

# A SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR UNIVERSITIES

Universities act as a training ground for our future leaders and these training grounds provide an immense opportunity to deliver innovative solutions to some of our society's toughest problems. The impact of universities on our planet is immense and due to their far reaching effects, it is important to assess if a university is sustainable or not. This framework was designed to help assess a university's sustainability score and provide recommendations based on its shortcomings.



This research investigates sustainability assessment frameworks for universities in existence along with their positives and shortcomings which are then used to create this framework which can be applied to universities across the world. This study was aimed at creating a sustainability assessment methodology for universities using a mixed method research design. The primary data was aggregated from key interviews and online correspondence with experts in the field while the secondary data was aggregated through literature and other online sources. A series of existing assessment frameworks along with their category/indicator selection criteria, methodologies and benchmarking methods were critically examined and this assessment framework was created building upon these existing frameworks. This framework includes 3 dimensions under which there are 16 broad categories under which there are 68 indicators which help in an extensive review of a university's sustainability efforts which is illustrated in figure 1 below. This framework went through a series of reviews where this framework was examined closely and refined to fit in with the project's research objectives. After the framework was refined, it was applied at one Dutch university (University of Twente) which scored a 4.88 out of 10.

This framework titled University Sustainability Assessment Framework (USAF) can be applied to other universities to aid in comparison between universities. In terms of recommendations to UT, an action priority matrix as illustrated in figure 2 was created which helps in understanding the areas of operations that UT needs to work on to become more sustainable. To conclude, UT is a fairly sustainable university that is actively working on improving its sustainability and small fixes to its areas of operations can make it truly sustainable.

Table 1. University of Twente Scorecard

Location	Ecosystem Dimension	Institution Dimension	People Dimension	Total
University of Twente	2.52	0.99	1.37	4.88

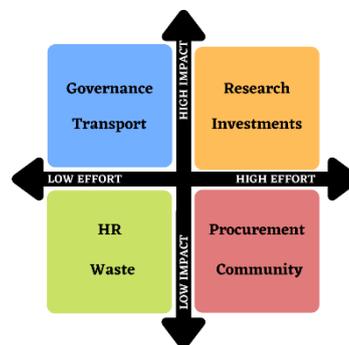
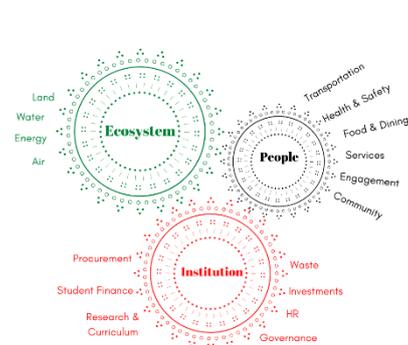


Figure 1: The dimensions and categories in USAF

Figure 2: Action priority matrix for UT

Jay Sanghvi

Graduation Date:  
7 August 2020

Graduation committee:  
University of Twente  
Prof.dr. A.A. Voinov

Dr. K. Vink