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Global Compact Communication on Engagement (COE) 2022-2024

Part 1. Renewal of Commitment

To our stakeholders:

I am delighted to have this opportunity to express continued support for the United Nations Global Compact and to renew Kristianstad University's (Högskolan Kristianstad) commitment to the initiative as well as its 10 principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-corruption.

Kristianstad University, Sweden, was founded in 1977 and has about 14,000 students and 550 employees. The University is oriented towards professional education and aims to be a leading university in its fields of research and education. Our institution offers undergraduate and graduate education in a range of academic professional areas, preparing students for their future working life as, inter alia, teachers, nurses, accountants, HR specialists, and computer engineers. This is our fourth Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact.

New knowledge and skills are essential to promoting a sustainable transition in our societies. Universities and higher education institutions play a crucial role in achieving this through education, research, and collaboration. By focusing on education and research, universities can have a meaningful impact. Additionally, growing attention is being paid to the direct environmental impact and climate footprint of higher education institutions. Efforts to reduce emissions and take informed decisions are closely tied to the University's attractiveness and recruitment of students and faculty. Kristianstad University has and will continue to demonstrate high ambitions in its climate and environmental initiatives, as reflected in its Strategy and Plan for Sustainability and Environmental Work.

To enhance its attractiveness and sustainability, and to adapt to the evolving work environment, Kristianstad University is currently developing a new campus area.



We deem it necessary to provide employees and students with appealing facilities that are well suited to their needs. The University plans to move into these new facilities in 2029.

We are glad to be able to share some of our experiences in this Communication of Engagement. We also look forward to achieving new sustainability objectives over the next two years.

Dr. Håkan Pihl

Vice Chancellor

Kristianstad University

Part 2. Description of Actions

Kristianstad University is a member of the UN-based organizations UN Global Compact and Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). The University will also continue to be part of the PRME Champions network until the end of 2025.

The University's Strategy and Plan for Sustainability and Environmental Work 2021–2024 is based on Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the most important objectives in the ancillary action plan is to reduce the University's carbon dioxide emissions per employee by 50 per cent by 2025, in relation to the 2019 level.

The University works to encourage and help its employees reduce their emissions concerning not only business travel, but also commuting to work. Large parts of the staff who previously worked on campus can now partially work from home. The University's hope is that establishment of a campus in the city centre of Kristianstad by 2029 will give more employees and students the choice to travel using public transportation. The University invests in technology that facilitates digital meetings and applies an internal environmental fee on business travelling, which encourages staff to reflect on their choice of transport. The fee has been in place since 2017 and amounts to SEK 200 per ton of carbon dioxide emitted for all flights. The compounded environmental fees are set aside to be used as quality funds to which staff can apply for funding of quality-enhancing projects.

Digital meetings have become part of everyday work at the University. In January 2020, i.e. before the COVID-19 pandemic, 427 meetings were held via Zoom. In 2023, the average was 4,724 Zoom meetings a month, excluding the summer months of July and August. This is slightly lower than in 2022, but more than 11 times as many as the number of meetings held in January 2020. The use of Microsoft Teams has shown a similar development. In 2023, an average of 1,251 meetings were held a month using the tool (excluding July and August), which is an increase from 2022.

In 2022, the University began working on a comprehensive environmental report as part of its obligations as a government agency. The inquiry was completed in 2023. In connection with the environmental report, the University analysed the internal and external factors affecting its environmental efforts. Moreover, a workshop was conducted together with university management to assess the progress of the University's efforts in relation to the 10 goals set in the environmental plan. The workshop concluded with a prioritization of actions for the remainder of the strategic plan period. A similar workshop was carried out together with the student union.

In short, the environmental inquiry's summary analysis states that the University's major contribution to society in environmental terms takes place through indirect environmental impact. The contributions in education, research and collaboration with the surrounding society are likely to mean that the activities as a whole have a positive environmental impact. However, the knowledge, ideas and working methods can be more clearly linked to Agenda 2030 and communicated more emphatically.

Regarding the direct environmental impact, the University faces challenges in the short and medium term. In the short term, the environmental impact within the framework of the existing campus needs to be reduced in ways that are available. In this respect, it is encouraging that the University is on track to reach its emission target by 2025. There is a challenge related to the inefficient use of premises in relation to occupancy. Furthermore, the student union has several ideas regarding the existing campus that the University needs to follow up and collaborate with the student union on.

In the medium term, there are great opportunities to take advantage of in connection with the planning and establishment of a campus close to the city centre. At its workshop, university management emphasized that the upcoming plan for sustainability and environmental work needs to revolve around the opportunities that construction of a new campus close to the city centre provides. For example, the new campus creates opportunities to influence future energy needs and emissions. The project managers for the University's city campus should therefore be consulted when the next plan is being developed.

Part 3. Outcomes

Our work with the surrounding community – through education, research and collaboration – is likely to have a positive environmental impact.

The University's carbon dioxide emissions related to business travel in 2023 rose compared to 2022. However, emissions were 67 per cent lower per employee compared to the 2019 level, and the University thus has a good chance of reaching its set target by 2025.

Research

In the University's new research portal, Pure, publications can be classified according to which of the 17 global sustainability goals the publication is linked to (if any). Of the University's publications, 43 per cent were linked to one of the global goals for sustainable development in 2022.

Regarding research, a national synthesis project on ecological compensation in connection with land development was completed in 2023. The project was funded by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and led by researchers

at Kristianstad University. The work was completed with a report that provides Swedish authorities knowledge support for continued work with this policy instrument. Another contribution to work with Swedish environmental objectives was publication of a book on application of the concept of ecosystem services in spatial planning: Planning for Ecosystem Services.

The EU-funded research project Klimatsmarta Näsby ended in 2023. The project aimed to reduce the climate footprint from construction processes and transport by involving those who live and work in the area. The results of the research are applicable to other cities and areas.

Education

Sustainability has grown to become a cornerstone of all academic programmes at Kristianstad University. Awareness of the environmental impact our actions have on the natural world around us have long been part and parcel of a Kristianstad University education. More recently, and as a result of a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact, the institutional understanding of sustainable development has broadened to include challenges and opportunities beyond the natural environment. Issues range from labour rights and anti-corruption at the faculty of Economics, food security and AI (amongst many more) at the faculty of Science, sustainability centred pedagogy and learning at the faculty of Education, and public health at the faculty of Health. These issues are tied together by applying a sustainability track – a way of mainstreaming sustainability thinking into all programs - that faculties develop independently but which all relate to the University's sustainability strategy. Here are some examples:

The Faculty of Health Sciences has offered the summer course Health and Sustainability. The same faculty also offers a second-cycle course called Perspectives on Quality Development and Sustainability in Health and Medical Care.

At the Faculty of Natural Sciences, a survey of the sustainability profiles of degree programmes has been carried out. The aim was to identify experiences and support needs as well as to create a basis for strengthening the programmes' sustainability profiles. In teacher education, elements of Agenda 2030 have been integrated into all programmes.

The University has also developed a Master's programme in Marketing for Sustainable Business. The programme is designed to provide students with skills in both marketing and sustainable business practice.

Campus development

The University can make a major contribution to society's broader environmental and sustainability-related efforts by relocating to energy-efficient premises close



to a hub for local and regional traffic. In the near-term, the University will consolidate its operations into fewer buildings by reducing the number of classrooms and workrooms. This will free up space and create a more energy-efficient campus.

Outreach

In 2022, the University held an event called Sustainability Day. Due to the pandemic, the event was completed digitally. The partner organizations that enable Work Integrated Learning (WIL), an in-depth methodology in the Master's programme in business administration, were all invited. The pedagogy and driving force of the WIL project is that students in collaboration with organizations will learn about and become familiar with the global goals for sustainable development.