

GREEN CAMPUS INITIATIVE: INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

DOI: 10.34920/phe.2025.18.07

Javlonbek Rakhmatillaev, Ulug‘bek Mamadaliyev

Abstract. This paper presents the methodology of implementation of Green Campus Initiative project (GreenCamUz) funded by Erasmus+. The project aims to integrate sustainability into various educational curricula using future-oriented strategies for competence development among project partners. The initiative of the project aligns strongly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Union’s commitment to environmental sustainability in education. The objectives of this 3-year project are to equip students and learners with the necessary skills to tackle climate change and ecological challenges. The methodology of this project is structured taking into account the project’s main aims, objectives and tasks.

Keywords: Green deal, green campus, project methodology, project objectives, project results.

Introduction

The need for the Campus Initiative project (GreenCamUz) project is convincingly articulated through a detailed needs analysis at the national level, highlighting significant environmental changes and the increasing demand for resources within Uzbekistan. The proposal demonstrates a convincing alignment with overarching Programme priorities, such as the Green Deal and Sustainable Growth and Jobs [1]. The transition to a green and sustainable economy is well justified as part of Uzbekistan’s national agenda, with relevant references to the EU Green Deal Programme [2] and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) [3].

Uzbekistan is dealing with environmental issues like water scarcity, air pollution, and poor waste management. This project helps advance the country’s green economy goals, aligning with national policies such as the Environmental Protection Strategy (2019–2030), Presidential Decree PP-4477 on Green Economy Transition, the “Green Space” initiative, and the 2025 focus on environmental protection. The initiative supports progress toward several UN SDGs, including quality education, clean water, clean energy, sustainable cities, and climate action. It also boosts sustainable growth by training 72 staff, creating 12 sustainability courses, and positioning universities as leaders in environmental action through six pilot projects and Green Campus Strategies.

The project objectives are well-formulated, shown in Fig.1, addressing interventions on multiple levels: individual, institutional, national, and international. Furthermore, the proposal is well aligned with EU values [4], promoting gender equality and encouraging the active participation of women in Green Campus Initiatives. Inclusive education is also a key component, with provisions foreseen for students with fewer opportunities, such as those with disabilities [6].

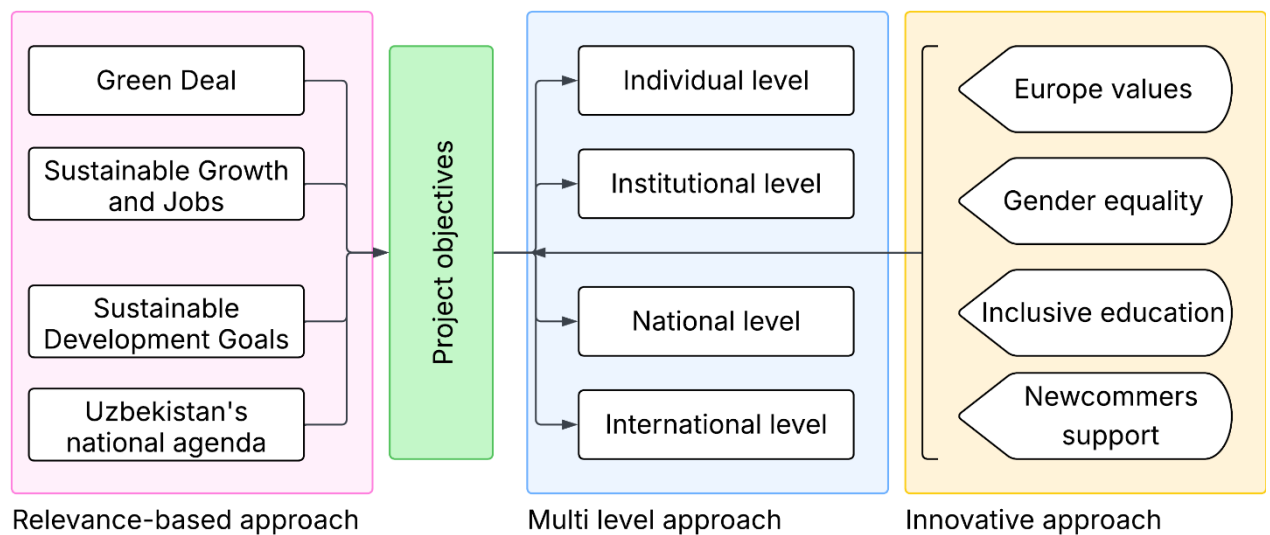


Fig.1. Multi-level impact pathway of policy-driven project objectives

Partnership and cooperation arrangements

The GreenCamUz consortium is structured to ensure comprehensive collaboration and multidisciplinary expertise [5,7]. The partnership composition is considered excellent, including relevant and experienced institutions from the EU, associated countries, and third countries not associated with the Programme (see figure 2). The consortium includes twelve entities, primarily higher education institutions (HEIs) from Uzbekistan (UZ), Poland (PL), Lithuania (LT), and Turkey (TR). Stakeholder involvement is indicated through the inclusion of ministries as associated partners, specifically the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and the Ministry of higher education, science and innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Collaboration with local stakeholders is also referenced.

Europe	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University		Opole University of Technology Karabuk University
Uzbekistan	Andijan state technical institute	Alfraganus University Green University	Kokand University Tashkent International University Graduate School of Business and Entrepreneurship
	Experienced	Less experienced	New commers

Fig.2. Consortium of the project

The management strategy of the project is convincing, structured around the Project Coordinator working collaboratively with bodies such as the Project Management Committee, Quality Assurance Board, and Work Package (WP) leaders. The allocation of tasks and responsibilities is adequately outlined, featuring balanced participation from both EU and Uzbek partners.

Project design and key activities

The project methodology for the GreenCamUz is structured across a three-year timeline and seven interconnected Work Packages (WPs), rooted in a logical and phased approach to integrate sustainability principles into the higher education system of Uzbekistan. The main approach involves integrating Sustainability into the Higher Education system of Uzbekistan by creating practical teaching materials, resources, and transforming university territories into environmentally friendly spaces.

The methodology is built upon curriculum development based on sustainability principles and current educational needs, training educators in new methodologies, establishing 12 new sustainability-focused courses, and utilizing a digital platform for remote learning and knowledge exchange, shown in Figure 3. The project methodology is sound, providing a good structure that clearly links to the project objectives and defined Work Packages (WPs).

Result: Green Campus design

The implementation of the Green Campus initiative yielded a multi-tiered structure that effectively integrated strategic planning, educational programming, stakeholder engagement, and pilot experimentation. At its foundation, the Green Campus strategy served as the guiding framework, anchoring all subsequent activities (Figure 4).

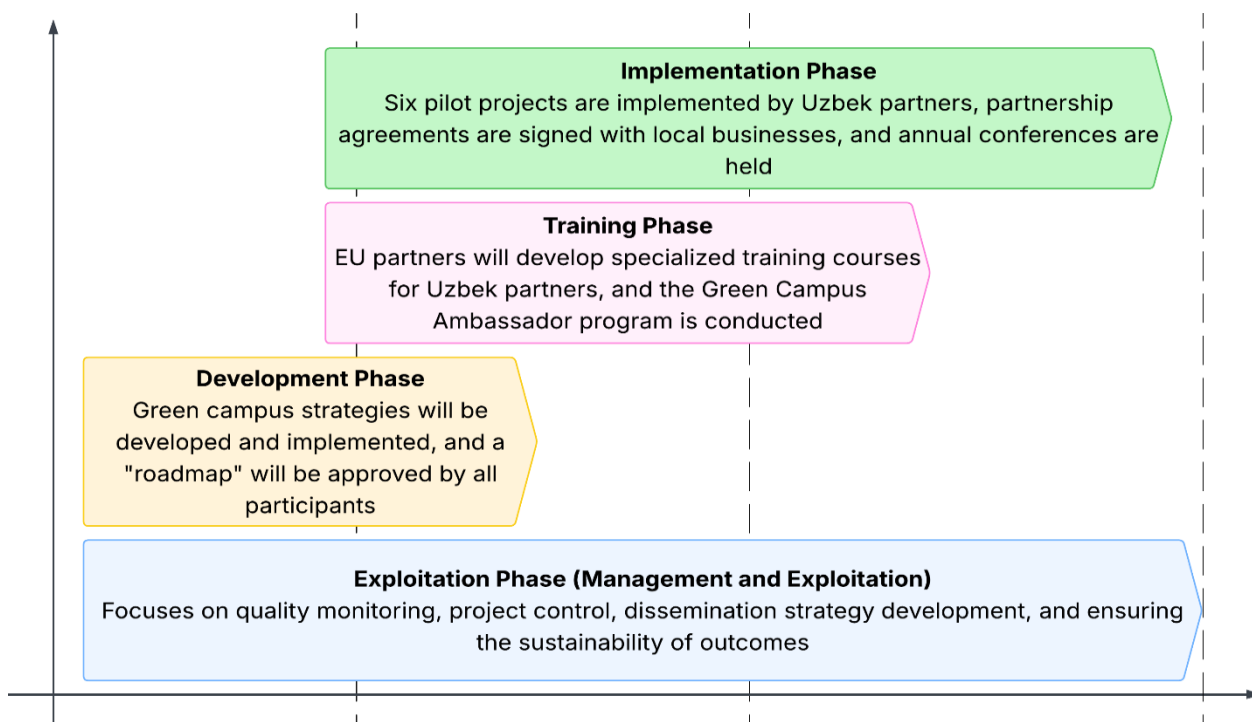


Fig.3. The four main phases of project

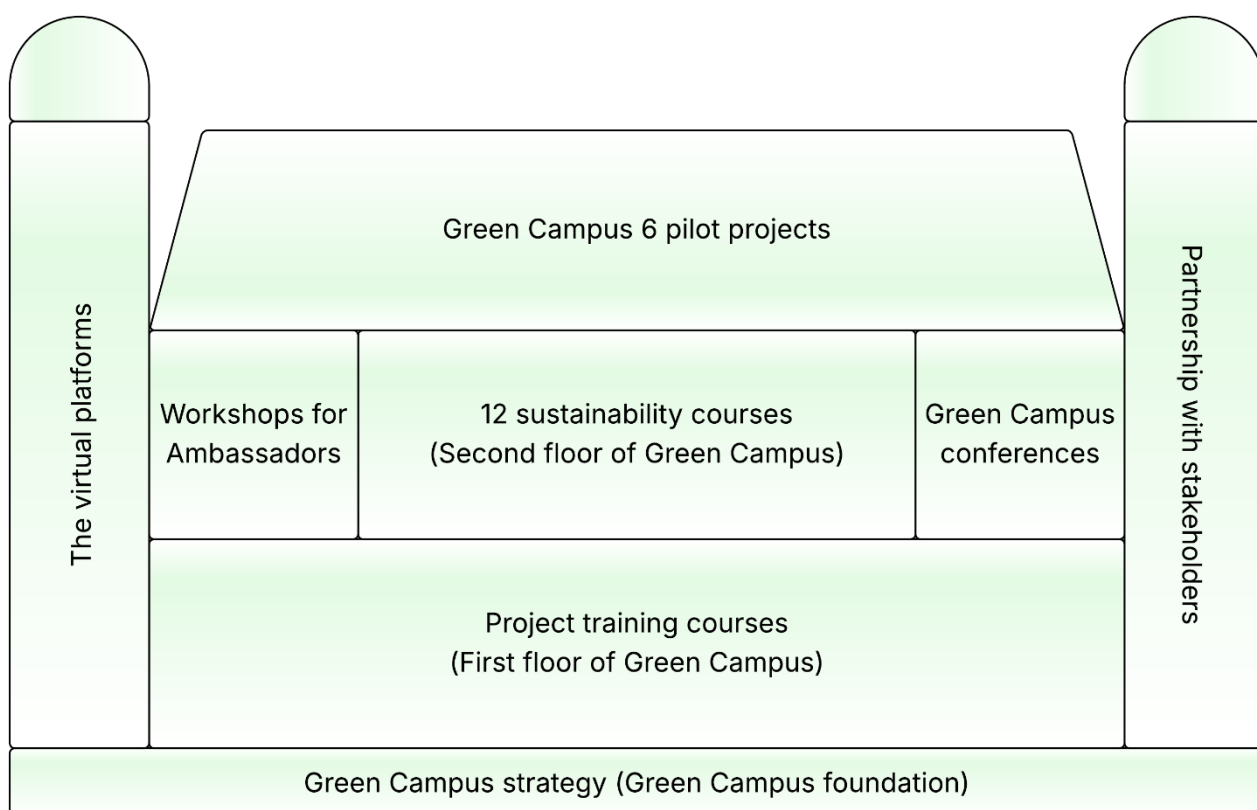


Fig.4. Green Campus vision

The first floor introduced targeted project training courses, equipping participants with foundational knowledge in sustainability and campus greening. Building on this, the second floor delivered 12 specialized sustainability courses, deepening competencies across environmental, social, and institutional dimensions. Parallel to these educational layers, virtual platforms facilitated ambassador workshops, while stakeholder partnerships enabled high-impact Green Campus conferences. Culminating the initiative, six pilot projects were launched, translating theoretical learning into practical, scalable interventions. This layered approach demonstrated a coherent progression from strategic vision to operational impact, reinforcing the initiative's capacity to foster systemic change in higher education sustainability.

Conclusion

The GreenCamUz project is a comprehensive effort aiming to enhance the sustainability development capacity of six Uzbek higher education institutions (HEIs) by integrating sustainability into educational curricula and transforming university territories into environmentally friendly spaces, addressing Uzbekistan's urgent need to transition toward a green economy amid challenges like high greenhouse gas emissions and climate change vulnerability, while aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 6, 7, 11, 13) and the EU Green Deal.

The methodology, implemented over a 36-month timeline through seven Work Packages (WPs), is structured across four phases, focusing on tangible outcomes such as the development and implementation of comprehensive green campus strategies for six universities and the design and integration of 12 new sustainability-focused courses/modules into curricula.

Capacity building is a central goal, targeting the training of at least 48 faculty members and 24 administrative staff through specialized courses developed by EU partners, along with establishing a network of 120 trained green campus ambassadors; this knowledge is then applied through the implementation of six small-scale pilot projects, demonstrating sustainable practices like zero paper circulation. Furthermore, the project emphasizes community outreach through the establishment of partnerships with at least 12 local businesses, the organization of the annual Green Campus Conference for 200 participants, and the creation of a virtual knowledge-sharing platform engaging 1000+ users, with long-term sustainability ensured by fully integrating the strategies and courses into institutional policies and curricula.

References:

1. European Commission. (2025). Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2025 (Version 2, including Corrigendum of 20.01.2025). Brussels: European Commission. <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>
2. European Commission. (2019). The European Green Deal (COM/2019/640 final). Brussels: European Commission. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640>
3. United Nations. (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1). United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
4. Davronova D., Sunnatillaev A. (2024). Celebrating 30 Years of EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation: The Impact of Erasmus+ and Tempus on Higher Education Reform. Perspectives in Higher Education, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.34920/phe.2024.17.01>
5. Rakhmatillaev J., Sunnatillaev A. (2024). Benchmarking Erasmus+ Curricula: A Strategic Framework for Higher Education Reform in Uzbekistan. Perspectives in Higher Education, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.34920/phe.2024.17.08>
6. Normurodova, N. (2024). Enhancing access and equity: The role of inclusive internationalization in global higher education. Perspectives in Higher Education, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.34920/phe.2024.16.08>
7. Eshkabilov, S. (2025). How to prepare good and competitive academic project applications. Perspectives of Higher Education Development, <https://erasmus.uz/journal/index.php/files/article/view/101>