

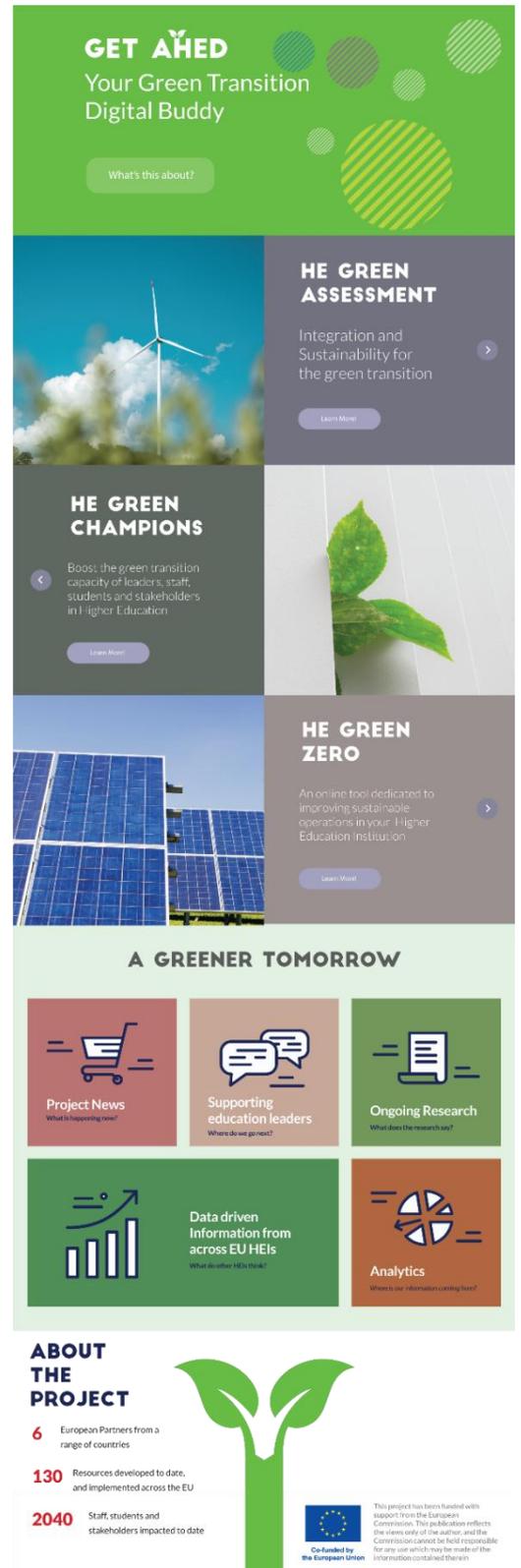


Green Education & Transition - A Higher Education Online Digital Buddy

DELIVERABLE D2.3

HE-Green Assessment Tool

28 January 2026



The screenshot displays the GET-AHED website interface. At the top, the title reads "GET-AHED Your Green Transition Digital Buddy" with a "What's this about?" button. Below this are four main content cards: "HE GREEN ASSESSMENT" (Integration and Sustainability for the green transition), "HE GREEN CHAMPIONS" (Boost the green transition capacity of leaders, staff, students and stakeholders in Higher Education), "HE GREEN ZERO" (An online tool dedicated to improving sustainable operations in your Higher Education Institution), and "A GREENER TOMORROW" which includes sub-sections for Project News, Supporting education leaders, Ongoing Research, Data driven Information from across EU HEIs, and Analytics. At the bottom, the "ABOUT THE PROJECT" section lists 6 European Partners, 130 resources developed, and 2040 staff, students and stakeholders impacted. A large green plant icon is on the right, and the European Union logo is at the bottom right with a disclaimer: "This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1. WP2 “HE Green Assessment”	2
2. Self-Assessment Toolkit	3
2.1. Definition of dimensions and preparatory work	4
2.2. Methodology: indicator development.....	4
3. Usability tests in 2025	7
3.1 First usability test.....	7
3.2 Second usability test	9
4. Self-assessment Toolkit user path	9
5. Self-Assessment tool dimensions	15
References	17

Executive Summary

This deliverable, entitled “HE-Green Assessment Tool”, classified as [DEM — Demonstrator, Pilot or Prototype] and with [PU — Public dissemination level], describes the online Self-Assessment Toolkit (SAT) developed to support the green transition of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The toolkit is available on University Greening Toolbox <https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/> and incorporates the results of the assessment to support further improvements in the field of environmental sustainability across different dimensions of

The final version of the Self-Assessment Toolkit enables users to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps in their institutions’ green transition efforts through a structured self-assessment process. Based on the assessment results, the tool provides tailored guidance, including examples of good and best practices (<https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/case-studies>) and access to a set of dedicated training resources (<https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/trainings>) to support targeted improvement actions.

The Self-Assessment Toolkit is structured around six key dimensions relevant to sustainability and green transition strategies within HEIs. Each dimension includes a set of statements designed to assess the institution’s level of preparedness in that specific area. In addition, the toolkit recommends relevant training and case studies aligned with the identified gaps, thereby ensuring integration and coherence across the three tools of the University Greening Toolbox.

This deliverable provides an overall description of the online Green Self-Assessment Toolkit and its functionalities, as made available to users through the GET-AHED website.

The content is organised as follows: an introduction to WP2 and the HE-Green Assessment Tool (Section 1), which includes an explanation of the scope and objectives of the tool (Section 1.1). Section 2 is dedicated to the Self-Assessment Toolkit, section 3 is oriented to the Self-Assessment Toolkit user path and finally, section 4 is focused on the various dimension.

1. Introduction

The GET-AHED (Green Education & Transition - A Higher Education Online Digital Buddy) project created a digital platform – the [University Greening Toolbox](#) – developed in consultation with several associate partner EU ministries, HEI representative bodies and a European University alliance. The University Greening Toolbox provides HEIs across the EU with a range of online tools to enable them to implement the EU’s Green Transition and Green Education Training priorities. The University Greening Toolbox therefore acts as a green transition digital buddy for the higher education (HE) community across the EU. The platform provides a range of tools and training to allow a multiple of HE stakeholder groups to review and develop whole institutional approaches to environmental sustainability focussing on:

- Designing, implementing, and monitoring institutional environmental sustainability plans.
- Supporting Higher Education leaders, in embedding environmental sustainability into all aspects of the institution’s operations.
- Supporting staff and students in promoting greater involvement in environmental sustainability initiatives both internally and externally.
- Designing, implementing, and monitoring approaches related to environmentally sustainable operations in HEIs, and in particular HE energy systems.

The toolbox offers a suite of user-friendly and proven online tools and practices that enable HEIs to assess, plan, and strengthen environmentally sustainable practices across all mission and operational areas of a HEI. The toolbox is available on a user-friendly online digital platform, it is free of charge and designed for HEI leadership, academic and administrative staff, as well as students, with a view to supporting HEI-wide engagement in the development and implementation of environmentally sustainable strategies, practices and operations.

1.1. WP2 “HE Green Assessment”

WP2 was dedicated to the self-assessment tool. The work package was led by UAveiro with contributions by all project partners. It developed an online tool to support higher education institutions (HEIs) in assessing their performance with a view to environmental sustainability in their strategies, activities and missions. The tool was built on a set of six dimensions and indicators which were subject to develop in the first half of the project duration and refined and validated in the second half.

Once completed the self-assessment, users are guided to relevant training materials in the section for *Training Resources for the Green Transition* and for *Case Studies to support the Green Transition*. Interlinkages between the three tools allow for tailored options based on the self-assessment results. This ensures that Self-assessment tool is not necessary a results-oriented tool, but much

rather a process-oriented tool which inspires and supports HEIs in improving the environmental sustainability performance.

This report summarises the work accomplished for the Self-Assessment Toolkit, outlining the work on the following objectives:

Main objective: The development of a self-assessment tool (Self-Assessment Toolkit) for evaluating the current stage of the institutional practice regarding green transition and environmental sustainability strategies.

And:

Objective 1 (deliverable for reporting period 1: months 1-12): Mapping dimensions and indicators to assess institutional practice regarding green transitions and sustainability strategies, and the collection of best practices according to the identified dimensions of the HE-Green Assessment Tool. These best practices aim to support users in the decision-making and action to improve the level of preparedness of the HEI regarding green transition and sustainability plans and practices.

Objective 2 (deliverable for reporting period 2: months 12-24): The piloting of the HE-Green Assessment prototype by the Associate Partners and Rectories of the HEIs involved in the consortium. Piloting of the self-assessment tool involves a key phase for the optimisation and refinement of the assessment tool to its final version.

Objective 3 (deliverable for reporting period 3: months 24-36): The integration of the final version of the Self-assessment Toolkit into University Greening Toolbox platform, publicly available to users of HEIs in their mission of the green transition and environmental sustainability.

2. Self-Assessment Toolkit

To ensure the high usability of the GET-AHED platform and its three tools, as previously described in deliverable D.2.2, the development process involved close collaboration with HEIs and consultation with EU ministries, HEI representative bodies, and the EUA. The SAT was modelled on the EU's HEInnovate (2023) online tool. It enables HEIs to evaluate their integration of environmental sustainability across various dimensions and indicators. The term dimensions refer to HEI structures or activities (e.g., teaching and research) targeted by the assessment, moving beyond operational levels, as recommended by Mapar et al. (2022). Indicators are defined as a Five-point Likert scaled statements that measure performance within each dimension. Score Highly means to score 5, with 1 the lowest score.

The definition of dimensions and preparatory work for defining indicators as well as for the interlinkages between the three tools were subject to the publication Régent et al. (2024). The

methodological approach shall be summarised based on Régent et al. (2024) in the following sections.

2.1. Definition of dimensions and preparatory work

To define dimensions and prepare indicator development and the linkages between the three tools, four key methodological steps were completed:

1. **Meta-Study of SATs:** A qualitative and quantitative review of 75 SATs (e.g., Tumbas et al., 2015; Mapar et al., 2022) identified relevant sustainability dimensions, indicators, and thematic areas.
2. **Initial Data Collection:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted at eight HEIs (e.g., University of Aveiro, University of Ruse) to explore SAT usage and gather initial and exploratory qualitative data.
3. **Dimension Grid Development:** Desk research created a grid of dimensions and modules populated with best practices and hypothetical examples for training purposes.
4. **Preparation for indicator Development:** Related projects were analysed to refine methodologies for indicator creation.

As part of the meta-study, a systematic review in 2023 identified and analysed 75 SATs based on their focus (general sustainability or green transition), dimensions, indicators, authors, application scope, and launch year.

2.2. Methodology: indicator development

The core of the SAT is the indicators statements that allow HEIs to assess their performance and positioning related to the environmental sustainability across six dimensions of the HEIs. The quality of the tool strongly depends on the relevance and usability of indicators. Thus, an iterative methodological approach has been applied as already presented in deliverable D2.2. Figure 1 illustrates the methodology for the indicator development and Figure 2 the participatory approach applied during the development of the SAT and platform.

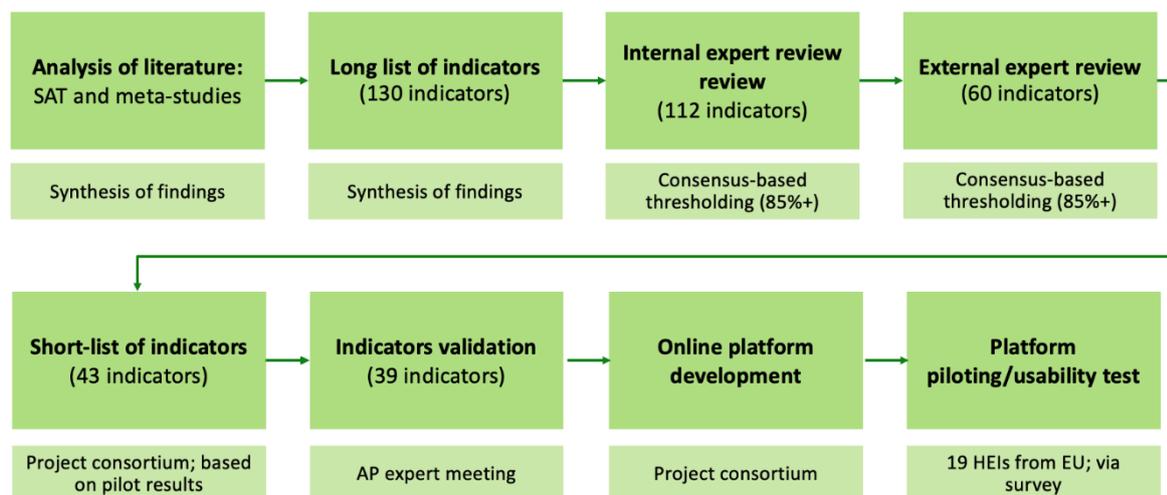


Figure 1: Methodology: indicator development

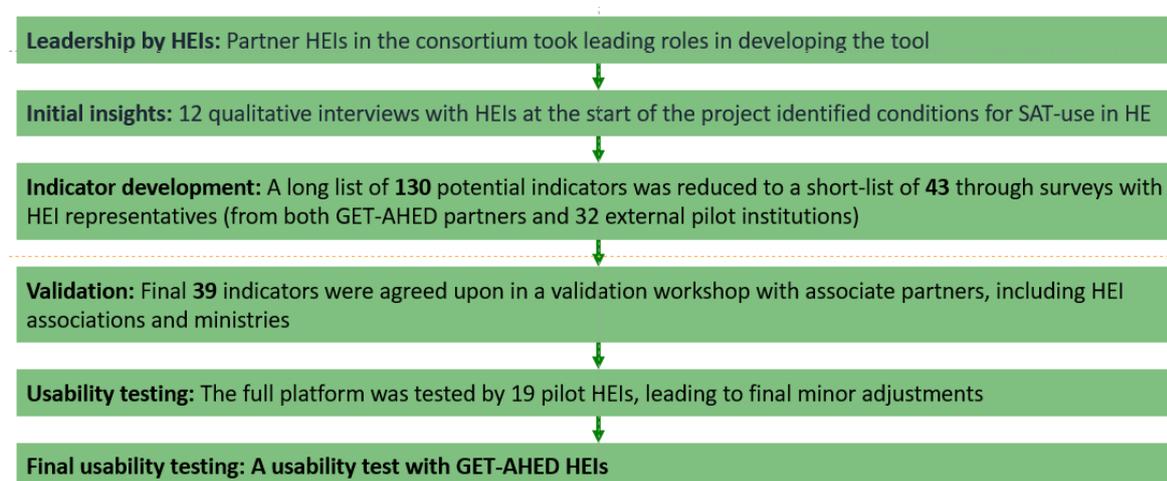


Figure 2: Participatory approaches

As already described in deliverable D2.2 (January 2025), the Green Self-Assessment Toolkit was developed through a rigorous and participatory methodology to help HEIs reflect on and strengthen their role in the green transition. Its design combines theory-driven frameworks, systematic reviews of existing tools, and extensive co-creation with universities and higher education stakeholders across Europe.

The dimensions of the toolkit are grounded in current research and policy, most notably the EUA Roadmap to the Green Deal, complemented by other key studies on sustainability in higher education. This ensures the framework aligns with European policy priorities while being relevant for institutional practice.

Indicators were primarily derived from a meta-study of 75 self-assessment tools (SATs) and related meta-analyses. To select indicators systematically, it was applied three criteria:

- Specific focus on environmental sustainability (not sustainability in general).
- Appropriateness for the HEI context, validated in exploratory interviews with eight universities.
- Clarity for self-assessment, meaning indicators could be formulated as Likert-scale statements.

Using these criteria, as described in D2.2, a long list of 130 potential indicators was established.

This initial set underwent a three-stage review process:

- Internal expert review: 12 representatives from partner HEIs (not previously involved in the project) evaluated the indicators' relevance and provided suggestions. Indicators scoring very high were kept; low-scoring ones were excluded; mid-range indicators were revised case-by-case.
- External pilot testing: 32 HEIs across Europe assessed the indicators through an online survey. They rated the relevance of the indicators, suggested potential mergers among similar indicators, and proposed reformulations of indicator statements.
- Consensus-based thresholding: Indicators with over 85 % agreement on relevance (i.e. more than 85 % of respondents rated them with "very relevant") were retained. Those below 75 % moved to a reserve list, while those in between were carefully reconsidered case by case.

Following revisions based on expert and pilot HEI feedback, the indicator set was discussed at the GET-AHED associate partner meeting, comprising higher education experts, associations and ministries. This final validation led to minor refinements, resulting in a concise set of 39 indicators across six dimensions:

- (1) Organisational Management;
- (2) Operations;
- (3) Education & Curricula;
- (4) Research, Development and Innovation;
- (5) Community and Outreach;
- (6) Assessment, Reporting and Evaluation.

Each indicator is accompanied by a short description to support interpretation, reflection and more informed decision-making of the score to be attributed.

Throughout, the methodology combined desk research, HEI interviews, internal and external expert reviews, and broad pilot testing. This ensured that the toolkit is both theoretically robust and practically grounded, designed with universities, for universities.

The result is a flexible, evidence-based instrument that enables HEIs to assess their current practices, identify strengths and gaps, and plan their next steps in contributing to the green transition.

In a nutshell, since the last deliverable D2.2, in January 2025, several improvements were conducted for the online self-assessment optimisation:

- Language-quality check by English native reviewer.
- Indicators validation in the Associate Partner meeting held on the 27th of May 2025.
- Presentation of the online platform, including the self-assessment user path in the roadshow during the GET-AHED Conference on the 21st of October 2025 in Cork, Ireland.
- Platform, “University Greening Toolbox” (which includes the SAT), two usability tests via surveys.

3. Usability tests in 2025

Two usability tests of the platform, which includes also testing the self-assessment, were conducted during 2025. In the following sub-sections the usability tests are presented.

3.1. First usability test

Usability test 1 occurred between 15th May 2025 and 16th June 2025. It involved eighteen (18) institutions and twenty (20) survey participants across different countries, with diverse positions and roles at their organisations: i) Professor; ii) Project leaders; iii) Member of the sustainable development or sustainability office.

The survey was developed with a set of four closed-ended questions with a Four-point Likert scale and one open question.

The questions, the Likert-scale and results are presented below in Figure 3:



Figure 3: Questions and results of the first usability test related to the self-assessment tool

The open question *“Do you have any suggestions for improving the usability of HE Green Assessment?”* resulted in a change of the name of the tool, decided by the consortium, and improvements in a process involving the consortium and external persons and other HEIs according to the feedback to the open question by the survey participants:

- Improved Results Display: Make the results graph more comprehensible by adding percentages, average scores, and clear labels for dimensions. Consider showing total questions and estimated completion time.
- In-Survey Progress: Implement visual indicators or a progress bar to show incomplete sections during the survey.
- Simpler Questions (concerns one indicator): It was highlighted in one indicator that it was too complex, and we should break it down for avoiding that they combine multiple concepts. The "indicator working group" shall look back into this.
- Button Clarity: Add tooltips or text to explain what "submit rating" and "Back" buttons do (e.g., if answers are saved).
- "Not applicable"-option: How to deal with indicators that are not applicable to individual HEIs, consider options for institutions not directly responsible for building infrastructure. Also it would be good if we could take into account the type of HEI.
- Assessment Summaries: Enable users to generate a summary of their completed assessments for discussion.
- Score Specificity: We need to define clearer criteria for each score (1-5) in the assessment.”

3.2. Second usability test

The usability test 2 of the platform occurred in December 2025 with the deadline to complete the survey by December 12, 2025. It involved twenty-six participants of the higher education institutions of the consortium, that were not part of the team of GET-AHED, with top-management roles (e.g. Vice-Rectors, etc) and representatives of the sustainability topics. The profiles of the respondents are composed by diverse positions and roles at their organisations: i) Professor; ii) Project leaders; iii) Member of the sustainable development or sustainability office, iv) students.

Twenty-two participants answered to the questions of the survey related to the self-assessment. The survey was developed with a set of three closed-ended questions with a Five-point Likert scale.

Figure 4 presents the questions, the Likert-scale and results:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	INSGESAMT
Taking the self-assessment is straightforward, intuitive and self-explanatory.	50.00% 11	50.00% 11	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22
After the self-assessment, the toolkit provides clear and actionable feedback.	36.36% 8	54.55% 12	9.09% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22
The recommended training and case studies are relevant and useful for my institution.	27.27% 6	31.82% 7	40.91% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22

Figure 4: Questions and results of the second usability test related to the self-assessment tool

4. Self-assessment Toolkit user path

Platform: <https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/>

Self-Assessment Toolkit: <https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/assessments/self-assessment-toolkit>

In this section, a quick step-by-step is presented to describe the user experience when implementing the SAT, as it can be showed in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Self-Assessment Toolkit user path

1 GET-AHED website access

The user accesses the University Greening Toolbox (Figure 6) and the SAT (Figure 7).



The University Greening Toolbox

The University Greening Toolbox is the result of the Erasmus+-funded project GET-AHED - "Green Education and Transition - A Higher Education Digital Buddy".

The toolbox is designed to provide Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) across the EU with a range of online tools to enable them to implement the EU's Green Transition, Green Education and Training priorities.

You can register to use the platform [here](#), or log in to the platform [here](#)

[Learn more about the GET-AHED Project!](#)

Figure 6: University Greening Toolbox

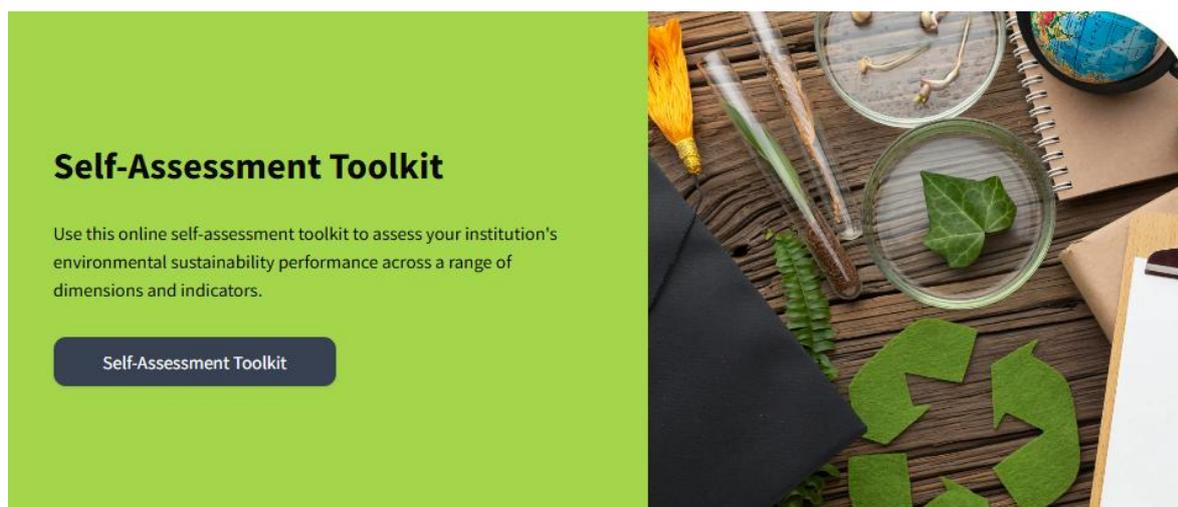


Figure 7: Green Self-Assessment Toolkit

2 Login or registration

The user logs in or registers if it is the first time, as shown in Figure 8, then the sign-out button is shown in addition.

<https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/login>

<https://green-uni-toolbox.eu/register>

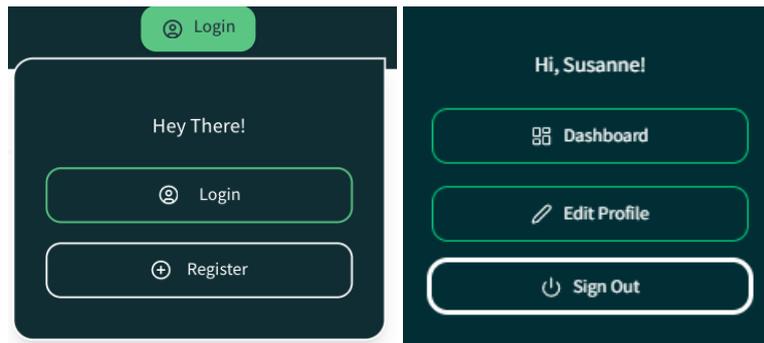


Figure 8: Login or registration to access the toolbox

3 SAT

The user chooses the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT), as illustrated in Figure 9.



Self-Assessment Toolkit

Evaluate how well your institution integrates environmental sustainability and the green transition across key areas of your university.

Get started in two ways

- ✔ Click **Start Assessment** to go through the full set of indicators
- ✔ Choose a Green Self-Assessment dimension below.

For each dimension, you'll see a series of indicator statements. Please rate your institution on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

*Please note, for the Green Self-Assessment Toolkit, you will be prompted to **Log in**, or to **Create an Account** if you do not already have one.*

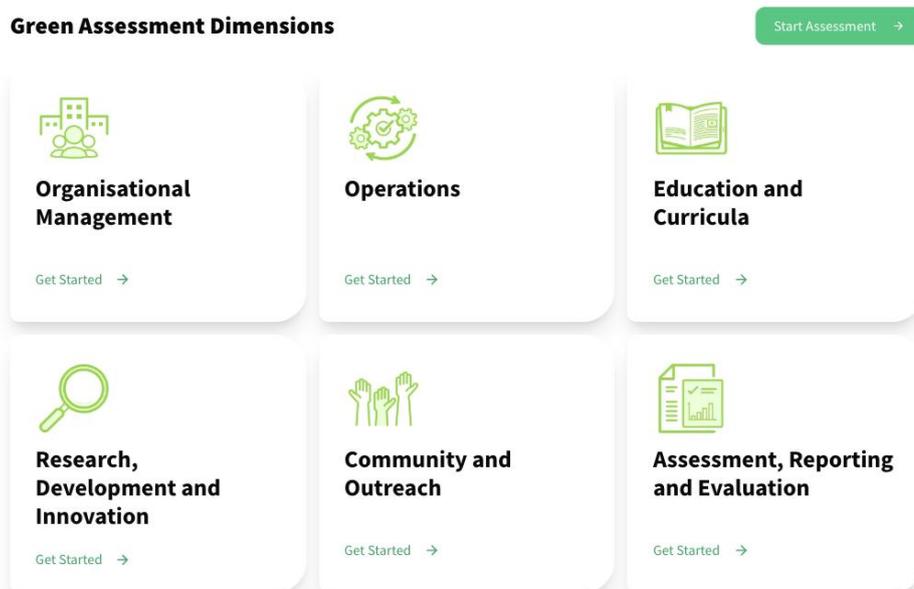


Figure 9: Self-Assessment Toolkit

The user can start the assessment in two ways, either by

- ✓ Clicking [Start Assessment](#) to go through the full set of indicators, or
- ✓ Choose a specific dimension.

The flexibility and modularity of the SAT adapt to each user's (HEI's) context and goals by using the self-assessment. It is possible to choose one single dimension, or all dimensions, depending on the HEI objectives within the topic of green transition.

4 Set, Start, Go

The user fills the self-assessment by scoring each statement (indicator) with a five-point Likert scale, as exemplified in Figure 10, considering the first statement of dimension "Organisational Management". Number 1 represents the lowest score, and 5 the highest score.

Organisational Management

Sustainability is essential in any strategic vision and governance, and management of an HEI. Integrating environmental sustainability into leadership, policies, and decision-making processes creates long-term commitment and systemic change. Sustainable procurement, resource allocation, and institutional policies shape a greener future and set an example for students and staff.

- Please rate your institution against each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 - with 1 representing the lowest score and 5 the highest score.

The HEI has a clearly defined strategy for environmental sustainability, properly aligned with relevant international strategies and policy frameworks.

The HEI has a clear environmental sustainability strategy aligned with global environmental initiatives that is accountable through reporting mechanisms.

To score highly, HEIs should:

- Integrate the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its policies.
- Implement global agreements, such as the Green Deal.
- Publish regular progress reports on targets based on recognised environmental sustainability standards.



Figure 10: Organisational Management dimension statement – example of filling the self-assessment

As presented in Figure 10, for a more informed scoring, the user has a short description of the statement and examples of a HEI that scores highly (i.e., score 5).

With a total of thirty-nine statements across six dimensions, these are their distribution:

- Dimension “*Organisational management*”: five statements.
- Dimension “*Operations*”: nine statements.
- Dimension “*Education and curricula*”: five statements.
- Dimension “*Research, development and innovation*”: eight statements.
- Dimension “*Community and outreach*”: seven statements.
- Dimension “*Assessment, reporting and evaluation*”: five statements.

5 Go back, submit, or continue

After filling one dimension, the user has the possibility to go back, submit the self-assessment and receive the results and recommendations or continue to another dimension or the full assessment, as illustrated in Figure 11.



Figure 11: Go back, submit or continue full assessment

6 Results and recommendations

After submitting the self-assessment, the results are presented to the user as shown in Figure 12. Linked to the results' scores a set of recommended training (Figure 13) and case studies (Figure 14). In addition, the system provides a list of recent module assessments including date and time of completion.



Figure 12: Results of the assessment

The user obtains a support information regarding the specific dimension and the dimension score. It also allows to search for category, duration and audience.

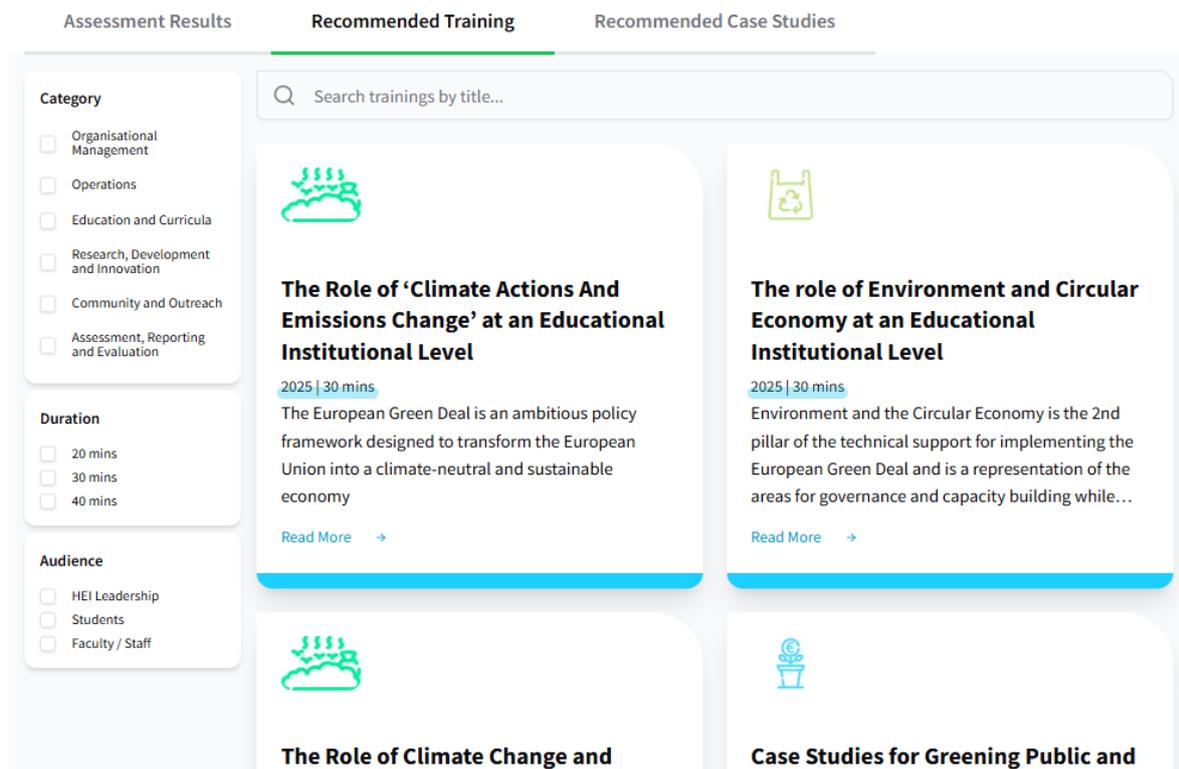


Figure 13: Recommended training

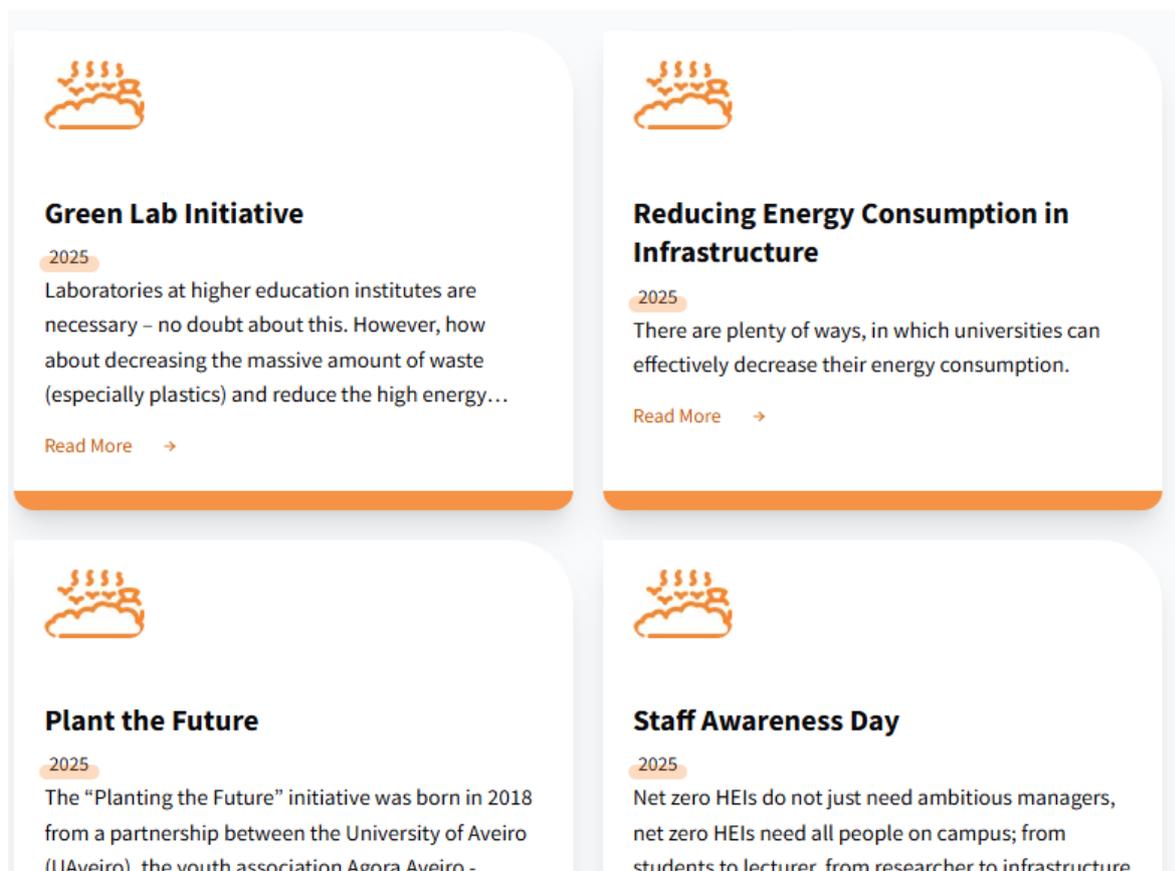


Figure 14: Recommended case studies

5. Self-Assessment tool dimensions

The user of the SAT can explore and fill all the dimensions or specific one(s) according to the goal of the implementation. Table 1 presents all the six dimensions and statements. As mentioned in the document, all the statements have, as a support for a more informed score decision, a short description and examples of how to score highly.

Table 1: Dimensions and statements

 <p>ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has a clearly defined strategy for environmental sustainability, properly aligned with relevant international strategies and policy frameworks. • The HEI has dedicated structures for coordinating and integrating environmental sustainability activities across the HEI • The HEI's decision-makers demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability as a priority in its decision-making processes. • The HEI promotes environmental sustainability across all its departments. • The HEI utilises educational, training and awareness-raising activities to disseminate the principles of environmental sustainability among its students, staff and external stakeholders.
 <p>OPERATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI applies green building criteria including the integration of sustainable design, construction, and renovation methodologies. • The HEI's procurement and tendering policy prioritises environmentally sustainable purchases. • The HEI adopts a strategy to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. • The HEI adopts clean and renewable energy measures, actions and sources for heating, cooling and energy provision. • The HEI implements measures and actions to reduce water consumption. • The HEI promotes waste avoidance and reduction measures, including circular economy approaches (e.g. in food waste management), across its campus. • The HEI has a waste and hazardous waste management system. • The HEI utilises policies that promote, facilitate and support environmentally sustainable commuting among its students and staff. • The HEI management incentivises or awards its employees to follow environmental sustainability practices in their operational activities.

 <p>EDUCATION AND CURRICULA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI offers and delivers educational opportunities in environmental sustainability to students and staff, including courses, modules, workshops, training initiatives or immersive experiences. • The HEI incorporates a range of competencies into curricula, therefore preparing students for a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle. • The HEI co-designs and delivers curricula with appropriate external stakeholders (e.g. sustainability practitioners), thereby responding to current environmental challenges. • The HEI uses its infrastructure (laboratories, buildings, campus, etc.) as an educational resource and living lab for environmental sustainability purposes. • New methods and results of environmental sustainability research are integrated into teaching and learning activities.
 <p>RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI fosters a research culture that prioritises environmental sustainability, encourages research on green challenges, and supports students and staff in developing innovative solutions to environmental issues. • Environmental sustainability is a cross-cutting theme in all the HEIs' research disciplines, including economic and social sciences, and the humanities. • The HEI actively supports environmental sustainability research by providing targeted funding, training and interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities. • Open science and collaborative approaches to environmental sustainability-related scientific research are utilised at the HEI (e.g. providing open access, involvement of non-academic stakeholders). • The HEI integrates environmentally sustainable practices into its research processes, promoting green lab initiatives, low-carbon methodologies and resource-efficient research tools. • Through its research, the HEI addresses the development of effective policies for environmental sustainability. • The HEI formally recognises and rewards "green champions" in research through dedicated awards or other incentives for staff and students. • The HEI engages in and promotes entrepreneurship and start-up initiatives focused on environmental sustainability.
 <p>COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI acts as an important player in environmental sustainability through its innovative contribution to regional, social and community development activities which address environmental challenges. • The HEI actively participates in environmental sustainability networks or alliances at a regional, national or international level. • The HEI cooperates with companies, business/industry, NGOs or other HEIs to promote environmental sustainability and associated activities within the HEI and in the community. • The HEI and its members actively participate in public discourse at various levels to promote environmental sustainability. • The HEI uses different communication channels (e.g. social media, web pages, flyers/posters, etc.) to raise awareness and sensitise its stakeholders to environmental sustainability. • The HEI develops, provides, promotes and implements programmes to raise awareness of environmental sustainability issues across society and the HEIs' stakeholder communities. • The HEI offers lifelong learning, upskilling and re-skilling programmes and activities in environmental sustainability to key external stakeholders.
 <p>ASSESSMENT, REPORTING AND EVALUATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI regularly assesses and reports on environmental sustainability as part of the implementation of its environmental sustainability strategy. • The HEI's reporting on environmental sustainability is considered in decision-making and resource allocation processes within the HEI. • The HEI transparently reports its annual greenhouse gas emissions. • The HEI regularly assesses resource consumption on campus in the context of environmental sustainability, including different types of resource use, such as energy, food, and materials. • The HEI regularly assesses the amount of waste and recycling on campus, including different types such as food or material waste.

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