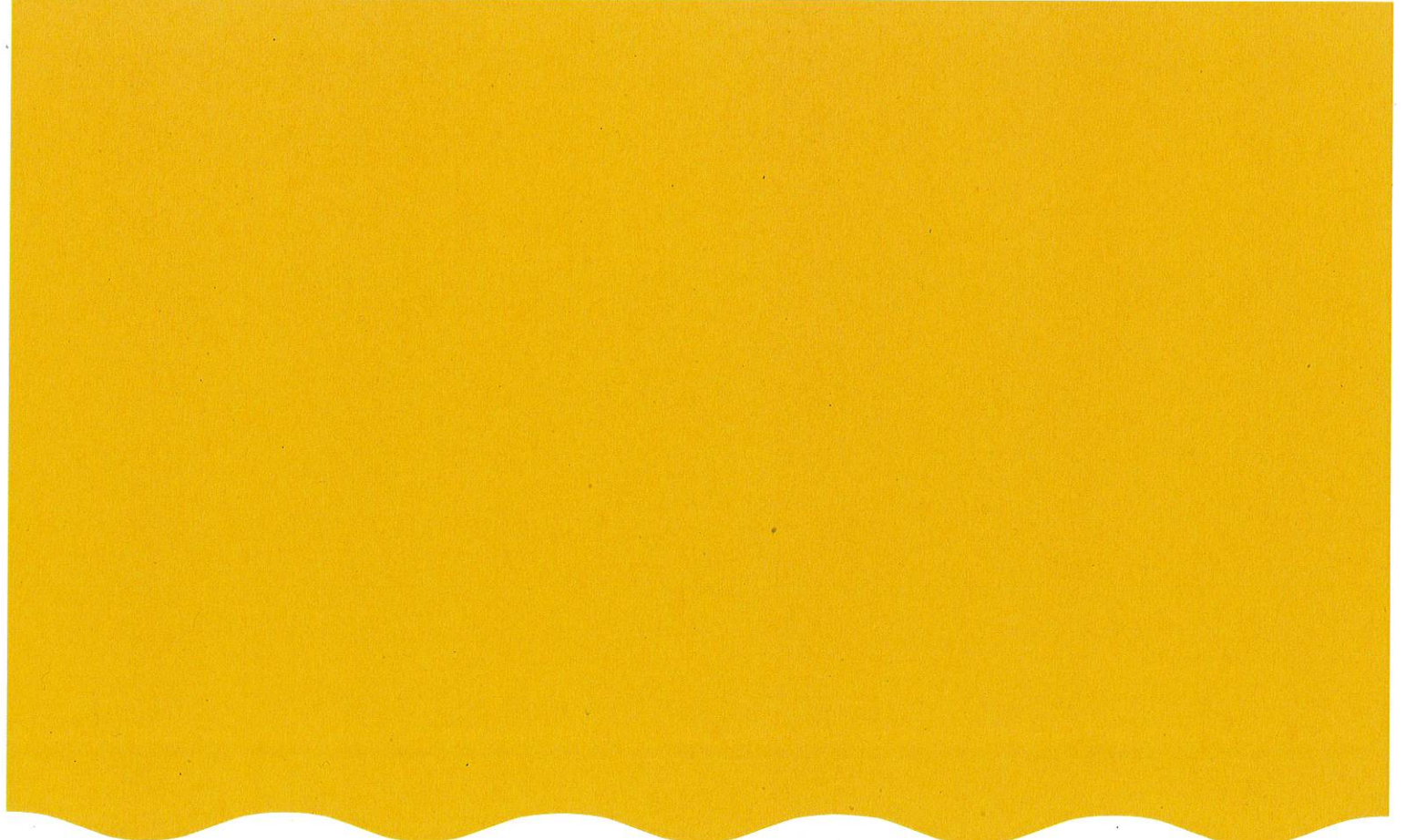




Charter for a Sustainable Future

Nourish sustainable transformations
across SEA-EU Alliance





This charter is the result of a truly collaborative effort, built through our collective experience as a Sustainability Network. Our approach was deeply rooted in shared learning and best practice exchange. We initiated the process by highlighting the local steps already taken at each partner university, examining the diverse ways each institution is organised to promote sustainability. This foundation was then further developed in dedicated workshops, where we specifically leveraged the insight of small working groups, including our engaged students. By pooling these perspectives—from established university structures to grassroots student initiatives—we have ensured that the commitments within this charter are relevant, actionable, and contextualised by the best practices across the entire SEA-EU Alliance. This charter gathers a set of goals, actions and recommendations and is intended for the SEA-EU sustainability team, the SEA-EU community, the SEA-EU governance and governance of SEA-EU universities.

SEA-EU COMMUNITY

GOAL

Develop a better understanding of one another and how social and ecological disruptions affects each of us. Sustainable development fundamentally requires solidarity and shared context. Our goal is to move beyond abstract data by developing a genuine understanding of the diverse, local impacts of climate change across the SEA-EU region. By recognising that sea-level rise, extreme weather, or resource scarcity affects our campuses and communities differently, we build the empathy and urgency needed to commit to a truly united response.

Actions

Collaborate in groups, employing different perspectives and ideas. True innovation is a result of diversity. To address complex sustainability challenges, we must actively collaborate in mixed groups, bringing together students, staff, and researchers from different disciplines and cultures. By employing varied perspectives and ideas, we ensure our solutions are comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and robust enough to meet the unique challenges faced by all alliance partners. This collaborative action is the engine of sustainable transformation.

Working Agreement or Recommendations

- **Prioritize vegetarian menus, local food, healthy food and minimize waste (no single use of plastics and only reusable cutlery) during SEA-EU events, in order to reduce carbon footprint and improve well-being.** Our catering choices have a huge impact on the planet. By prioritising vegetarian and local food, we directly reduce the carbon



footprint associated with meat production and long-distance transport. Furthermore, banning single-use plastics and adopting reusable cutlery directly tackles pollution and resource depletion, reinforcing our commitment to both environmental health and participant well-being.

- **Inform students on the impact of consuming meat and the option to choose vegetarian/vegan alternatives.** Education is a core pillar of sustainability. Providing students with clear, evidence-based information on the environmental impact of meat consumption empowers them to make conscious dietary choices. This isn't about imposing rules, but about offering knowledge and feasible alternatives that align with their personal values and our collective goal of a more sustainable future.
- **Avoid flying when alternative transport modes with a lesser carbon footprint impact are available and compatible with agendas such as trains.** Air travel is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. For shorter distances within Europe, choosing the train over a plane significantly reduces our carbon footprint. This commitment demonstrates that we prioritize the planet over mere convenience, showcasing a proactive approach to climate action and setting a responsible example for all participants.
- **Prefer online meetings to physical ones when technically feasible and take advantage of human interaction in physical meetings. Plan online meetings when they last less than two days (without counting travel time). Manage the hybrid mode in SEA-EU events when it is possible.** The Importance of Smart Meeting Formats: Every physical meeting involves a carbon cost. By using online platforms for shorter sessions (less than two days) and embracing the hybrid model, we drastically reduce travel-related emissions and costs. This allows us to reserve face-to-face interaction for longer, more complex sessions where human connection and networking are truly essential, maximising both efficiency and sustainability.
- **Organise SEA-EU events between Tuesday and Thursday to allow employees not to travel during the weekend.** The Importance of Work-Life Balance: Sustainable development is not just about the environment; it's also about social sustainability and well-being (SDG 3). Scheduling events between Tuesday and Thursday respects the personal time of our employees, preventing the need for disruptive weekend travel. This simple organisational choice contributes to a healthier, more motivated, and ultimately more sustainable partnership.

- **Calculate and reflect on the carbon footprint for each SEA-EU event.** You can't manage what you don't measure. By calculating the carbon footprint of every event, we move beyond good intentions to quantifiable results. This practice provides essential data for reflecting on our choices, identifying areas for improvement, and demonstrating accountability and transparency in our journey toward net-zero emissions.
- **All events must be organised inclusively (ie. session dedicated to getting to know each other, session dedicated to the goal alignment and session dedicated to working in small groups) and check participants' well-being each day.** A sustainable project requires a sustainable team. Designing events to be inherently inclusive, with dedicated time for icebreakers and goal alignment, ensures all voices are heard and feel valued. Furthermore, routine well-being checks demonstrate that we value our members' mental and physical health, fostering a resilient, collaborative, and socially responsible network.
- **Organise the event in advance to allow all universities sufficient time to prepare.** Sustainability is fundamentally about long-term thinking. Organising events well in advance prevents rushed planning, which often leads to less sustainable, higher-cost choices (e.g., last-minute flights). Providing sufficient preparation time allows universities to arrange eco-friendly travel, secure local and sustainable suppliers, and ensure high-quality participation.
- **Organise different events during the same period to allow people to network and to mix participants from different SEA-EU tasks.** By clustering multiple related events, meetings, or workshops into the same travel window, we achieve significant efficiency gains. This practice not only drastically cuts down the overall carbon footprint by reducing the number of necessary trips but also promotes cross-pollination of ideas and networking between different task forces, leading to a stronger, more integrated alliance.

SEA-EU SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

GOAL

Raise awareness to inspire members of the SEA-EU Alliance to develop their own initiatives for sustainable transformation and encourage them to sustain the efforts. Awareness is the spark that ignites change. Our ultimate goal is not just to manage central initiatives, but to democratise sustainability. By effectively raising awareness, we aim to inspire every faculty member, student, and staff member across the alliance to see themselves as an agent of change. This creates a powerful, decentralized network where members are motivated to develop their own local initiatives. Crucially, we must also encourage them to sustain these efforts over time, embedding a culture of long-term commitment that ensures our transformation is both broad-based and permanent.

Actions

- **Identify nominees for the sustainability team (able to continue working together after Task 4.4 is finished).** This guarantees that the vital work and institutional memory built during Task 4.4 are not lost. A designated, enduring team ensures long-term commitment (SDG 17) and accountability for the charter's implementation.
- **Include at least one student representative in each meeting (and set up a reward system for their participation like open-badge, internship hours or adding information to diplomas about students' involvement in sustainable activities on campus).** Integrating student voices ensures our actions are relevant and innovative, addressing the needs of the next generation. The reward system validates their contribution, making participation itself sustainable and attractive.
- **Showcase and share to the SEA-EU community success and failure stories of each university regarding sustainable transformation.** Sharing both successes and failures fosters a culture of transparency and continuous improvement. It allows partners to replicate effective strategies and avoid repeating mistakes, accelerating collective progress.
- **Highlight best practices among and outside the sustainability team.** Systematically identifying and promoting exemplary actions—both internally

and externally—raises the standard for the entire alliance, encouraging healthy competition and rapid adoption of effective solutions.

- **Implement small actions to involve everyone from the younger to the older ones.** Small, inclusive actions lower the barrier to participation. They ensure that sustainability is a collective responsibility, engaging all stakeholders regardless of their role or background.
- **Connect on social media to see what others do, and stay up-to-date.** Utilizing social media keeps the team abreast of global trends and allows for immediate, wide-reaching dissemination of SEA-EU's work, boosting visibility and external impact.
- **Create a platform for international information exchange in English and use social media for communication to share sustainable practices in the SEA-EU community (with a list of actions with contact information to improve exchange in each university) and communicate outside the alliance. Create a common standard structure of dissemination (culture of each country/singularities, ranking, waste, energy, governance, social activities...). Create or identify a tool/metric common to each campus and annually updated.** A dedicated platform and standardised communication structure are crucial for efficient data exchange and comparison. The common tool/metric ensures that data is comparable and reflects our collective impact accurately over time.
- **Set a list of indicators with transparency across SEA-EU Alliance and on our websites (example: carbon foot print, water use, ...). Two levels of indicators (the group and all universities).** Transparent multi-level indicators (alliance-wide and university-specific) are essential for tracking progress, demonstrating commitment, and meeting the core principle of transparency (SDG 17).

Evaluate if the charter has been well followed yearly, and set a deadline to implement the corrective actions. Create an annual book or report to give a holistic vision and improvement. A formal annual review and report are necessary for adaptive management. This process ensures the charter remains a living document — relevant and effective — and allows for timely, data-driven course correction.

- **Map governance-research-education on sustainability as a tool for networking.** This mapping exercise reveals gaps and overlaps, helping to align institutional efforts. It is a powerful networking tool that facilitates multidisciplinary projects and embeds sustainability across all university missions.
- **Organise events, like a festival of sustainability.** Events inject energy and visibility into the mission. A festival is a high-impact, public-facing activity that

raises awareness, celebrates achievements, and inspires broader community involvement.

- **Evaluate the interest of a forum for discussion for the sustainability team.** A dedicated forum ensures the core team can exchange ideas, share documents, and resolve issues efficiently outside of formal meetings, fostering a dynamic and responsive working environment.
- **Make sure to develop inclusive policies (Gender, Disabilities, Religion, Country of origin...).** True sustainability must be socially equitable. Explicitly developing inclusive policies ensures that our actions benefit all members of our diverse community and reflect the alliance's commitment to equality and accessibility.

SEA-EU GOVERNANCE AND UNIVERSITY'S GOVERNANCES

GOAL

- **Improve Communication at All Levels.** Effective sustainability requires breaking down silos. Improving communication—from top-level administration to individual students—ensures that goals are shared, understood, and collectively owned. This alignment is crucial for translating high-level commitments into tangible, on-the-ground action.
- **Transformations on the Campus to be More Tailored to Students' Needs.** Campuses are living laboratories. When sustainability transformations are tailored to student needs, they foster a sense of relevance and direct ownership. This approach ensures maximum participation and adoption of new practices, making sustainable living an intuitive part of the university experience.
- **Make Sustainability Courses More Innovative and Appealing to Students.** Education is our greatest tool for change. By making sustainability courses more innovative, interdisciplinary, and engaging, we equip students with the essential skills and critical thinking needed to tackle global challenges in their future careers, ensuring a lasting impact far beyond graduation.



Action

- **Break Down the Wall of Resistance to Change by Training.** Resistance often stems from a lack of understanding or capacity. Targeted training demystifies new processes and builds confidence, turning potential resistance into active support. This investment in human capital is vital for ensuring smooth, successful, and enduring institutional change.
- **Find Funding for Sustainability.** While passion drives the mission, funding provides the necessary scale and longevity. Securing dedicated resources allows us to move beyond small-scale initiatives to implement transformative projects, such as major energy efficiency upgrades or new research programmes.
- **Collaborate with NGOs.** Partnering with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) brings external expertise, credibility, and fresh perspectives. NGOs often possess deep practical knowledge and community links that enrich our projects, broaden our reach, and strengthen our collective impact on regional and global issues.

Working Agreement or Recommendations

- **Reduce Parking Spaces on Our Campuses and Implement Solutions that Promote Low-Carbon Mode of Transport.** This directly addresses our collective carbon footprint. By reducing car dependence and actively implementing facilities for cycling, walking, and public transport, we signal a clear commitment to sustainable mobility and create a healthier, less polluted campus environment.
- **Promote Sustainable Transport.** Active promotion of sustainable transport options, such as providing information on carpooling or offering incentives for public transport, is essential. It helps shift habits and ensures that the low-carbon infrastructure we develop is actually used by our community.
- **Offer Menus Tailored to Specific Needs, such as Vegetarian**



Menus, and be Aware of Reducing Waste. Our catering choices reflect our values. Offering sustainable menu options (like vegetarian meals) and aggressively reducing food and plastic waste minimises our ecological footprint while promoting the health and well-being of our diverse community members.

- **Save Energy, Water, and Biodiversity in Our Campuses.** These represent core areas of operational sustainability. Implementing measures to reduce consumption of energy and water, alongside actions to protect and enhance campus biodiversity, demonstrates institutional responsibility and sets a practical example for resource management.



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