

GET-AHED: Co-creating a sustainability self-assessment and educational tool for higher education institutions

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Complexity of sustainability problems



- **“Wicked problems”**: highly complex, characterized by uncertainty, and involve value divergence between different stakeholders (Head, 2008; Van der Brugge et al., 2005).
- Traditionally, the identification and prioritization – driven by academic community based on perceived **scientific** impact (Latour, 1987; Sauermann and Stephan, 2013).
- Hence, “ivory tower” of science and **gap** between theory and actual needs (Van de Poel, 2003).

Co-creation as a remedy for addressing “wicked problems”

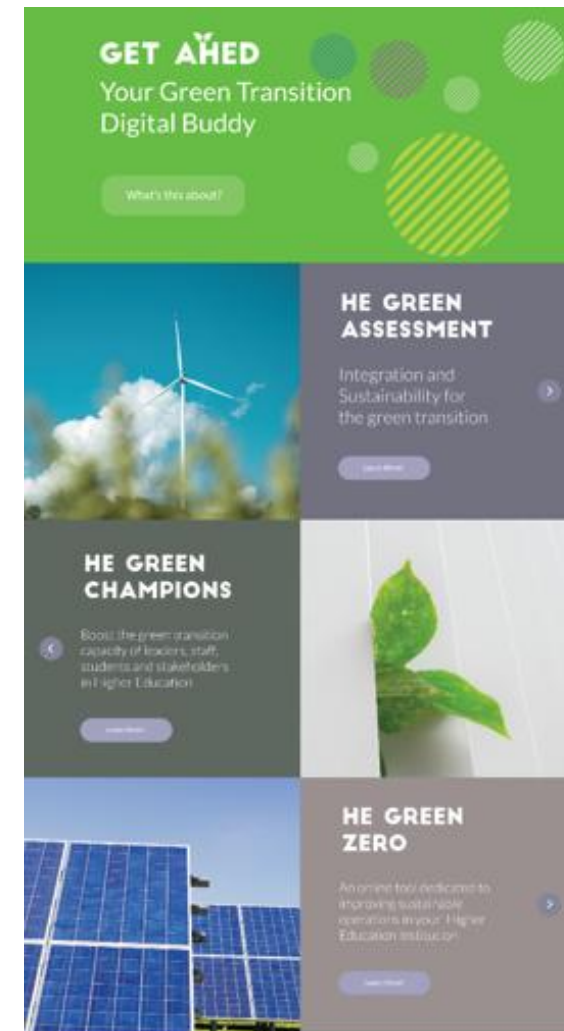


- 🌍 Over-coming disciplinary siloes and/or boundaries (Dane, 2010).
- 🌍 Expanding the “search landscape” (von Hippel, von Krogh, 2016) and/or triggering “local search” for solutions (Afuah, Tucci, 2012).
- 🌍 Combining diverse knowledge and perspectives (Gruber, Harhoff, Hoisl, 2013; Xiao, Makhija, Karim, 2022).
- 🌍 Expanding the number of analytical lenses to (re)assess the problem and/or identify additional causes (Zaggl et al., 2023).
- 🌍 Sharing workload (Beck et al., 2022).

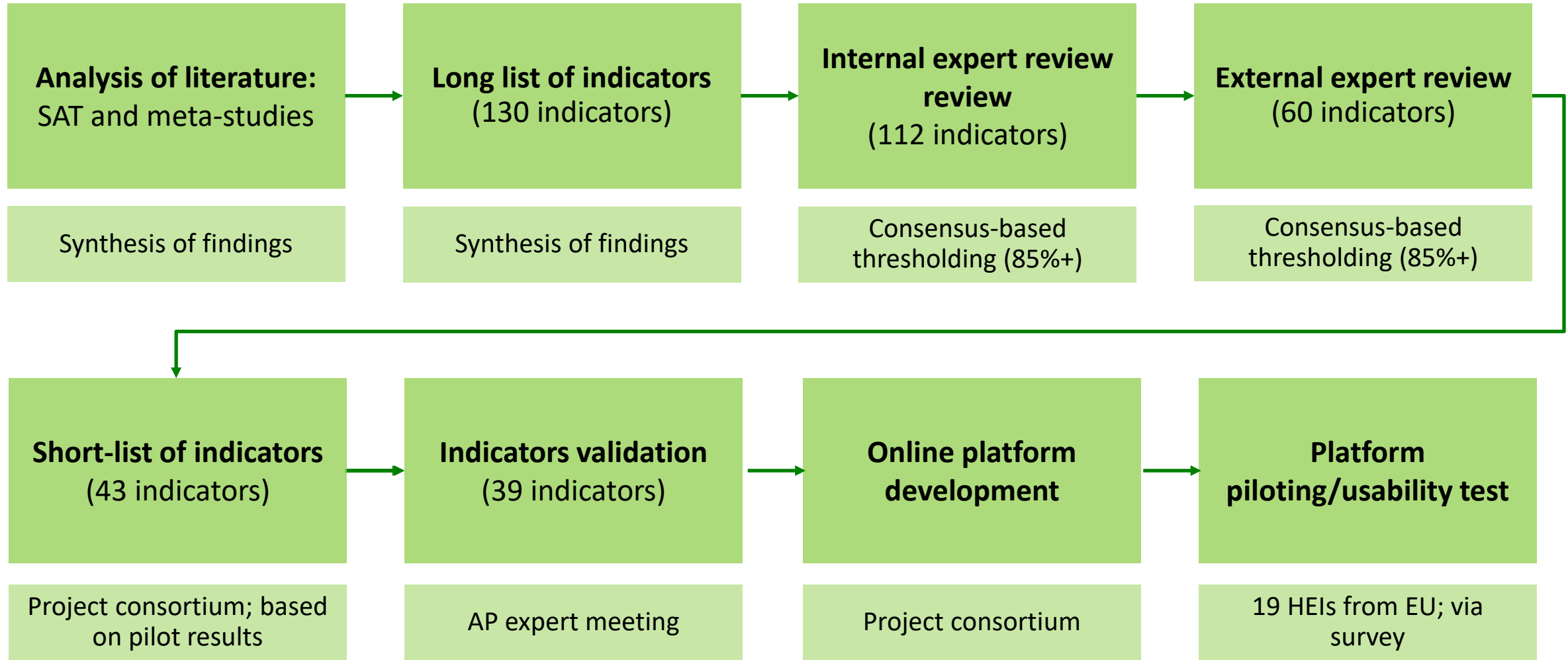
What is GET-AHED?

Green Education & Transition – A Higher Education Digital buddy

- 🌱 The GET-AHED project aims at supporting HEI-strategies and sustainability reporting practices (implementing EU's Green Transition and Green Education)
- 🌱 ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD-LOT1
- 🌱 February 2023 – January 2026
- 🌱 A digital platform **co-created** with:
 - 🌱 Associate partners
 - 🌱 EU and national ministries
 - 🌱 HEIs
 - 🌱 European University Alliance



Methodology: Indicator development



Resulting dimensions

Green Assessment Dimensions

[Start Assessment →](#)



Organisational Management

[Get Started →](#)



Operations

[Get Started →](#)



Education & Curricula

[Get Started →](#)



Research, Development and Innovation

[Get Started →](#)



Community and Outreach

[Get Started →](#)



Assessment, Reporting and Evaluation

[Get Started →](#)

Piloting results: Short-listing the indicators

Dimension	# Indicators initially	# Short-listed indicators	“Retention rate”
Organizational management	12	5	42%
Operations	12	9	75%
Education and curricula	5	5	100%
Research, development, innovation	11	8	73%
Community and outreach	13	7	54%
Assessment, reporting, evaluation	7	5	71%

Examples of indicators

Dimension: Research, development, innovation

B4.13 The HEI engages in and promotes entrepreneurship and start-up initiatives focused on environmental sustainability.

Description:

The HEI actively fosters and promotes entrepreneurship and start-up initiatives centred on environmental sustainability. By fostering innovation and providing support, it encourages the development of green business solutions.

To score highly, HEIs should:

- *Host incubators for sustainability-focused start-ups.*
- *Provide mentorship and funding opportunities for eco-entrepreneurs.*
- *Partner with industry to accelerate the commercialisation of green technologies.*

Dimension: Operations

B2.11 The HEI promotes waste avoidance and reduction measures, including circular economy approaches (e.g. in food waste management), across its campus.

Description:

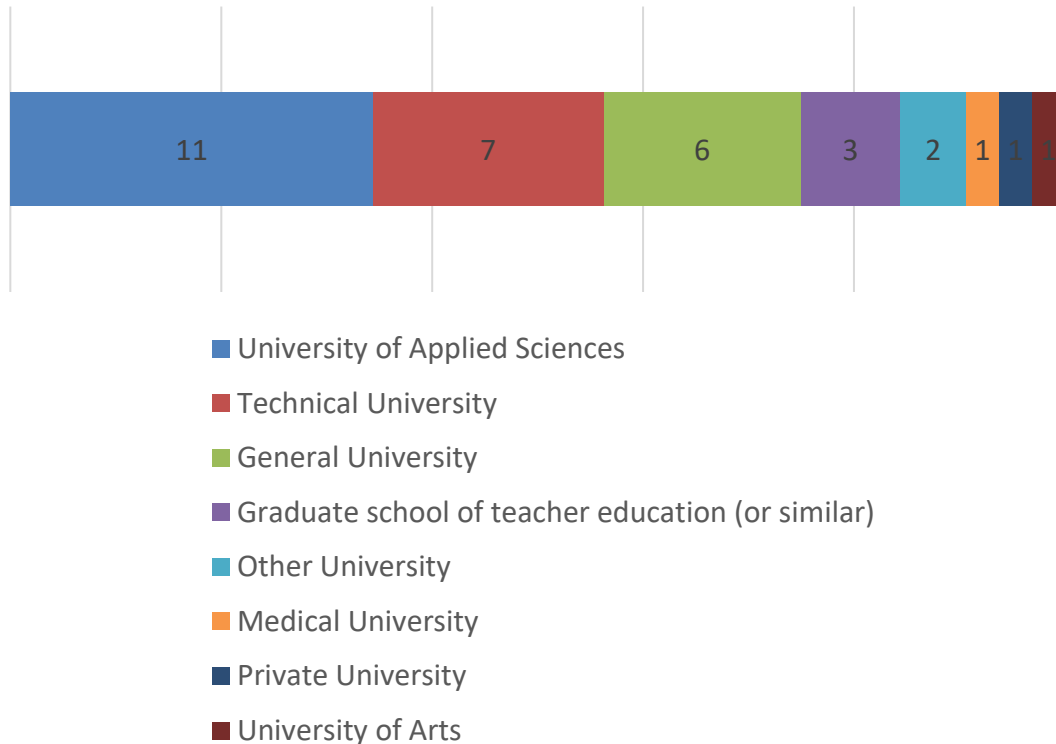
The HEI encourages waste reduction on campus to foster environmental sustainability. It includes ways to reduce food waste, hazardous waste and promote recycling.

To score highly, HEIs should:

- *Use digital documents and implement a needs-based purchasing practice to minimise paper waste.*
- *Promote recycling programmes for plastics, paper and electronics.*
- *Practice organic waste composting through waste management staff.*
- *Implement sustainable food waste management strategies at the campus level.*

Piloting the indicators

- Participating institutions (n = 32)



Job titles of participating HEI representatives:

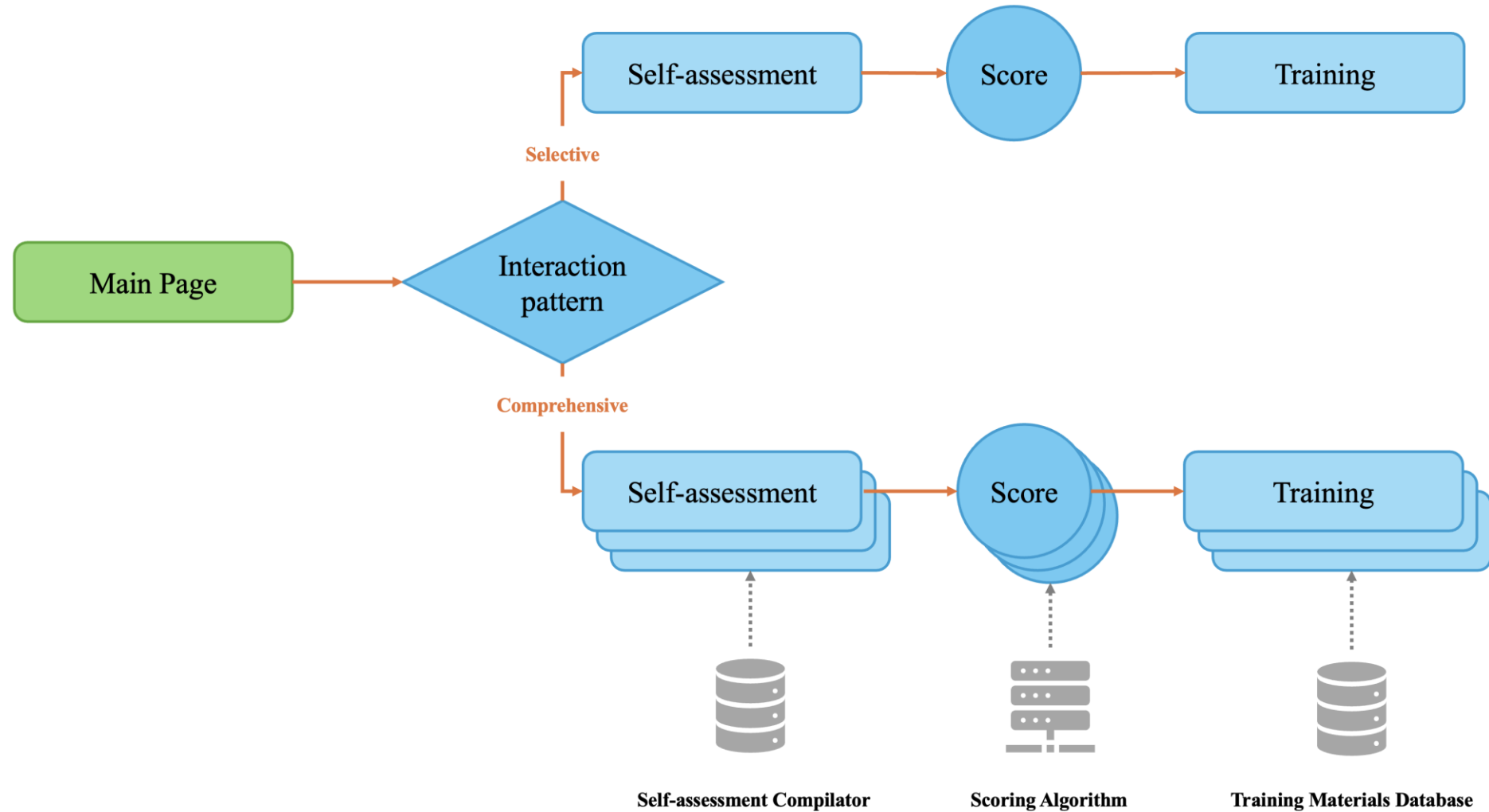
- Vice Rector
- Dean
- Head of Department
- Head of Sustainability
- Head of quality management
- Professor for Sustainability Management
- Representative of sustainability unit
- Member of Green Team
- (Senior) lecturer for sustainability
- Impact manager

Piloting results: Descriptives

- 50% of participating HEIs have a dedicated “**Sustainability Unit**”
- 63% are **not yet familiar** with (environmental) sustainability self-assessment tools (SAT)
 - Out of those familiar with SAT, less than 1/3 use them for their sustainability reporting
- 72% do **not have any kind of sustainability reporting** installed at their institution
- 50% of participating HEIs have **high interest in sustainability assessment**, as per their willingness to be indicated on the project website

Institution type	% having Sust. Unit	% familiar with SAT
General Uni.	33%	0%
Grad. Teach. S.	33%	33%
Medical Uni.	100%	0%
Other Uni.	0%	0%
Private Uni.	100%	100%
Technical Uni.	43%	86%
Uni. of Applied Sci.	64%	18%
Uni. of Arts	100%	0%

How users interact with the platform



Example of Training Materials

Training Courses



Introduction to Climate Action and Emissions Reduction Pillar

2025 | 20 mins

Introduction to Climate Action and Emissions Reduction Pillar

[Read More](#) →



What is Climate Action and Emissions Reduction?

2025 | 40 mins

What is Climate Action and Emissions Reduction?

[Read More](#) →



Climate change and emissions reduction in the context of the Green Deal in Europe

2025 | 30 mins

Climate change and emissions reduction in the context of the Green Deal in Europe

[Read More](#) →



Climate Change and Emissions Reduction and the European Green Deal

2025 | 30 mins

Climate Change and Emissions Reduction and the European Green Deal

[Read More](#) →



Mechanism of Climate Change and Emissions Reduction

2025 | 30 mins

Mechanism of Climate Change and Emissions Reduction

[Read More](#) →



The Role of 'Climate Actions And Emissions Change' at an Educational Institutional Level

2025 | 30 mins

The Role of 'Climate Actions And Emissions Change' at an Educational Institutional Level

[Read More](#) →

Example of an interactive Training Course

Interactive Training

What is Climate Action and Emissions Reduction?

0% COMPLETE

What is Climate Action and Emissions Reduction

What is climate action and emissions reduction?

Objectives of the climate action and emissions reduction pillar

What is Climate Action

What is clean affordable and secure energy

YOUTUBE

#betd2020 Explainer: Climate Neutrality by 2050

Climate change · Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and...

Share

CLIMATE NEUTRALITY BY 2050

Watch on YouTube

#betd2020 Explainer: Climate Neutrality by 2050

In the Paris Agreement of 2015, states worldwide agreed to prevent the global temperature rise through climate change from raising above 2 °C and to ideally keep the temperature rise below 1,5 °C. In order to stop climate change, the global economy needs to become climate neutral.

[VIEW ON YOUTUBE >](#)

WPZ
Research GmbH

13

Example of “Good Green Practices”



HE Green Zero

Learn how to improve energy sustainability on campus with this recommendations tool.

Case Studies



Plant the Future

2024 | Portugal

The “Planting the Future” initiative was born in 2018 from a partnership between the University of Aveiro (UAveiro), the youth association Agora Aveiro -...

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Change of Compressor Unit

2024 | Barcelona

Change of Compressor Unit

[Read More](#) →

Thank you for your attention!

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