bookdifferent.com is committed to making all aspects of holiday as sustainable as possible while keeping things easy for travellers. It provides eco-certified hotels, responsible destinations, plastic-free travel options and information about responsible transportation methods.

B.4. Sustainability Charters and Strategies

Sustainable Campus Charter by International Sustainable Campus Network ISCN

The ISCN Sustainable Campus Charter 2018 reflects the guiding principles of the ISCN, that is, that organisations for research and higher education have a unique role to play in

developing the technologies, strategies, citizens, and leaders required for a more sustainable future. Signatories to the Charter commit to follow and support five calls to action. These are: at institutional level - embedding sustainability in all aspects of the university, creating an environment that cultivates resilient, empowered, caring and engaged students, staff, and faculty who will contribute to the health of people and places, and engage with external partners, industry, government and civil society to disseminate knowledge, research, and best practices to benefit the communities in which they serve; and at network collaboration level - deepening and broadening the collaboration that happens between members of the network to accelerate collective action, and ensuring that the network is significantly inspiring international dialogue and debating to contribute to the SDGs.

Environmental Sustainability Strategy by Further Education Colleges in London

This strategy provides for a whole college approach to environmental sustainability, which endorses and aligns with the FE Climate Action Roadmap. It has been informed by stakeholder engagement events with staff, leaders and Governors and a learner survey. The strategy specifies actions starting from 2021 leading to 2025. The College has set a target to become net carbon zero by 2030.

Charter of Commitments to Sustainability by the University of Padua

The Sustainability Commitments Charter defines the University's sustainability goals for a five-year period (2023-2027), linking scientific-technological innovation and management methods, objectives and measures to be implemented, with a focus on communication and the involvement of all members of the university community.

Code of Ethics of the University of Oviedo

As part of the Code of Ethics, the university includes environmental and sustainability clauses in all procurement procedures that are encouraged. Research staff are encouraged to run their projects and as far as possible within a context of environmental and social sustainability.

Climate Emergency Declaration of the Freie Universität Berlin

Freie Universität Berlin declared a state of climate emergency in December 2019. Some of the resolutions in the declaration comprises are as follows: considering the possible consequences for climate in all decisions and plans, and making sustainability and climate protection even more visible in research, teaching, and transfer in the future and systematically embedding these in international networks.

For more information: <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-green-charter>

