



კავკასიის უნივერსიტეტი
CAUCASUS UNIVERSITY

Caucasus University

Sustainable Development Goals Report

2024





PREAMBLE

Caucasus University (CU) has embraced sustainability as a core value to enhance its mission in education, research, and community engagement. The university is committed to fostering inclusive and responsible growth, ensuring that its initiatives contribute to the well-being of its academic community and society at large.

As part of this vision, CU places special emphasis on equity, inclusion, and social responsibility, addressing the needs of its most vulnerable members while ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff benefit from a supportive and sustainable environment.

Research and education remain at the heart of CU's sustainability efforts, ensuring that knowledge serves as a driver of positive change. More recently, the university has increased its focus on sustainable infrastructure, green campus initiatives, and student-centered services, reinforcing its dedication to long-term sustainability.

Building on best practices across its 11 schools, CU has taken steps to map and consolidate its sustainability-related activities. The university has actively engaged in SDG-aligned research projects, policy development, and community outreach, making significant contributions to local and global sustainability efforts.

To further institutionalize sustainability, CU has initiated a strategic approach to align with international sustainability frameworks and strengthen its presence in global rankings. Key milestones include the publication of sustainability-related policies, the organization of annual sustainability-focused events, and participation in regional and international sustainability networks.

With a growing emphasis on collaboration, CU seeks to expand its partnerships with global sustainability organizations and play a leading role in regional SDG implementation. Through education, research, and community-driven initiatives, CU is committed to shaping a more sustainable and resilient future for Georgia and beyond.

Caucasus University (CU) is committed to measuring and improving its contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To strengthen its global positioning and track its sustainability progress, CU has applied for assessment in the **Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings**.

By applying for THE Impact Rankings, CU demonstrates its commitment to sustainable education, research, and innovation. This assessment will provide valuable insights into CU's strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that the university continues to align with global sustainability standards while making a positive impact on local and international communities.

Caucasus University (CU) actively engages in sustainability-focused networks, both regionally and internationally, reaffirming its commitment to sustainable development through knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and the adoption of best practices.

CU is a member of the **United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)¹ and PRME² (The Principles for Responsible Management Education)** joining a network of over 1,600 higher education institutions from more than 152 countries that work closely with the United Nations to promote global priorities such as peace, human rights, and sustainable development.

CU's membership in abovementioned networks marks a significant step forward in aligning its academic, research, and social engagement strategies with global sustainable development efforts. Through this network, CU will continue to foster innovation, inclusivity, and impactful research, reinforcing its mission to drive meaningful change at local, regional, and international levels.

In 2024, Caucasus University established an SDG-Oriented Impact Ranking Working Group as part of its strategic commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This initiative reflects CU's ongoing efforts to institutionalize sustainability and maximize its societal impact through structured, cross-sectoral engagement.

The identification of the group's four key strategic directions was carried out using the internationally recognized STARS³ (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) methodology. These four priority areas form the foundation for CU's SDG-related efforts:

1. Integration of SDGs into education - Embedding sustainability principles and SDG-related content into academic programs across all faculties.
2. Support for research and innovation aligned with the SDGs - Encouraging research initiatives that address sustainability challenges and generate innovative, impactful solutions.
3. Sustainable campus development - Improving campus operations through environmentally responsible and resource-efficient practices.
4. Enhancing student and community engagement - strengthening the active involvement of students and community stakeholders in sustainability initiatives and civic engagement.

To ensure focused implementation, the working group was divided into four subgroups, each aligned with one of the strategic directions. Each subgroup includes relevant stakeholders to promote ownership and impact:

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/academicimpact>

² <https://www.unprme.org/search/>

³ <https://stars.aashe.org/>

- Education Integration Subgroup: Comprised of Vice Presidents and faculty Deans.
- Research and Innovation Subgroup: Includes Vice Presidents, Heads of the Research Centers, Deans and representatives from the Research Facilitation Department.
- Campus Sustainability Subgroup: Formed by Vice Presidents and operational department heads responsible for institutional infrastructure and services.
- Student and Community Engagement Subgroup: Consists of student representatives alongside community outreach officers, ensuring youth perspectives and grassroots involvement are central to CU's sustainability agenda.

A comprehensive Vision Document for Sustainable Development was drafted in 2024, outlining the strategic directions and long-term goals of this initiative. The document is scheduled for formal approval in 2025 and will serve as the university's roadmap for achieving SDG impact across education, research, operations, and civic engagement.

CU MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES



Mission: Caucasus University’s mission is to prepare morally grounded, highly qualified professionals for both local and international markets. Through research-oriented teaching, we equip individuals with the skills and ethical values necessary to advance democratic ideals, fostering a knowledgeable, capable society that is responsive to modern educational demands.

Vision: We aspire to be a globally recognized institution where all stakeholders can realize their fullest potential. Caucasus University envisions an educational environment that promotes growth, inclusivity, and international outreach, upholding ethical standards and academic excellence.

Values: Guided by our values, we contribute to the SDGs by fostering a Spirit of Innovation, Inclusion and Diversity, Academic Freedom, and Community Proximity, along with a deep commitment to Caring for the Country’s Development. Our strategic priorities underpin our approach to sustainable development:

1. Intensification of Scientific Research to enhance relevance and innovation.
2. Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning Quality to uphold academic excellence.
3. Internationalization to foster cross-border collaboration and global competency.

These directions guide our contributions to the SDGs and serve as the foundation for the achievements highlighted in this report. Our guiding slogan, “Studium Pretium Libertatis” – Knowledge is the Foundation of Freedom – captures our commitment to advancing a more sustainable, equitable world.

SUSTAINABILITY IN RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND THIRD MISSION

Caucasus University strategically integrates education, research, and third mission activities to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In education, CU has embedded sustainability into curricula across its 11 schools, offering over 200 courses aligned with the SDGs, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). In research, CU's scholarly output continues to grow, with numerous publications and funded projects directly addressing SDGs such as health (SDG 3), peace and justice (SDG 16), and partnerships (SDG 17). Research is informed by global challenges and contributes to policy development, innovation, and societal impact. CU's third mission further extends this engagement, with over 300 activities annually supporting lifelong learning, knowledge transfer, and social inclusion. These initiatives include entrepreneurship programs, cultural preservation, community outreach, and student empowerment. Startup Pre-Acceleration Program CUnicorn⁴ and PRODIGE⁵ foster innovation and digital transformation, while collaborations such as the SDG Innovation Accelerator and ENRICHER HUBS⁶ enhance regional development and green tourism. Through this comprehensive approach, CU reinforces its mission to foster responsible leadership, democratic values, and sustainable development at local, regional, and global levels.

RESEARCH

Caucasus University (CU) is committed to producing high-quality research, scholarly publications, and academic resources that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2024, CU's faculty members and researchers published numerous peer-reviewed articles, books, and research projects that address various sustainability challenges. These contributions play a crucial role in advancing knowledge, influencing policy, and fostering sustainable development in Georgia and beyond.

The graphic shows the number of mentions of each SDG in the 73 publications in 2024, meaning in some cases one publication may address more than one SDG. The research delivers on all SDGs, with SDG 3, SDG4, SDG16 and SDG 17 at the top. A significant number of authors address the different SDG, namely SDG 3 (19), SDG 4 (20), SDG 16 (15) and SDG 17 (12). The publications consider a wide range of research interests from healthcare, education, economic development to

⁴ <https://cu.edu.ge/en/innovation-and-enterpreneurship-center/startup-pre-acceleration-program-cunicorn>

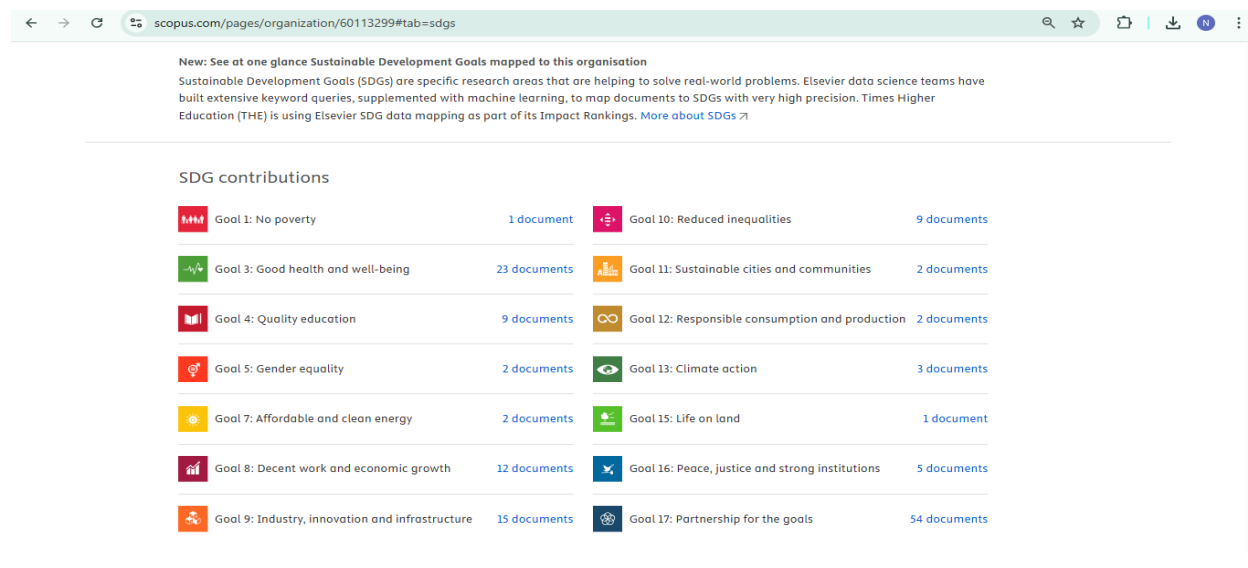
⁵ Promoting High-quality Digital Education in Georgia (PRODIGE) is to promote digital higher education in Georgia by implementing relevant legislative changes and strengthening the capacities of higher educational institutions.

⁶ The "Designing Green Tourism Concept through Learning" (ENRICHER hubs) project focuses on bridging the skill and competence gaps between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the labor market, with a specific emphasis on fostering sustainable tourism in Georgia and Moldova. This initiative aims to raise awareness and enhance the concept of green tourism services, aligning with sustainable tourism practices.

climate change. These topics highlight CU's broad engagement with sustainability, education, governance, and global challenges.



In alignment with its academic mission and societal responsibility, Caucasus University (CU) continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainable development through intensified scholarly activities. As evidenced by data extracted from the Scopus database for the year 2024 given below, CU's faculty have maintained and expanded their academic contributions across a wide range of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This commitment illustrates not only CU's research culture but also its dedication to addressing pressing global challenges through scholarship.



According to Scopus data, in 2023, Caucasus University (CU) had 175 academic publications with the involvement of 47 authors. As of 2024, the number of publications has increased to 206, and the number of contributing authors has risen to 54. This growth demonstrates CU's expanding research capacity and greater engagement of its academic staff in international scholarly output.

In terms of contributions to the SDGs, CU has shown noticeable progress compared to the previous year. The most significant increase is observed in Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals, where the number of publications has grown from 43 in 2023 to 54 in 2024, confirming the university's commitment to international cooperation and collaborative research.

Smaller but meaningful increases are also evident in the following areas:

- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, with an increase from 19 to 23 publications, demonstrating growing research attention to healthcare systems, mental well-being, and public health policy.
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, which saw a rise from 10 to 12 documents, indicating continued scholarly support for labor market reforms and sustainable economic models.
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, growing from 13 to 15 publications, highlights a focus on digital transformation, sustainable industry, and infrastructure development.
- Goal 4: Quality Education and Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities also experienced moderate increases, reinforcing CU's focus on inclusive and equitable education as well as social justice.

Several SDGs—such as Goals 1, 5, 7, and 15—show consistent contributions year over year, signaling a continued baseline of research interest.

Overall, the comparison illustrates CU's expanding impact in areas critical to Georgia's national agenda and the global SDG framework. The growth in research output not only enhances the university's academic reputation but also affirms its role as a proactive agent in the regional and global sustainability dialogue.

Some of the impactful contributions are listed below:

1. Verulava, T., Zorbenadze, R., (2024) "Funding hospitals with diagnosis groups: world experience and recommendations for Georgia". Rustaveli National Science Foundation. Tbilisi
2. Eteria, E., (2024). Georgia-European Union Economic Relations in 2014-2023: From Association to Candidate Status, Journal "Economist", Volume XX, #1
3. Machabeli, G., (2024) "UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM): Leadership for Inclusive Education- Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Background paper: Leadership for Inclusive Education in Georgia"
4. Tskhadaia, G., (2024) "Toward a Universalistic Theory of Political Obligation – A Post-Structuralist Approach." Philosophy & Social Criticism.
5. Arziani G., Japaridze M., Alelishvili N., 2024, The impact of infrastructure and human resources in early childhood and preschool education institutions on the provision of quality education, Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Youth in collaboration with UNICEF

6. Kakhidze, Sh., (2024). Access of girls and boys, women and men to services offered by municipal non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) entities operating in the fields of culture, sports, and education in Telavi Municipality. USAID, Egeria Solutions.
7. Kiladze M., Luarsabishvili, V., (2024) "The Legitimization of Violence. Individual, Crowd, and Authority during the Covid-19 Pandemic" Peter Lang Publishing (also aligns with SDG 3)
8. Tarasashvili, M., (2024, October 16). Navigating the complexities of post-conflict reconstruction: Strategies and challenges in aid for Ukraine's rehabilitation. The 32nd NISPACEe Annual Conference 2024 e-proceedings: Public Administration in post-conflict reconstruction. ISBN: 978-80-99939-10-4
9. Chelidze, G., (2024) How to Teach about the European Union (Teaching Manual for Lecturers) (also aligns with SDG 4)
10. Kakhidze, Sh., (2024). Gender analysis of the 2024 municipal budget: Dmanisi Municipal Gender Equality Council. USAID, Egeria Solutions
11. Bregadze, G., (2024), "Climate Change Impacts on the Tourism Industry in Georgia", Globalization and Business
12. Pirtskhelani, N., (2024, October 3-4). Sustainable energy development – Georgia's new security challenge in the era of globalization. Paper presented at the 9th Annual International Scientific Conference "Science for Sustainable Development - 2024", Caucasus University, School of Governance, Tbilisi, Georgia
13. Akobia, E., & Tvalavadze, R. (2024, May). The role of external allies in the public administration performance post-conflict: The comparative case of Armenia and Georgia. 32nd NISPACEe Annual Conference, Tbilisi, Georgia
14. Tskhadaia, G., (2024) "A Liberal Proposal to Justify State Authority." Analiza i Egzystencja 66,10.18276/aie.2024.66-01
15. Tarasashvili, M., (2024, May 9). New era of uncertainties: How US foreign aid works in times of war. East-West Studies Journal, N13, 2023/2024

SDG-ALIGNED RESEARCH PROJECTS

The following research initiatives, supported by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia and other academic platforms, reflect the institution's growing commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These projects address critical themes such as health, environmental sustainability, gender equality, peacebuilding, and corporate responsibility, demonstrating interdisciplinary approaches and societal impact.

responsibility, demonstrating interdisciplinary approaches and societal impact.

1. Rcheulishvili K., "The research project (2023-2025) 'Palliative Care Practice in Georgia: At the Intersection of Sociocultural, Theological, and Natural Science Perspectives' (YS-23-900), which won in the Young Scientists Grant Competition of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia."
2. Khutsishvili T., Print and Online Catalogue of Georgian Cultural Monuments in the Historical Regions of Turkey - Speri, Baiburt, and Lazeti. HE-18-1109. Project Funded by the Shota Rustaveli Scientific Foundation, 2021-2025 (also aligns with SDG 15 and SDG 17)

3. Pirveli E., “Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability in Georgian Corporate Sector’s High Echelons” (FR-24-1868), Time: 04.2024 – 04.2027, Basic State Research Grant 2024, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation., (also aligns with SDG 16)
4. Pirveli E., “Corporate Diversity Reporting in Emerging Georgia: A Text Mining Approach Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic” (FR-21-1248) Time: 03.2022 – 03.2025 Basic State Research Grant 2021, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation (also aligns with SDG 8)
5. Pirveli E., “Environmental, Social and Governance Indicators of Sustainability Reporting: An Emerging Country” (FR-22-4093), Time: 03.2023 – 03.2026 Basic State Research Grant 2022, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation, Principal Investigator
6. Pirveli E., “CSR Disclosure, Earnings Management and Corporate Governance: A Georgian Perspective” (FR-23-5672) Time: 12.2023 – 12.2026, Basic State Research Grant 2023, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation, Principal Investigator
7. Popiashvili N., "Resilient Women and Youth for Peace and Dialogue" - Trainer (2024-25)

EDUCATION

Caucasus University (CU) has undertaken a significant initiative to align the university's academic offerings with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To achieve this, the department developed a robust methodology based on The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System.

STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework designed specifically for colleges and universities to systematically measure and evaluate their sustainability performance across various domains, including academics, operations, and community engagement. This framework enables institutions to track their sustainability progress comprehensively, fostering accountability and continuous improvement.

Recognizing the importance of integrating sustainability into higher education curricula, the Strategic Development Department adapted the STARS framework to create a structured approach for identifying SDG-related courses within CU. As part of this initiative, a detailed Google spreadsheet was developed and distributed among the 11 schools within the university.

This spreadsheet served as a structured data collection tool, enabling faculty members and administrative staff to assess and categorize their respective courses in relation to sustainability.

Each school was tasked with completing the spreadsheet by evaluating their courses against sustainability criteria. Specifically, they were required to indicate whether a course was:

- Sustainability-focused – meaning that the course title or description must indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability, i.e. on the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems or a major sustainability challenge such as climate change, according to STARS.
- Sustainability-inclusive – meaning that the course title and description do not unequivocally indicate that focus, but it is evident from the course description or syllabus that it incorporates sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts in a prominent way.

For sustainability-inclusive courses, the schools were required to provide detailed explanations on how sustainability was integrated. This included specifying whether sustainability was incorporated through a dedicated module, embedded within specific topics, or introduced through activities designed to enhance students' understanding of sustainability-related challenges and solutions.

Upon completion of the data collection process, the results were compiled and analyzed. The findings revealed that CU offers a total of 206 sustainability-related courses, out of which:

- 17 courses were classified as sustainability-focused.
- 189 courses were categorized as sustainability-inclusive.

The visual below illustrates how individual sustainability-focused courses correspond to one or more of the 17 SDGs, reflecting a comprehensive institutional commitment to sustainable development.



Below are the details for the sustainability-focused courses offered across the seven schools at Caucasus University at the BA and MA levels, highlighting how each program aligns with various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These programs are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to address global sustainability challenges in their respective fields.

At the undergraduate level, Caucasus University demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to sustainable development, integrating a wide array of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curricula of its seven schools. A detailed review reveals that SDG13 (Climate Action) is the most frequently addressed goal, appearing in the programs of the following schools: Caucasus School of Business (CSB), Caucasus School of Economics (CSE), Caucasus School of Governance (CSG), Caucasus School of Media (CSM), and Caucasus Tourism School (CTS). This reflects a university-wide emphasis on environmental responsibility, climate resilience, and education aimed at addressing the global climate crisis. Examples include *Media and Environment* (CSM), *Green Politics and Sustainable Development* (CSG), *Sustainable Tourism Development* (CTS), *Circular Economy* (CSE), and both *BA in Business Administration – Responsible Management* and *Joint BA Programme with Rennes School of Business* (CSB).

SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) follows closely, featured in the curricula of four schools: CSB, CSE, CSM, and the Joint BA program in CSB with Rennes School of Business. Courses aligned with this goal focus on sustainable resource use, waste reduction, and the promotion of circular economic principles, preparing students to adopt environmentally conscious practices in diverse professional fields. Relevant courses include *Circular Economy* (CSE), *Digital*

Technologies and Environment (CSM), BA in Business Administration – Responsible Management concentration and Joint BA Programme with Rennes School of Business (CSB).

SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) is also prominently integrated, particularly within CSA, CSB (through the Joint BA program), and CSE, where the emphasis lies in sustainable urban planning, architectural resilience, and inclusive design. This is addressed through *Sustainable Architecture 1–4 (CSA)*, *Joint BA Programme with Rennes School of Business (CSB)*, and *Circular Economy (CSE)*.

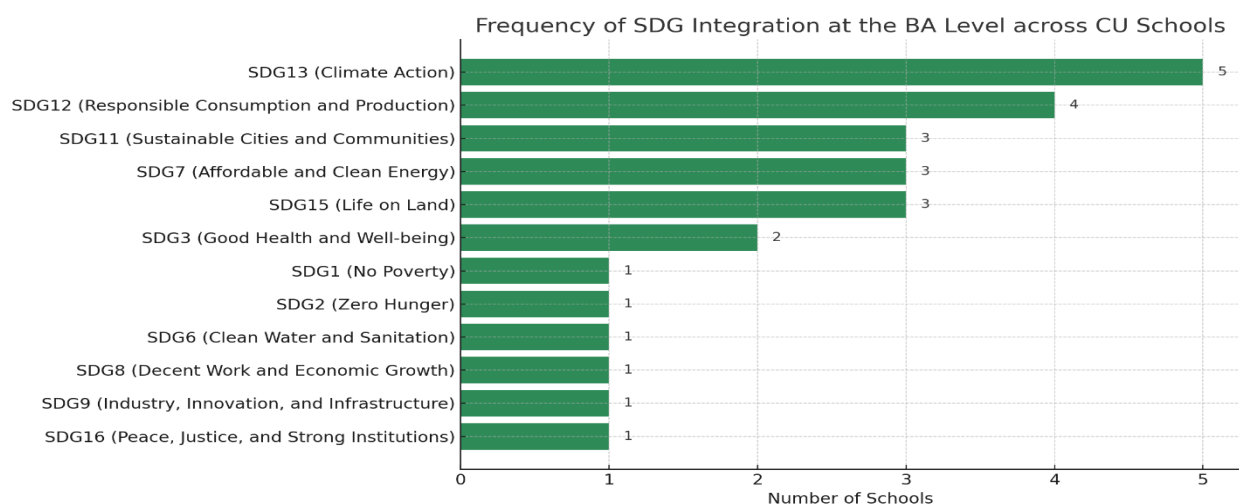
SDG7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) appears in three schools—CSB, CSG, and indirectly within the Economics curriculum at CSE—demonstrating the university’s focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable technological integration. Courses addressing this goal include *BA in Business Administration – Responsible Management concentration (CSB)*, *Green Politics and Sustainable Development (CSG)*, and *Circular Economy (CSE)*.

SDG3 (Good Health and Well-being) is represented in the Joint BA program in CSB and in CTS’s Agrotourism program, indicating a growing awareness of the intersection between health, tourism, and sustainable development. These are taught through *Agrotourism (CTS)* and *Joint BA Programme with Rennes School of Business (CSB)*.

SDG15 (Life on Land) is addressed in CSE, CTS, and CSM, focusing on ecosystem preservation, biodiversity, and the sustainable management of terrestrial resources. Corresponding courses include *Circular Economy (CSE)*, *Ecotourism (CTS)*, and *BA in Business Administration – Responsible Management concentration (CSB)*.

Several other SDGs are addressed with more targeted integration. For instance, SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) are each included in CSB’s Business Administration program (*BA in Business Administration – Responsible Management concentration*), highlighting ethical governance, inclusive growth, and sustainable business innovation. Additionally, SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) is covered in CSE's *Circular Economy* course.

This widespread and strategic alignment illustrates Caucasus University’s commitment to equipping its students with the interdisciplinary knowledge and practical tools needed to address sustainability challenges and contribute to a more equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable future.



At the master's level, Caucasus University continues to demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to sustainability by embedding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across various graduate programs. A detailed analysis of the provided data reveals a rich integration of SDGs, particularly those related to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

SDG13 (Climate Action) is the most prominently featured SDG across all master's programs, appearing in five distinct programs: the *Dual MBA (Sustainability Transition in International Business)*, *Master's in Economics (Economics of Climate Change)*, and all three tracks of the *CES Integrated Bachelor's-Master's Program for Primary Education Teachers (Grades I–VI)*. This highlights the university's emphasis on equipping students with the knowledge and leadership to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) is addressed in three programs—the *Dual MBA (Sustainability Transition in International Business)*, the *Master's in Economics (Economics of Climate Change)*, and one of the *CES education tracks ("Our Georgia")*—signaling an institutional focus on sustainable resource use and environmental accountability.

SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) is featured in three programs—the *Dual MBA (Sustainability Transition in International Business)*, *Master's in Economics (Economics of Climate Change)*, and *CES teacher training tracks*—reflecting CU's engagement with sustainable water management and sanitation education.

SDG7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) is integrated into two programs—the *Dual MBA (Sustainability Transition in International Business)* and *Master's in Economics (Economics of Climate Change)*—demonstrating CU's emphasis on the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency in graduate education.

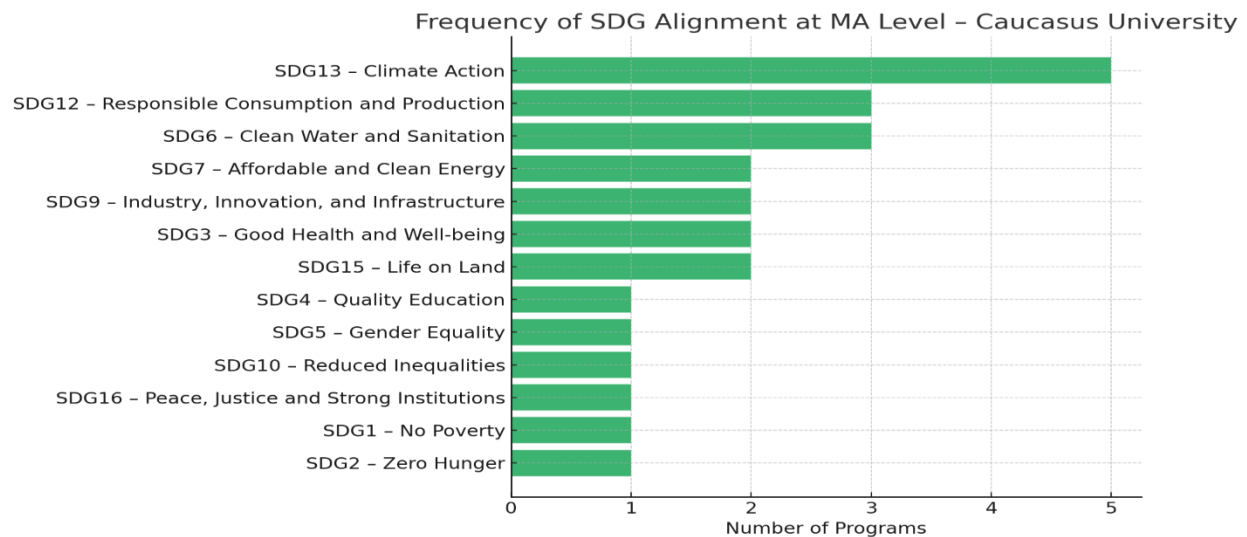
SDG9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) is aligned with two programs—the *Dual MBA (Sustainability Transition in International Business)* and the *Innovation Management* program—underscoring CU's dedication to sustainable economic growth through innovation and infrastructure development.

SDG3 (Good Health and Well-being) appears in two programs within *CES (Conflict Management and Non-Violent Environment and The Individual and Society)*, showcasing a concern for health-related aspects of sustainability, especially within educational and social development contexts.

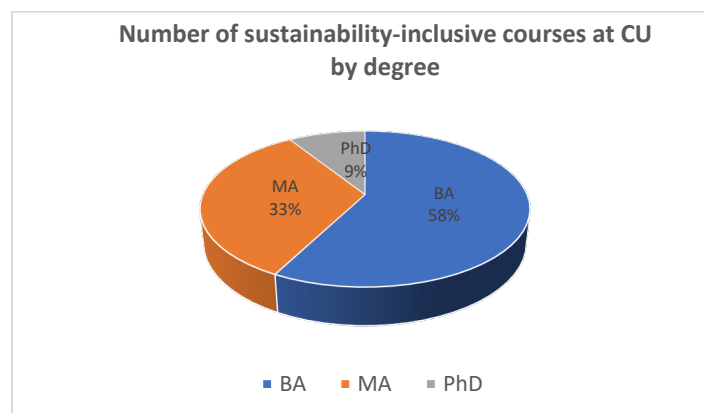
SDG15 (Life on Land) is included in the *Master's in Economics (Economics of Climate Change)* and in the *CES track "Our Georgia"*, indicating awareness of biodiversity, ecosystem preservation, and land conservation.

SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG5 (Gender Equality), SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) each appear in one *CES* program (*The Individual and Society* for SDG4, SDG5, and SDG10, and *Our Georgia* for SDG16), highlighting their importance in the teacher training curriculum and broader social development themes.

SDG1 (No Poverty) and SDG2 (Zero Hunger) are uniquely aligned with the *Master's in Economics (Economics of Climate Change)*, underlining the intersection of climate change economics with poverty and food security challenges.



As mentioned above, the analysis identified 189 sustainability-inclusive courses which embed sustainability concepts into their curricula, equipping students with interdisciplinary knowledge and practical tools to address environmental, social, and economic challenges. The distribution of these courses is illustrated in the diagram below.



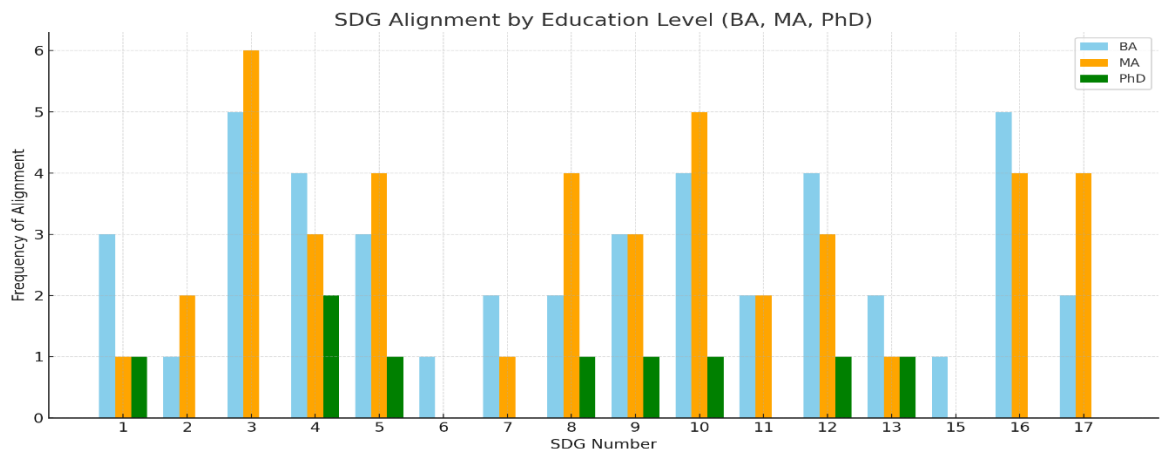
The bar graph below provides a comprehensive overview of how academic programs at bachelor's (BA), master's (MA), and doctoral (PhD) levels across the various schools of Caucasus University align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This visualization reflects the integration of sustainability into the curriculum, showing how different schools at each academic level contribute to the advancement of specific SDGs through their course offerings.

Bachelor's programs (BA) show the broadest range of SDG alignment. They are most closely associated with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). These alignments reflect the university's commitment to foundational education that promotes equity, justice, and responsible global citizenship.

Master's programs (MA) reflect deeper specialization and professional focus, with strong alignment to SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10, SDG 16, and SDG 17

(Partnerships for the Goals). These trends suggest an emphasis on building leadership capacity for addressing complex social challenges and fostering intersectoral collaboration.

Doctoral programs (PhD), though fewer in number, maintain strategic alignment with sustainability goals. They most frequently align with SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 12, indicating a focus on research-driven contributions to public health, education quality, social equity, and sustainable economic systems.



THIRD MISSION

University carried out a number of activities related to the Third Mission, which correspond to the three directions set by the university: continuous education (CE), knowledge and technology transfer (KTT), and social engagement (SE).

In the reporting year, the university planned and implemented 47 projects at the school level, showcasing the university's third mission: 23 activities related to continuous education (CE), 12 related to knowledge and technology transfer (KTT), and 12 ongoing

Continuous Education (CE)

Trainings:

- "Interior Design"
- "Logistics and Supply Chain" – SOCAR Georgia Gas
- "Occupational Safety" – Ministry of Defense
- "Export Management" (Batumi, Zugdidi, Tbilisi)
- "Infection Control" for Dental Clinics – Batumi
- "Medical Methodological Training-Seminar"
- "Mini MBA Course" – BOG

projects focused on societal engagement (SE). These data were obtained from the strategic plan monitoring system. During the reporting year, other structural units, departments, and

offices of the university also planned and implemented 301 projects, which represent the university's third mission: 2 activities related to continuous education (CE), 42 related to knowledge and technology transfer (KTT), and 257 ongoing projects focused on social engagement (SE). These data were obtained from the 2023-2024 annual reports.

The strategy monitoring and reporting system allows us to assess the activities implemented within a particular strategic objective, including comparing the baseline indicator, target indicator, and

Knowledge and Technology Transfer (KTT)

- In Akhaltsikhe, at the Samtskhe-Javakheti State University, as part of the project "Entrepreneurial Education, Path to Innovation, Equality, and Quality EPIIC (MES-CIF-1-22)," training on the 3M strategy development was conducted, and the Third Mission policy document, strategy, and action plan of Akhaltsikhe University were prepared;
- Within the same project, an Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center was established at NJSU, based on CU's experience and structure. Curricula were revised and updated to enhance entrepreneurial and innovation mindsets across programs. Entrepreneurship was added to the curricula as a separate course. A pre-acceleration program curriculum was developed, and an innovation bootcamp for NJSU-CU students was held with the engagement of George Washington University.
- A series of workshops on "Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Thinking and Skills" was held at six Technology Parks across various regions of Georgia, with support from the Innovation and Technology Agency.
- Visits were conducted to six technology parks in Georgia (Innovation and Technology Agency), and six workshops on the topic "Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Thinking and Skills" were held;
- Four training sessions on "The University's Third Mission – Challenges and Perspectives" were conducted for students, academic staff, administrative staff, and external stakeholders.

Societal Engagement (SE)

- Assistance to a dog shelter;
- Full scholarships for students from occupied territories;
- Full scholarships for students from ethnic minority groups;
- Two-month scholarships for three students from Abkhazia (May and June);
- The library hosted a summer school, focusing on the theme “The European Union Against Disinformation”;
- A meeting was held about NATO Research Center;
- Book/journal presentation;
- A workshop for prospective students.

results. This helps us identify areas where we need to plan and implement more activities. Based on the given table, it is evident that there has been growth in 80% of the activities.

In parallel, the Strategic Development Department at Caucasus University developed a questionnaire, which was provided to the schools. This questionnaire was then distributed to the university’s academic and invited staff to collect information about the activities they individually implemented and to determine the connection of these activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the framework of the Third Mission. As a result of the feedback received, 10 projects were identified:

1. European Union for Peace, Prosperity and Security (EU-PPS)
2. Commentary on the Juvenile Justice Code
3. Enhancing Public Administration Degree Programs (BA, MA) at Caucasus School of Governance
4. Dissemination of knowledge about the rights of the child in schools
5. I love Georgian - my state language
6. Criminal justice of tourism
7. The Jean Monnet Center of Excellence for EU Policy Transposition (EUPOLTRANS)
8. Psycho-social rehabilitation and integration
9. Research ethics and integrity
10. Jean Monnet Research Module. European Commission. Teaching European Values and Ideologies

While ensuring quality education, the university's activities are closely linked to contributing to the development of society, as evidenced by the activities carried out and planned within the university, which are closely aligned with the university’s values. Each activity, whether carried out at the level of schools, departments, or offices, embodies the university's innovative spirit, academic freedom, proximity to both local and international communities, diversity, commitment to the country's development, respect for the country’s history and culture, and the dissemination and realization of national values.

Caucasus University’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center has launched the **C Unicorn Pre-Acceleration Program: *Fostering Innovation for Sustainable Development*** to nurture early-stage technology startups and foster an entrepreneurial culture within the university ecosystem. Held once per semester in a 10-week hybrid format, the program is open to CU students, alumni, and staff, with a significant proportion of participants coming from the Caucasus School of Business (CSB).

The program delivers a comprehensive curriculum through thematic sessions, personalized mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to co-working spaces. It culminates in a Demo

Day, where teams present their ventures to a jury panel for recognition, prizes, and potential investment opportunities. Participants receive training in areas such as business modeling, marketing, finance, product development, and pitching.



Mentors, including CSB faculty, play a central role in shaping each venture by offering expertise in idea validation, market research, branding, financial planning, and fundraising. So far, the program has catalyzed the launch of **32 startup projects**, many of which continue to receive mentorship and support.

Startup Highlights

- BioNova – Converts biomass into bioenergy (biogas and electricity), addressing energy access issues.
SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 13 (Climate Action)
- Rez – A digital reservation and data analytics tool for restaurants, enhancing operational efficiency.
SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)
- Heri – A ride-sharing app focused on passenger safety and simplified driver operations.
SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)
- PitchPals – A matchmaking platform for sports tournaments and players, promoting active lifestyles.
SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)
- Beezy – A digital ecosystem for the HoReCa sector, integrating services like cashless tipping and AI tools.
SDG 9, SDG 8
- IMAGINE - XR – An XR platform enabling immersive interior design experiences.
SDG 9 (Innovation), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)
- CulTourist – Connects tourists with local guides, fostering cultural exchange and employment.
SDG 8 (Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)
- Econshop – A platform offering pricing and discount comparisons, promoting consumer awareness.
SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption)
- Eventsmate – Simplifies the process of connecting vendors and event organizers.
SDG 8 (Economic Growth)
- Life Kit – Helps newcomers integrate into foreign communities by linking them with essential services.
SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)
- RevUp – A digital platform connecting users with reliable auto services.
SDG 9 (Industry), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)



By continuing to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable business models, the CUnicorn program exemplifies how academic institutions can drive societal impact through startup ecosystems aligned with global development goals.

On October 3–4, 2024, Caucasus University hosted its IX Annual International Scientific Conference, featuring a dedicated panel on ***“Innovative Approaches to Advancing Sustainable Development: Bridging Science and Practice.”*** The panel, attended by over 50 participants,



focused on several SDGs (SDGs 3, 4, 8, 9, and 16) through interdisciplinary discussions on education, health, innovation, green finance, and sustainable energy.

Topics included trauma-informed learning for vulnerable populations, student attitudes toward sustainability, the role of renewable energy in development, and the intersection of healthcare and technology. The second day highlighted sustainable

tourism, environmental awareness, architecture, and corporate sustainability in Georgia.

The conference fostered cross-sector dialogue, emphasizing holistic strategies to tackle complex sustainability challenges.



Caucasus University hosted its second annual international conference, ***“Addressing Third Mission in Universities: Local and Global,”*** on November 14-15, 2024. This event continued the best practices introduced through the European Commission-funded institutional development project "Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the Third Mission in Georgian Universities" (SQUARE), ensuring the sustainability of the project's outcomes. The conference focused on strengthening the third mission of universities—

engaging with society to promote social development, innovation, and sustainability.

The conference brought together representatives from over ten countries, including universities, government bodies, donor organizations, businesses, and civil society. Keynote speaker Thomas Jorgensen from the European University Association discussed the role of universities in fostering innovation and introduced the concept of "University without Walls 2030." Discussions centered around university-social engagement, policies for the third mission, university-industry collaboration, and the role of universities in achieving the SDGs.

The event also featured a seminar for doctoral students titled "Shaping the Future: Doctoral Education and Citizen Science in Georgia." Participants were introduced to key findings from the project "Internationalization of Doctoral Education in Georgian Higher Education Institutions," funded by the Competitive Innovations Fund (CIF). The seminar emphasized the connection between doctoral education and the third mission of universities.

This conference continues Caucasus University's commitment to enhancing its societal impact and fostering collaboration between academic institutions, communities, and industry.



Caucasus University's Erasmus+ CBHE-winning project, **Promoting High-quality Digital Education in Georgia (PRODIGE)**, aims to enhance digital higher education through legislative reform and institutional capacity building. The project focuses on three pillars: supporting national policy reform, developing quality assurance mechanisms for digital education, and strengthening universities' digital teaching capabilities.

Activities include strategic planning, training programs, study tours, and the development of digital education resources aligned with European standards. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and NCEQE, the initiative engages 10 Georgian universities and partners from Belgium, Estonia, Spain, and Croatia. PRODIGE supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by improving access to inclusive, high-quality digital learning across Georgia.



The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center in collaboration with the UN Global Compact Network Georgia, has implemented various activities and achieved significant results under the University's Third Mission in the SDG Acceleration Program for Young Professionals: **Empowering Young Innovators: Caucasus University's Leadership in the SDG Innovation Accelerator Program**. The participating companies include Grant Thornton Georgia, EY Georgia, the Georgian Farmers' Association, Crystal, and Tegeta. The program organized four camps with facilitators, involving 22 participants and two mentors from Caucasus University.

Additionally, as part of the CIF project, five video lessons were created as training resources. These lessons covered the basic principles of startups, comparing traditional businesses to startups, the process of startup idea generation, validation, and refinement with a focus on problem-oriented products, branding and design including market research and analysis, how to raise capital and what investors are looking for, and how to develop a business plan and pitch a startup idea.

Since 2024, Caucasus University has been actively engaged in the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project "Designing Green Tourism Concepts Through Learning" (ENRICHER HUBS). Coordinated by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), the project brings together nine universities from Finland, Austria, Italy, Georgia, and Moldova to address skills gaps between higher education and the labor market in the field of sustainable tourism.



The project's main objective is to support the twin transition—green and digital—to boost the recovery of the European tourism sector by identifying skill mismatches between higher education institutions (HEIs) and the labor market in Georgia and Moldova. This will be achieved by enhancing HEI capacities in green tourism service development and experiential learning, better aligning graduate competencies with industry needs.

Specific project objectives include:

- Reducing the mismatch between labor market demands and the competencies of future HEI graduates in areas such as sustainability and green tourism service design.
- Introducing experiential learning approaches—such as innovative pedagogies and service design tools—to strengthen students' workplace-readiness.
- Enhancing collaboration between HEIs and tourism businesses for the co-creation of green tourism service concepts.

Key Activities and Events in 2024

In 2024, several project activities were carried out. Notably, the Kick-off Meeting was held at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), bringing together partner universities from Georgia, Moldova, Italy, and Austria. Caucasus University was represented by leadership and faculty from the School of Tourism. The meeting included presentations, strategy sessions, and visits to sustainable tourism sites such as the UNESCO-listed Suomenlinna Fortress, setting the foundation for future collaboration on green tourism development and experiential learning.

The project also delivered a series of four “Train the Trainers” (ToT) weeks, aimed at strengthening capacity in sustainable tourism and service design among university staff in Georgia and Moldova. Each university nominated three participants, with the same individuals attending all sessions, resulting in 18 participants per country.

The four-day training sessions combined lectures, workshops, and discussions and introduced participants to a range of theories, models, and tools in sustainability and service design. Two sessions were held online and two in person:

- ToT1: Sustainability Thinking (Kutaisi, Georgia)
- ToT2: Design Thinking (online)
- ToT3: Service Design in Action (Comrat, Moldova)
- ToT4: Business Thinking and Activities (online)

The ToT model aims to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to train others within their institutions, thus ensuring long-term impact through internal dissemination and institutional capacity-building.

The ENRICHER HUBS project contributes to SDGs by promoting sustainable tourism (SDG 8, 12, 13), enhancing education quality (SDG 4), fostering industry-academia collaboration (SDG

17), and supporting local economic growth through green innovation, skills development, and community outreach in Georgia and Moldova, aligning higher education with sustainability goals.

CU SUPPORTING CULTURAL AND SPORT LIFE

Caucasus University's cultural and sports initiatives contribute to SDGs by fostering well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), inclusion and diversity (SDG 10), and strong institutions (SDG 16). Through championships, language promotion, and international student integration, CU nurtures student engagement, intercultural dialogue, and active, healthy lifestyles in a supportive campus environment.

The Caucasus University Arm Wrestling Championship for CU students took place on February 26, 2024 in the university's conference hall. The event featured individual competitions for both male and female participants, with three weight categories: 60, 70, and 80+ kilograms. All participants underwent on-site weighing to determine their final weight. The competition was further divided into subcategories based on the right and left hand. Competitors arm-wrestled until one achieved two wins, and in the case of a tie, a third round was scheduled.



The Caucasus University Basketball Championship began on March 12, 2024, at the hall of the Basketball Club "Academy." The championship featured teams composed of both Georgian and international students. The final match took place on March 19, where the winning teams were announced. The winner of the championship received the 2024 CU Basketball Championship Transition Trophy, and cash prizes were awarded to the top three teams from Caucasus University.



On April 15, 2024, Caucasus University held the summary event of the "I Love Georgian - My State Language" project. The event featured speeches by notable guests, including Lithuanian Ambassador Andrius Kalindra and Swedish Ambassador Anna Lieberg, emphasizing the importance of the Georgian language. Prof. Mariam Manjgaladze discussed the university's vision to promote Georgian culture, and Professor Karina Vamling was honored with the "Supporter of the Georgian Language" award. Eter Tataraidze presented her new poetry

collection, and a documentary film, Say Hello to Tiflis, was screened. Certificates and prizes were awarded to students for their participation in various competitions, and the event concluded with a folk music performance by the university's folklore ensemble.



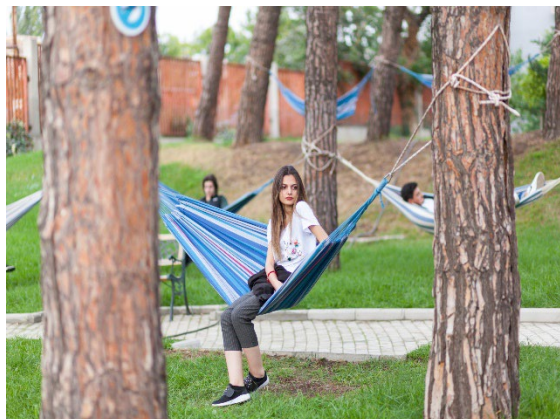
On June 24, 2024, Caucasus University welcomed its new international students with a special orientation event. The students were introduced to the university's academic programs, campus life, and support services, marking the beginning of their academic journey at CU.



Caucasus University's campus is equipped with one football field and essential sports facilities, including a table tennis table and an arm-wrestling table. The university supports student engagement in sports through dedicated basketball and volleyball clubs, providing necessary equipment such as basketballs and a volleyball net, available for student use. An annual basketball championship is organized, for which an external gymnasium is typically rented. The university also hosts an annual volleyball championship on its own court, organized in collaboration with the Volleyball Federation.



CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE ACTION AND BIODIVERSITY THROUGH CAMPUS GREENING



Caucasus University actively supports climate action and urban biodiversity through the purposeful landscaping of its campus, which hosts a diverse range of trees, shrubs, and vines known for their environmental benefits, including carbon dioxide (CO₂) absorption, air purification, and habitat creation.

Currently, the university yard includes large variety of species that contribute meaningfully to reducing the university's carbon footprint by capturing and storing atmospheric CO₂ throughout their life cycle.

In total, the greenery at CU absorbs approximately 3,214 kilograms of CO₂ annually.

Each plant plays a role based on its characteristics:

- Large trees such as oaks, spruce, poplar, and pine serve as major carbon sinks, with individual trees absorbing 20–50 kg of CO₂ annually as they mature.
- Medium-sized trees and shrubs like thuja, acacia, photinia, and pyracantha contribute additional carbon capture while enhancing the green aesthetics and ecological resilience of the space.
- Vines like ivy and wisteria contribute to vertical greening, improving microclimates and air quality on campus walls and structures.
- Flowering plants such as roses and crepe-myrtles support pollinator biodiversity while also modestly absorbing CO₂.

In addition to these efforts, campus renovations have been aligned with energy-efficiency and environmental standards:

- The renovation of the Batumi campus was funded in part by a co-financing resource from the EBRD's energy-efficiency project funding line. The project proposal, which included both the façade and engineering systems, was reviewed and approved due to its full compliance with energy-efficiency principles.
- Similarly, the Ortachala campus features energy-efficient glazing and a façade designed to minimize energy loss, further reducing the environmental impact of university facilities.

The university also implements sustainable operational practices:

- CU actively reduces paper consumption—all contracts with staff, lecturers, and students are fully digitized, minimizing the need for printed documents.
- In terms of paper recycling, the university collects approximately 1.5 tons of wastepaper and recycles it every three years.
- The university also invests in energy-efficient lighting, purchasing energy-saving bulbs at the start of each academic semester and replenishing stock as needed to ensure that lighting systems remain sustainable and efficient.

Overall, the strategic planting and maintenance of this diverse green infrastructure contribute directly to:

- Mitigating climate change impacts by sequestering carbon dioxide (SDG 13),
- Enhancing urban biodiversity and ecosystem services (SDG 15),
- Promoting a healthier, more sustainable urban environment for students, staff, and visitors (SDG 11).



The integration of diverse native and adaptive plant species not only beautifies the CU campus but also symbolizes the University's broader commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable development.



კავკასიის უნივერსიტეტი
CAUCASUS UNIVERSITY

(+995 32) 2 37 77 77 info@cu.edu.ge Paata Saakadze street №, Tbilisi 0102, Georgia