



2023-‘26

Sustainable Development Strategy



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA

Foreword

Medical University – Sofia conducts activities that are part of the implementation of the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the related 169 actions included in the document "Transforming Our World: Agenda for Sustainable Development - 2030".



“Our academic community as a group of professionals and students who work towards the same goal can make a real difference in shaping good attitudes in society. The Medical University – Sofia is managed in a sustainable manner, and we have now made this formal by introducing a Sustainable Development Strategy 2023-'26. It has been approved and adopted by the University Academic Council, which shows that the University's employees are aware of contemporary challenges, which provides them with a special priority in their daily activities. The Sustainable Development Strategy is part of MU-Sofia University mission, vision and strategic goals. Activities supporting sustainable development build the value of our HEI, affect its prestige and credibility in the local ecosystem.

To help us achieve our Sustainable Development Strategy for the period 2023 – 2026, we have launched a series of policies and plans to provide a strategic route map, detailing how the University proposes to reduce its carbon emissions through the implementation of a range of projects, policies, education and behavior change. These are to hold us accountable as a university – and help us achieve our goal of becoming carbon net-zero by 2035.”

ACAD. PROF. LATCHEZAR TRAYKOV, MD, DSC

RECTOR, MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA



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Vision & Mission

Medical university – Sofia acts sustainably according to the economic pillar of sustainability, as strategically uses its finances, tangible and intangible resources and values and is responsible in a long-term perspective according to its employees' and students' needs.

Medical university - Sofia empowers its employees and students to make sustainable choices during their working and study time, transforming its campus in a sustainable place to work and study. There are several implemented governing documents and plans: **Policy for sustainable development** (contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030, which contains the UN's sustainable development goals), **Strategy for sustainable development of the university (2023-2026)** and **Sustainability plan 2023-2026** (it should be draw up an action plan that describes how it will implement the University's sustainability strategy).

Along with the necessary professional and scientific knowledge, it is considered a priority that students develop the qualities that will make them responsible citizens, with depth of thought, a critical spirit and an international perspective, capable of understanding their work as a service to others and to society.

Sustainable leadership at the MU-Sofia

Sustainable management

The senior management of MU-Sofia focuses on the educational and research dimensions of the Sustainable management in the university and in contrast, less attention has been paid to the building, waste and recycling, and water and energy. A total of 6 factors effect the development of the Sustainable management:

- 1) Strategy and university culture
- 2) Environmental pressures (legal, imitation, and normative pressures)
- 3) Education and capabilities of academic community
- 4) Values of researchers, administrative and technical staff and students
- 5) Attitudes of stakeholders towards Sustainable management
- 6) International Institutional cooperation

Sustainable initiatives

minimize energy use, water management, green building and particularly green space, management by improving biodiversity to creat and academic ambiance

Sustainable actions



Implementing the United Nations' Sustainable Development goals (SDGs)¹



SDG 4: Quality Education (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for STUDENTS AND STAFF)

Goal 4 targets in the MU-Sofia

- ✓ By 2024, ensure that all students complete free, equitable, and quality higher medical education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
- ✓ By 2023, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality educational process
- ✓ By 2024, substantially increase the number of students and staff (administrative staff, lecturers and researchers) who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment and decent jobs

¹ Reference: Pic. 1. Goals of SDGs finally adopted by UN summit that took place on the 25th of September 2015 in New York. Source: UN Information Centre. UN SDGs: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education>

- ✓ By 2025, eliminate gender disparities in the higher medical education and ensure equal access for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and youth in vulnerable situations
- ✓ By 2025, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development;
- ✓ By 2025, include in teaching programs the principles of sustainable, environmentally friendly development and provide practical classes, examples of specific ecological activities, examples for taught issues of the importance of environmental policy, principles sustainable development, green economy, etc.
- ✓ By 2026, substantially increase the supply of qualified lecturers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in the widening countries in Horizon Europe (incl. Bulgaria)



SDG 5: Gender Equality (Achieve gender equality and empower all women)

Goal 5 targets in the MU-Sofia

- ✓ By 2025, end all forms of discrimination against all women (staff & students of the MU-Sofia)
- ✓ By 2026, eliminate all forms of violence against all women in the MUS, including sexual and other types of exploitation
- ✓ By 2023, ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in the university environment
- ✓ By 2026, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

- ✓ By 2025, enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- ✓ By 2024, adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women in the MU-Sofia.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all in the MU-Sofia)

Goal 6 targets in the MU-Sofia

- ✓ By 2026, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all (staff and students)
- ✓ By 2026, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- ✓ By 2026, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater, and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- ✓ By 2026, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all university units
- ✓ By 2026, implement integrated water resources management at all university levels (Rectorate, Faculties, Deans' offices, etc.), including through cooperation with the Sofia Municipality as appropriate
- ✓ By 2026, protect and restore water-related ecosystems
- ✓ By 2026, expand international cooperation through sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting,

desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

- ✓ By 2026, support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all in the Mu-Sofia)

Goal 8 targets in the MU-Sofia

- ✓ By 2026, promote a development policy that supports production activities, the creation of decent jobs, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourages the exit from the shadow economy and the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, through access to financial services;
- ✓ By 2026, ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and people with disabilities; ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- ✓ By 2026, protect labor rights and promote a safe working environment for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular migrant women and those in precarious employment;
- ✓ By 2026, our goal is to create an innovative, creative, equal opportunity development and safe work environment that supports employees and their diversity.



Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Goal 9 targets in the MU-Sofia

- ✓ By 2030, promote a building of resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

- ✓ by 2030, use opportunities to initiate ground-breaking technologies, investment in scientific research and innovation
- ✓ by 2030, increase the number of researchers and building research capacity, expertise and infrastructure
- ✓ by 2030, address the scientific and technical challenges of big data in the field of Medicine and Public Health and Care, ensuring that the infrastructure and skills pipeline for data-intensive research are developed at the institutional level.
- ✓ by 2030, advancements in using of eco-friendly products for purpose and benefits of training



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Goal **17** targets in the MU-Sofia

- ✓ By 2030, promote a building of resilient infrastructures (incl. new Rectorate green campus)
- ✓ by 2030, develop multiple partnerships and types of partnerships, relying increasingly on global networks to achieve research that addresses the world's grand challenges.
- ✓ by 2030, go well beyond these international networks of academia, partnering with government and civil society at all levels. For instance, at a local level, MU-Sofia researchers worked closely with the Sofia Municipality on behavioural change during the city's extreme air pollution, and subsequently shared the lessons learned with a global audience
- ✓ by 2030, MU-Sofia has to work closely with industry in many of its fields, and these partnerships are critical to delivering the SDGs.
- ✓ A critical gap identified by Goal 17 is the lack of meaningful data on which to base policy decisions and monitor progress towards all SDGs

Relationship between the objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy of MU-Sofia and the objectives of the SDGs

SDGs	Sustainable Development
Strategy	

Objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy	The end of poverty	The end of hunger	Health and quality of life	Quality of education	Equality between men and women	Drinking water, sewerage	Affordable and clean energy	Decent work and economic growth	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Responsible consumption and production	Sustainable electricity and municipalities	Less unevenness	Climate measures	Life in the water	Life on land and Peace, justice and strong institutions	Partnership for development	Flexible study and education	Support for PhD students	Excels in research and development	Strengthening strategies in management	Reducing the administrative burden and infrastructure optimization	The system is a source of third role tools	Pronging a consortium identity	Internationalisation in a globalised world	Strategic partnerships
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sustainability competencies through the Green education initiatives of the EU:



[A European Green Deal - European Commission](#)

Research and innovation for the European Green Deal



EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area

[European Education Area](#)



[Erasmus+ Programme and European Solidarity Corps](#)



[DASHBOARD of the Education for Climate Coalition](#)



[The Effort Sharing Regulation](#)

The proposed Bulgarian targets:

Previous 2030 target compared to 2005 - 0%

New 2030 target compared to 2005 (Commission proposal) - 10%



[The DiscoverEU Green Route](#)

National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (Bulgaria)



<https://www.moew.government.bg/en/climate/international-negotiations-and-adaptation/adaptation/>

By Decision № 621/25.10.2019 was approved by Council of Ministers the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan for the Republic of Bulgaria. The aim of the Strategy is to serve as a reference document, setting a framework for

climate change adaptation action and priority directions up to 2030.

"The role of higher education is seen as a key pre-condition to allow for successful implementation of other adaptation actions.

Regarding research and education, climate change impacts on the urban environment are not sufficiently presented in the urban planning curriculum, thus reflecting the overall limited academic and professional capacity for promotion of issues of CCA.

There are, therefore, considerable needs for further capacity building and increasing understanding and awareness of CCA through public engagement, communication access, and education.

Raising awareness and general education on climate change is, among others, an essential pre-condition for good adaptation. Therefore, further efforts are needed to improve the degree of awareness among local communities. This is closely linked to the need of providing better education in natural sciences, as well as introducing climate change issues in the curricula at all scholar levels."

Table 3. Summary of biodiversity and ecosystems services adaptation options

Strategic Objective	Type of Option	Examples
Enhance ecosystem governance	Strategic planning and implementation legislation	Develop and adopt the new Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and a new Green Infrastructure Strategy with regard to CCA
	Adjusting sectoral legislation to climate legislation	Revise the CCMA and sectoral strategies/legislation to include provisions of CCA Strategy
	Linking emissions statistics to new environmental accounts	Create carbon environmental accounts
	Education for ecosystem thinking	Create specialized education courses for administrations responsible for implementing CCA and biodiversity legislation

“Maximize the use of research and education institutions”

Ministry of Education and Science

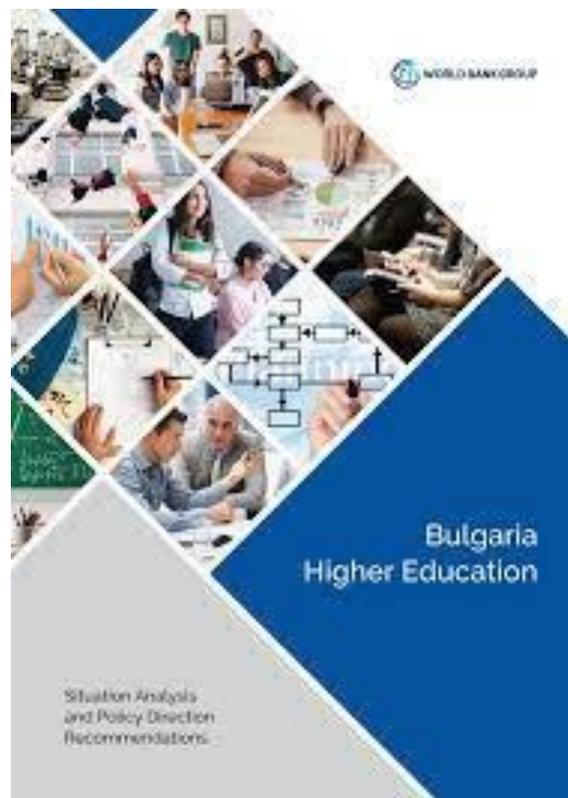
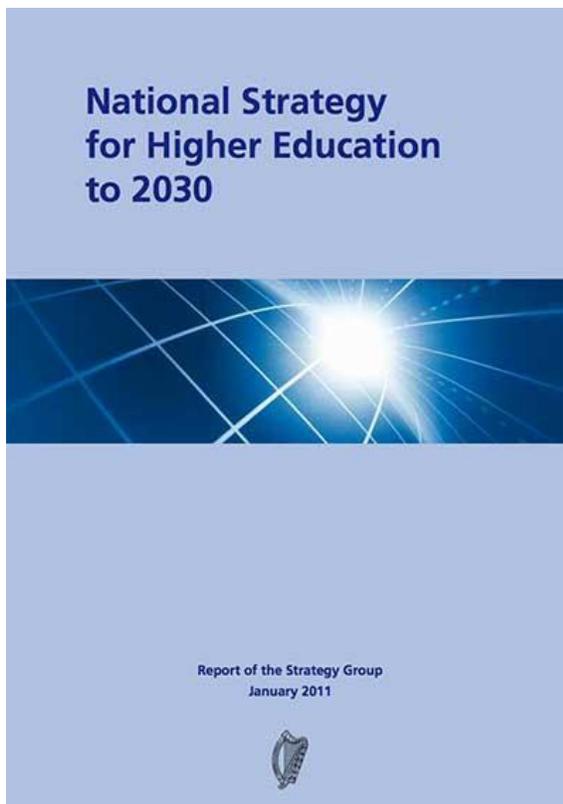
Recovery and resilience plan for Bulgaria

(https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/recovery-and-resilience-plan-bulgaria_en)

“Bulgaria’s plan will accelerate the decarbonisation of the energy sector, promote the large-scale deployment of digital infrastructure, including in rural areas, as well as support investments in improving the business environment, education and skills, research and innovation, social protection and healthcare. All reforms and investments have to be implemented within a tight time frame, as the Regulation on the Recovery and Resilience Facility foresees they have to be completed by August 2026. “

There are also important measures for modernising education and enhancing research and innovation (€748 million). The plan aims at strengthening the adequacy and coverage of the minimum income scheme, improving the provision of employment and social services and their integration, as well as modernising long-term care with a focus on people with disabilities and older people (€440 million). Access to healthcare will be improved through modernization of hospitals and medical facilities; establishing an air ambulance system; the construction of outpatient care units in remote and under-served regions (€372 million).”

Climate framework for higher education institutions in Bulgaria



Strategic Plan of the Medical University – Sofia

The Strategic plan of the Medical University – Sofia (2023-2026) was developed by the University in partnership with the academic community. It sets out our ambitious vision for a more sustainable University and what we need to achieve to get there.

The Strategic Sustainability Plan contains 7 goals, each of which will be delivered by a set of initiatives with associated targets.

Priority areas

Climate neutrality by 2050

Establishment of the Sustainability Committee at the Rectorate

Engaging students, staff, and the local community in practical responses to the climate and ecological emergencies

Shaped the local/regional response of the medical higher education to the climate crisis

Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities

Goals

To deliver on our vision we have identified the following goals.

Goal 1 Tackling Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with energy use across the entire MU-Sofia estate

Goal 2 Understanding our total emissions footprint

Goal 3 Becoming an University leader in the Staff & Students Mobility

Goal 4 Using the opportunity through the educating thousands of young people to be shaped the global response to the climate crisis

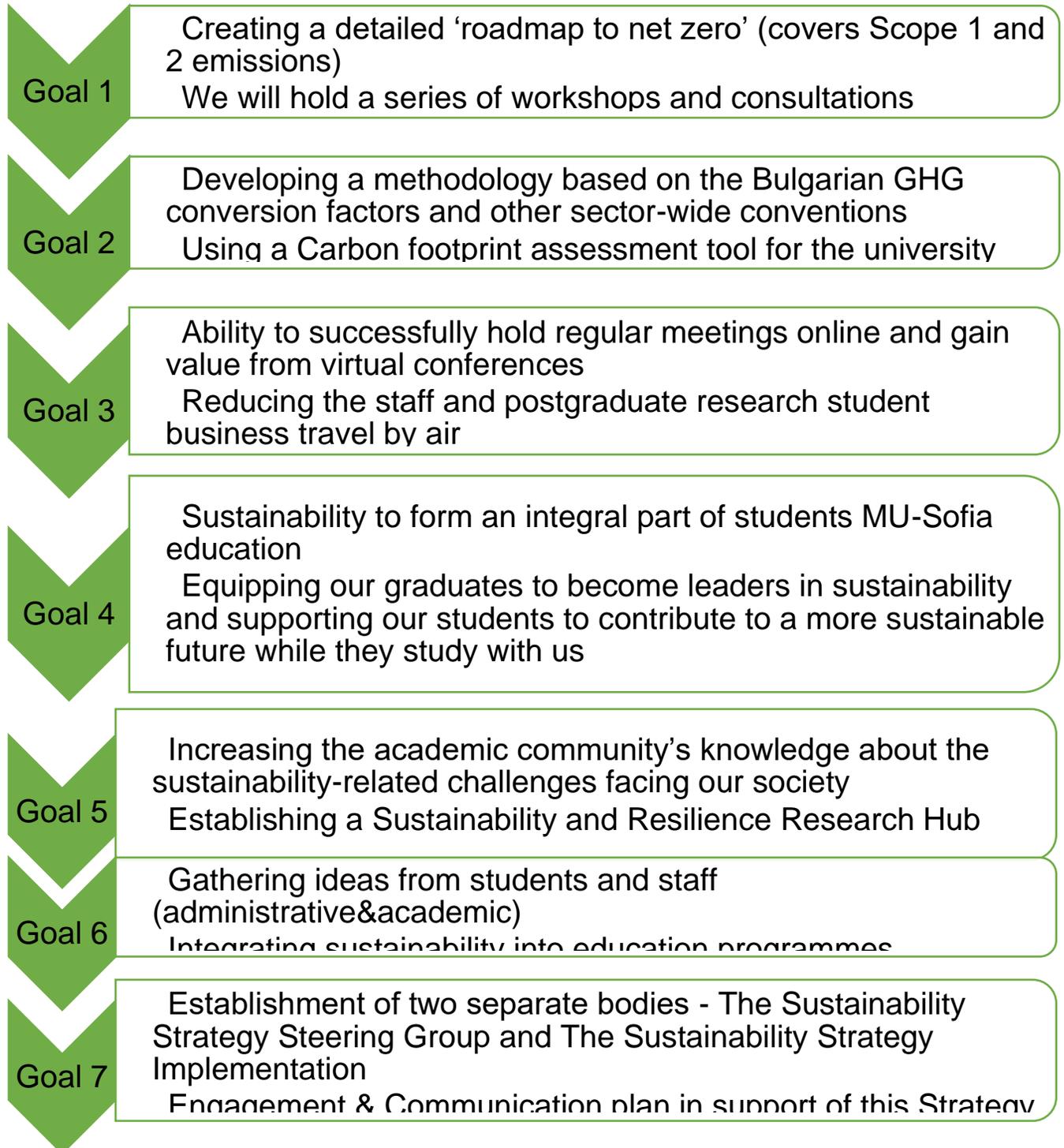
Goal 5 Addressing the climate crisis through research

Goal 6 Involving students and staff in all sustainability decision-making actions

Goal 7 The MU-Sofia governance structure to ensure resources to deliver university's sustainability vision

What will we do?

(Targets and indicators)



Measures & Interim targets

To track the progress and work on each Goal, MU-Sofia will issue every June yearly a Sustainable Development Goals Report.

Implementation overview to 2026

Goal	Targets	Jun-Dec 2023	Jan-Jun 2024	Jun-Dec 2024	Jan-Jun 2025	Jun-Dec 2025	Jan-Jun 2026
G1	Creating a detailed 'roadmap to net zero' (covers Scope 1 and 2 emissions)						
	A series of workshops and consultations						
G2	Developing a methodology based on the Bulgarian GHG conversion factors & other sector-wide conventions						
	Using a Carbon footprint assessment tool for the university						
G3	Ability to successfully hold regular meetings online and gain value from virtual conferences						
	Reducing the staff and postgraduate research student business travel by air						
G4	Sustainability to form an integral part of students MU-Sofia education						
	Equipping our graduates to become leaders in sustainability						
G5	Increasing the academic community's knowledge about the sustainability-related challenges						
	Establishing a Sustainability and Resilience Research Hub						
G6	Gathering ideas from students and staff						
	Integrating sustainability into education programmes						
G7	Establishment of two separate bodies - The Sustainability Strategy Steering Group and The Sustainability Strategy Implementation						
	Engagement & Communication plan in support of this Strategy						

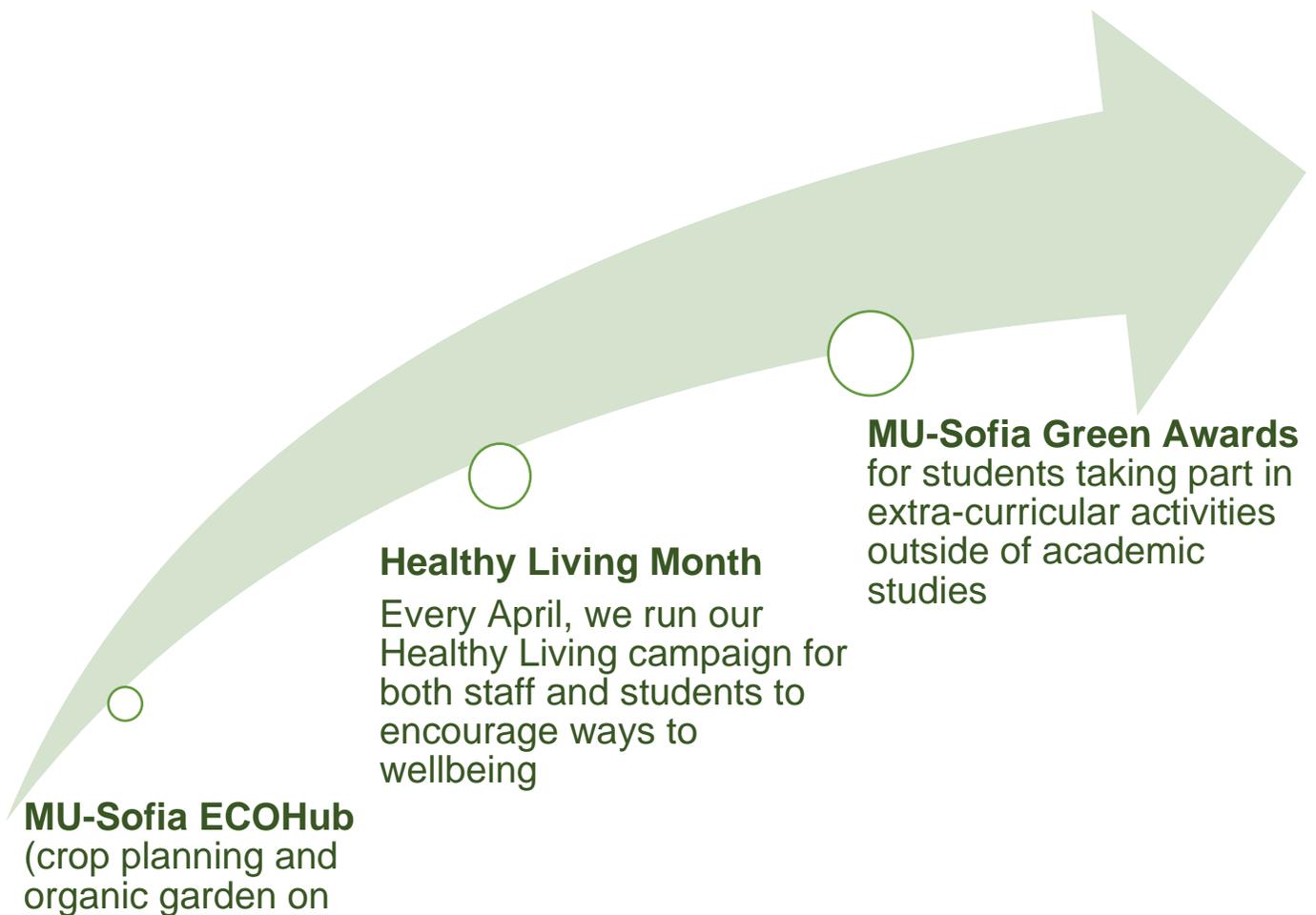
Student Initiatives

The responsible structure of MU-Sofia for implementing the green sustainable initiatives of MU-Sofia is the Student Council, which implements its strategic medium-term activities and activities in the context of engaging student circles and young volunteers for sustainable change.

Tasks for the period 2023-2026:

- ✓ stimulating the students of MU-Sofia to volunteer for the activities of the "Air for Health" Medical Network
- ✓ holding regular student discussion forums in the context of clean air issues with the participation of interested parties, as well as a training seminar with students from all faculties and colleges of MU-Sofia
- ✓ meetings with the local community, special focus on meetings with children and adolescents on clean air issues (students from 5th to 12th grade in several schools in Sofia)
- ✓ the preparation of recommendations and communication with the official authorities in the field of higher education in the person of the Ministry of Health and the Municipality of Sofia to improve air quality
- ✓ active collaboration and increase of initiatives with third-party partners, for example, the Physician Network "Air for Health"
- ✓ Medical students are increasingly interested in learning how to practise in a sustainable way, and to communicate the need for sustainable healthcare to colleagues and patients.
- ✓ Physician network "Air for Health" in partnership with the Faculty of Public Health "Prof. Dr. Ts. Vodenicharov, MD", Medical College "Y. Filaretova" and the Student Council at the Medical University - Sofia laid the foundations of the non-governmental organization "Air for Health", in which students stand up in support of clean air.

Student Engagement Model at the MU-Sofia



“BOOSTING GREEN ACADEMIC COMPETENCES FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE”



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA

