



## POLICY: INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

As approved by the Stellenbosch University Council on 20 November 2010

### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy for the Integrated Management of Sustainability is to:

1. Commit the University to a shared view of sustainability;
2. Establish the principle of an integrated network to guide and coordinate campus activities regarding sustainability; and
3. Serve as a basis for the Operational and Communication Plan for Sustainability.

### B. CONTEXT

The University's commitment to sustainability, similar to its commitment to its students, staff and research success, arises from the mission of the SU, namely:

*"The raison d'être of the University of Stellenbosch is to create and sustain, in commitment to the academic ideal of excellent scholarly and scientific practice, an environment within which knowledge can be discovered, can be shared, and can be applied to the benefit of the community."*

This commitment is enhanced by the University's unique location on the ecologically sensitive floodplain of the Eerste River and its property at the foothills of the Stellenbosch Mountains with the subsequent realisation of the responsibilities these entail. It finds further expression through the University's goal to be "a builder of hope" by using science to solve some of the most difficult problems in our country and on the continent, thereby employing new knowledge to equip communities to change their world.

The University has also committed itself to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and in this instance specifically "balancing a sustainable environment with a competitive industry".

### C. DEFINITION

Sustainability is the **ability** to realise current needs, to enhance the quality of life and to develop, **without** increasing the use of materials and energy to the extent that it overloads the supporting systems. The supporting systems can also be **renewed** in such a way as not to impede the ability of future generations to

do the same.<sup>1</sup> Therefore there is a balance that extends across more than one generation between nature (ecology), people (community or social networks) and the economy.

#### D. POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Stellenbosch University:

1. Aims to **deliver leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**, who have the insight, attitude, practices and skills to integrate sustainability into their own lives, their work and their communities;
2. Commits itself to **continuous action** to integrate sustainability in a meaningful way into all its activities, whether teaching, research, community interaction or operations;
3. Strives to manage its **resources** in a balanced way realising and recognising the intertwinement of ecological, social and economic systems;
4. Recognises the **uniqueness** of the University as a town university situated in a unique landscape which includes a river and a fynbos biome;
5. Strives for **sustainability success** in the areas of:
  - i. Teaching and learning: Enables our students to develop the knowledge and skills that they will require as future leaders, with sustainability as an integral part of this;
  - ii. Research: Supports research geared to achieving a better understanding of sustainability, and exploits our expertise in science, innovation and technology to find mechanisms to tackle the problem areas pertaining to sustainability.
  - iii. Community interaction: Promotes a culture of sustainability and leads by example in the community and by making available knowledge, expertise, lessons learnt and best practice.
  - iv. Operations, finance and ecology: Improves the current operational processes and procedures in order to reduce the University's ecological footprint; improves the current financial processes and procedures in order to create and maintain financial sustainability; creates a safe and healthy environment for our staff and students, and develops new strategies, processes and procedures to remedy deficiencies regarding operational processes and sustainability. These apply to all the campuses and include the conservation of resources, e.g. by water management, energy management, waste reduction, property management, etc.
  - v. Student life: Encourages our students to participate in sustainability initiatives and to practise sustainability in the various forums in which they are involved.
6. Supports **integrated** sustainability in order that:
  - i. Sustainability is integrated meaningfully in all the University's core functions and operational processes;
  - ii. Planning and coordination can be done in a systemic manner, in other words the focus remains on the overarching process, irrespective of who or which unit / department is responsible for the mutual aspects;
  - iii. The University's relationship with the town and community and the interdependence of the parties are recognised and managed in terms of its value;

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<sup>1</sup> **Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future**, Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to document A/42/427 - Development and International Co-operation: Environment (<http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>)

- iv. Shared responsibility for and ownership of sustainability are accepted, overarching and with the specific responsibility for actions required in each environment.
- 7. Develops and implements **appropriate measuring instruments** to monitor the pursuit of sustainability and continuously further improve “best practice”. These include an applicable Strategic Management Indicator encompassing all the University’s core functions, as well as operations, finance and ecology.
- 8. Reports in an appropriate and integrated manner on sustainability in terms of the standards determined by, among others, the Higher Education Act, King III and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).
- 9. Supports the appropriate management behaviour regarding sustainability, including principles such as transparency and accountability.

## **E. IMPLEMENTATION**

Consequent to the overarching Sustainability Policy, an Overarching Sustainability Operational Plan is developed. This is managed from the office of the Executive Director: Operations and Finance.

This Policy will be reviewed within three years on the basis of the experience gained during its operationalisation. In this review attention will be paid to, among others, the incorporation of the socio-political power dimensions underlying the concept of sustainability.