



Quarterly report:
Actions and Initiatives





OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



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Quarterly Update 1 (April- June 2023)

Name of organisation/group: University Of Galway

Date: April – June 2023

Please provide an update on the initiatives and activities your organisation/group has undertaken to promote, make use of and contribute to the SDGs in the last quarter:

Introduction and Report Format

The University of Galway's approach to embedding the SDGs centres on a [Learn-Live-Lead](#) model. The focus of **learn** is to continue to embed SDG literacy into all aspects of University learning and research. The focus of **live** is to implement the principles of the SDGs through campus operations and engagement activities. From a **lead** perspective, the aim is to play a central and transformative role in attaining the SDGs by 2030. Our *Learn-Live-Lead* model is organised around six key themes: Research & Learning; Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Nature & Ecosystems; Health & Wellbeing; Built Environment; and Governance & Leadership. As SDG Champion, for each quarterly report we will share our SDG progress using our Learn-Live-Lead approach and highlight the SDGs each initiative is seeking to progress. Our first quarterly report captures the time frame April–June 2023.

LEARN

Awarding of Student Sustainability Leadership Internships for 2023

The University of Galway's [Student Sustainability Leadership Awards](#) scheme provides paid internships to University of Galway students seeking to develop their sustainability knowledge and skills. These internships aim to provide enthusiastic, sustainability-minded students with an opportunity to work with our sustainability team's on-campus. For the year 2023, two SDG-focused internships in *Sustainability Research* and *Sustainability Communication and Engagement* were awarded to two students that demonstrated outstanding awareness and commitment to sustainability during the competitive interview process. Over an 8-week period, students will collaborate with staff to arrange an SDG-showcase event, compile sustainability-related learning tools and resources, refresh the university's sustainability website and document the University of Galway's on- going progress in progressing the SDGs.



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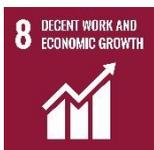
Launch of new MSc in Sustainability Leadership

The recent launch of a new [MSc in Sustainability Leadership](#) expands the University of Galway's suite of sustainability-focused postgraduate courses. The new Sustainability Leadership course provides students with training in the leadership skills needed to address the challenges and opportunities that contemporary businesses face in the areas of environmental sustainability and corporate leadership. With contributions from the [College of Business, Public Policy & Law](#), the [College of Science and Engineering](#) and the SDG- focused research centre the [Ryan Institute](#), students will receive tuition in areas ranging from Responsible Management and Leadership to Sustainable Information Systems, students will leave the programme with a holistic understanding of sustainability challenges and opportunities.



An Introduction to the SDGs incorporated to the New Staff Induction Programme

A topic entitled *An Introduction to the SDGs* has been integrated into the University of Galway's New Staff Induction Programme. The University of Galway's [Sustainability Strategy](#) places an emphasis on the central role that staff play in the University's sustainability journey and is committed to incorporating sustainability as part of staff induction and professional development. By incorporating the SDGs into the staff induction programme, incoming staff will not only improve their own knowledge of the SDGs but will also be empowered to implement the SDGs into their own teaching curricula. In this way, the integration of the SDGs into the university's staff induction programme not only represents exciting progress towards our own Sustainability Strategy, but also the SDGs more broadly.



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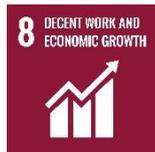
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Establishment of new Institute for Clinical Trials

The University of Galway has recently established the [Institute for Clinical Trials](#). The research centre aims to transform the clinical research landscape in Ireland by creating an end-to-end programme for the development and delivery of clinical trials. The institute will utilize the university's clinical research experience in collaboration with healthcare partner [Saolta](#) to carry out clinical trials for [cutting-edge medical projects](#), allowing patients to access the latest medicines quickly, as well as acting as a focal point for the development of sustained industry partnerships, boosting Galway's position as the MedTech centre of Ireland.



Publication of SDG-focused research

Our most recent quarter has seen many research articles published that seek to progress the SDGs. The SDG-focused research centre the [Ryan Institute](#) has collaborated with researchers in the schools of [Political Science and Sociology](#) and [School of Natural Sciences](#) to publish papers on areas ranging from the potential use of [forest therapists in healthcare systems](#) to the [impact of walkable neighbourhoods on happiness](#)

Research findings from our Schools includes new [findings on bowel-cancer treatment](#) and [research on the causes of stroke](#) from the [College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences](#), [research on stem cell function](#), [cancer vaccine research](#) and research on the [use of smartphone apps to identify plant species](#) from the [School of Biological and Chemical Sciences](#), and insights into the use of [fiscal policies to reduce diet-related diseases](#) from the [School of Business and Economics](#).

The University of Galway has also been selected to lead a number of collaborative research projects, such as the [Horizon Europe project on biodegradable medical implants](#) and [European consortium on treatments for rare eye diseases](#). Research funding for several projects has also been secured by the university under [Science Foundation Ireland's Frontiers for the Future Programme](#).

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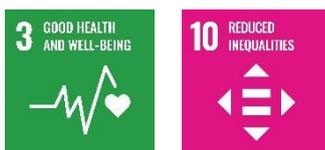
The research projects will cover several areas, including the study of past climate change impacts to help resolve current climate change issues; advanced therapeutic treatment to alleviate suffering in patients with blood vessel blockages; and a collaboration with [Tyndall National Institute](#) on advancements in electronic devices.



LIVE

Launch of Accessible Bike Shelters

The installation of new accessible bike shelters across the University of Galway's campus further embeds sustainability on our campus, providing families and people with impaired-mobility a new facility to store their bikes. The [United Nations](#) has highlighted the benefits of cycling for environmental and health reasons. For those with impaired mobility, such as the elderly or individuals with physical disabilities, a lack of facilities can act as a major barrier to the uptake of cycling. Similarly for families who may rely on larger cycling equipment such as cargo bikes, a lack of storage facilities may act as a barrier to engaging with cycling as a means of transport to school and work. For these reasons, the installation of new bike shelters represents exciting progress on the SDGs on our campus.



New Drinking Water Fountains

The installation of new water fountains across campus demonstrates University of Galway ongoing commitment to progressing SDGs 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). The installation of new water fountains has increased the total number of water fountains to over 20 internal water fountains and 4 external hands-free stations across campus. In line with SDGs 6 and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and the university's [Sustainability Strategy](#), the University of Galway aims to reduce total water consumption by 10% across campus and eliminate the use of single-

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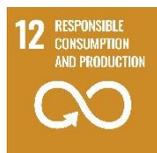


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use plastic items such as water bottles. The installation of new drinking water fountains represents an important step towards achievement of these goals.



Opening of Outdoor Gym

We are delighted to report the opening of two [new outdoor gyms](#) on the University of Galway campus. The two new on-campus gyms, located at College Green and across from the Arts Millennium Building, are part of the wider *Sports for All* initiative that aim to provide fitness facilities to students, staff and visitors to our campus. The outdoor gyms align with the university's [Sustainability Strategy](#) by providing an opportunity for physical activity on campus. The gyms offer access to a range of exercise equipment including exercise bikes, leg press, chest press and shoulder press, pull down rowing machine, cross trainers, walkers, stepper, hand bikes and shoulder wheel station, and seating areas and water fountains. One quarter of the equipment has also been designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with a physical disability.



LEAD

Panel Discussion on the SDGs at All-Staff Meeting

The University of Galway's most recent All-Staff Meeting dedicated time to discuss and raise awareness the University of Galway's progress on the SDGs. Members of the [Community and University Sustainability Partnership group](#) and sustainability researchers spoke on the importance of the SDGs for the University of Galway and the university's receipt of [SDG Champion status](#). The panel discussed current progress on sustainability initiatives in the university, including the [implementation of the SDGs into university curricula](#), improvements to the [university's sustainable energy systems](#) and new and upcoming [case studies](#) on the university's progress on the SDGs. The University of Galway's receipt of

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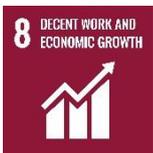


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SDG Champion status. The panel discussed current progress on sustainability initiatives in the university, including the [implementation of the SDGs into university curricula](#), improvements to the [university's sustainable energy systems](#) and new and upcoming [case studies](#) on the university's progress on the SDGs. The University of Galway's receipt of SDG Champion Status for the year 2023/24 represents an exciting opportunity for staff to become more involved with the SDGs and staff have been implored to become involved with sustainability initiatives on-campus for the upcoming year.



Glassary Initiative by University of Galway Students

Glassary ("green glossary") is a University of Galway student-led sustainability initiative which reduces household waste generated across campus accommodation residences, whilst simultaneously providing support to local community and voluntary organisations. Donation points are set-up at student residences at the end of each semester, where students can then donate their leftover household items. These items are then collected and re-distributed to future students or local organisations. Alongside tackling SDGs related to the environment such as SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), *Glassary* also helps alleviate the effects of poverty (SDG 1) and provides our students an opportunity to become active with civic engagement. The delivery of *Glassary* at the end of Semester 2, 2023 was hugely successful with a significant donation made to a local homelessness-prevention charity, the [Galway Simon Community](#).



University Wide Email and Call-to-Action on SDG Champion Programme

In recognition of the university's SDG Champion status, the President of the University of Galway Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh wrote to all staff and students highlighting the University's achievement and calling our campus to action. Professor Ó hÓgartaigh requested that staff and students recommit to the SDGs and make positive changes for both people and the planet. Professor Ó hÓgartaigh suggested that staff and

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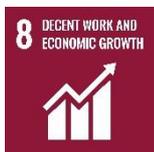


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students show their contribution to advancement of the SDGs through the use of the hashtag #SDGsIRL, emailing the [Community and University Sustainability Partnership team](#) on SDG progress on-campus, and organizing SDG-related events. Alongside this, the President encouraged researchers to link their SDG-focused research to their [IRIS profiles](#) and the university's [research tracking system](#), as well as preparing [Research Impact Case Studies](#) to showcase work aligned to the SDGs.



Launch of the University of Galway's Sustainability Podcast

To increase awareness of the SDGs, University of Galway has launched a new SDG focused podcast series [University of Galway's Sustainability Podcast](#). The podcast is available across a variety of platforms, including YouTube, Spotify, Soundcloud and Apple Podcasts, allowing a wide range of listeners to tune in. This new podcast series centres around the University of Galway's progress on the SDGs. Listeners can gain insights into the importance of the SDGs, as well as the contribution educational institutes such as the University of Galway are making to achieve the SDGs. The recent release of the first podcast episode featuring Sustainability Officer Michelle O'Dowd Lohan discussed how sustainability is one of University of Galway's core values and what this designation means to the community.



Receipt of Two New Athena Swan Award

The University of Galway was recently awarded two [Athena Swan](#) awards in recognition of the University's commitment to advancing gender equality for staff and students. The award of an Athena SWAN Bronze Award to the [School of Law](#) and a joint-award to the [School of Computer Science](#) and the university's research centre the [Data Science Institute](#) sees the University's total number of awards increase to ten Bronze and one Silver Award. In a recent [press release](#), professors across both schools and research centres have welcomed the award, and express enthusiasm at continuing their progress

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toward achieving SDG 5: Gender Equality.



University of Galway ranks 34th in the world for progress on the SDGs

The University of Galway has further increased its ranking in the [Times Higher Education \(THE\) Impact Rankings](#). THE Impact Rankings represent the only global performance table that assesses university performance across the UN SDGs. The University of Galway is the highest ranked Irish institution and has increased its ranking by ten places to 34th in the world, placing the university in the top 2 percent of universities globally. The University of Galway has been recognized as making significant contribution to 11 of the 17 SDGs and ranks number five in the world for progress on SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. More details on the placement of the University of Galway in the top 50 institutions for progress on the SDGs is available in a recent [press release](#).



Dr. John Caufield Speaks on New Sustainability Audio Project 'Ours to Protect'

Dr. John Caufield, Director of Strategy Implementation at the University of Galway, recently appeared as a guest speaker on local radio station [Galway Bay FM](#)'s new sustainability-focused audio project [Ours to Protect](#). Dr. Caufield discussed recent efforts from University of Galway staff and students have made to progress the Sustainable Development Goals. Listeners could gain inspiration from the university's progress on the SDGs, achieved through initiatives such as the [instalment of new solar panels](#), Beach Clean-Ups programmes and the development of the student-led [Food Pantry](#).



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Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy on Friday June 23

The University of Galway hosted the second day of the [Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy](#) on Friday, June 23rd. The Forum aims to improve public understanding on Ireland's foreign, security and defence policies. The forum was open to members of the public and provided civilian, military experts and practitioners the opportunity to discuss issues including Ireland's efforts to protect the rules-based international order through peacekeeping and crisis management, international humanitarian law, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding.



Climate Action Roadmap

The University of Galway recently released our [2030 Climate Action Roadmap](#). The Government's Climate Action Plan outlines the energy efficiency and energy related Green House Gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets which Public Sector Bodies in Ireland are legally obliged to meet. The University of Galway's Climate Action Roadmap outlines the work undertaken by the University of Galway thus far, including our approach to reducing carbon emissions and energy usage across our campus through movement towards renewable and carbon zero energy sources.



Conclusion

Our first quarterly report as SDG Champion demonstrates wide ranging progress on the SDGs encompassing key theme areas including: Research & Learning; Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Nature & Ecosystems; Health & Wellbeing; Built Environment; and Governance & Leadership. Contributions to the SDGs have been made in areas ranging from science and the humanities to governance and leadership. This report summarises our progress on the SDGs between April and June 2023. Improvements to our campus infrastructure, such as the introduction of outdoor gyms and increased availability of water fountains, as well as enhancements to our research, teaching and public



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outreach outputs represent exciting progress on the SDGs. Further reports documenting our progress on the SDGs will be accessible during the year, with the next report scheduled for release in September 2023.

SDG Visual Snapshot



Students and staff at the launch of one of three new accessible bike shelters available on-campus



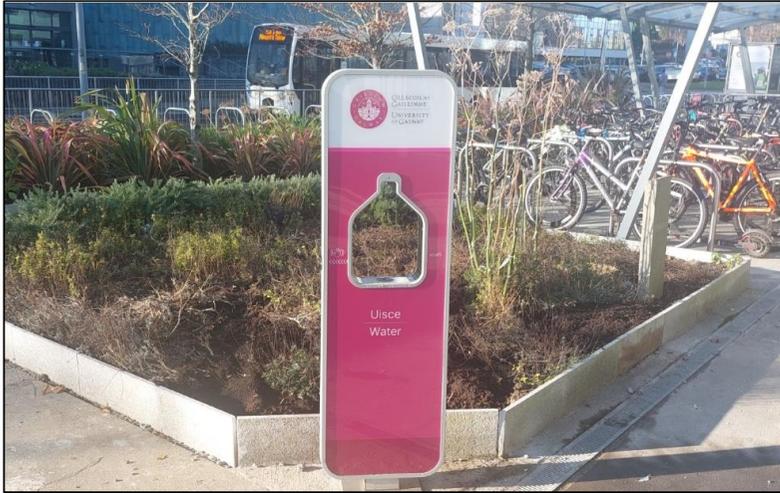
Taoiseach Micheál Martin with University of Galway President Prof. Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh and key staff at the Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy



President Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, students and staff at the launch of our new outdoor gym



Student Sustainability Interns Adam Mullins and Ciara Varley



A new water fountain installed on-campus



Sustainability Officer Michelle O'Dowd Lohan and podcast host Nuala Ní Chonghaile on the first episode of the University of Galway's sustainability podcast



Dr Aideen Ryan, Associate Professor in Tumour Immunology at University of Galway's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Credit - Andrew Downes, XPOSURE



The University of Galway's Student's Union Sustainability Officer, Malena Thren, with volunteers at our most recent Glassary event