

# Sustainability Report

## 2024–2025





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1.1 Introduction

American University of Sharjah (AUS) is a proactive advocate for the pivotal role that higher education institutions play in championing sustainability and climate action through education, research and operations. In Academic Year 2024–2025, AUS upheld its commitment to sustainability by reinforcing its dedication to decarbonization and community engagement. This report outlines our progress, achievements and ongoing initiatives towards a more sustainable campus.

#1	1 <sup>st</sup>	95%	22%
university in the UAE for environmental sustainability	university in the UAE to receive AASHE STARS Rating	of all academic departments offer sustainability courses	of offered courses are sustainability-focused or inclusive
46%	3	1 <sup>st</sup>	35%
of students graduate from programs that require an understanding of sustainability	dedicated sustainability research centers	university in the UAE to publish a comprehensive Climate Action Plan	of faculty are engaged in sustainability research
	100%	100%	
	of academic departments conduct sustainability research	of students are served by a peer-to-peer sustainability outreach and education program	

1.  
Executive  
Summary

1.2 Key Highlights



**SDG 13:**  
**Climate Action**

Analysis of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions report and community engagement initiatives



**SDG 4:**  
**Quality Education**

An overview of how AUS is actively contributing to excellence in teaching, and extracurricular activities



**SDG 9:**  
**Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**

An overview of how AUS is actively promoting innovation and industry partnerships



**SDG 3:**  
**Good Health and Wellbeing**

A look at our initiatives that promote a healthy campus community



**SDG 17:**  
**Partnerships for the Goals**

A look at how AUS has fostered strong external partnerships

1.3 Future Outlook

Looking ahead, AUS remains committed to advancing sustainability at the university through ambitious goals and continuous improvement by focusing on four pillars:



**Climate**  
**SDG 13**

Climate Action



**Food**  
**SDG 2**

Zero Hunger



**Nature**  
**SDG 15**

Life on Land



**Health**  
**SDG 3**

Good Health and Well-Being





# 2.

## Messages from the Leadership





## 2.1 Chancellor's Foreword



“At AUS, sustainability is part of who we are.”

This year, I am proud to see our collective efforts being recognized with AUS ranking first in the **UAE for Environmental Sustainability** by the QS Sustainability Rankings (2025). This achievement reflects the incredible cross-institutional work being done across our campus—by our students, faculty and staff—to create a more sustainable future for all.

We are also proud to align our institutional efforts with the UAE's national sustainability vision, including the recently issued **Federal Law on the Reduction of Climate Change Effects**. In fact, AUS has long been committed to supporting the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategy through our own Climate Action Plan, guiding our holistic, university-wide approach to decarbonize across teaching, research and campus operations. From reducing campus emissions to advancing innovation in renewable energy, clean energy solutions and enhancing energy efficiency, we place climate action at the heart of what we do.

Since climate action and community engagement go hand in hand, the UAE's designation of this year as the **Year of Community** deeply resonates with us at AUS. We continue to engage our entire university community in advancing sustainability on campus. Our investment in student leadership through initiatives like the **EcoRep Program** and the **Green Living Challenge** in our residential halls is helping integrate sustainable practices into daily life and promote a more environmentally conscious campus culture.

Beyond our gates, we are also helping shape the national sustainability agenda. We have led the **Campus Carbon Neutrality Pillar** of the UAE Universities Climate Network and proudly represented higher education on the **UAE Alliance for Climate Action Advisory Committee**—ensuring our voice contributes meaningfully to shaping the country's net-zero future.

Internationally, we actively engage in global partnerships that reflect our values and amplify our impact. Through our leadership in **UNESCO's South-South Universities Cooperation Network**, we strengthen collaboration among institutions across the Global South, demonstrating the power of academic partnerships in advancing sustainable development. Similarly, our contributions to the **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Advisory Council** showcase the UAE's unique perspective and growing recognition of our role in informing the international dialogue on sustainability in higher education. These engagements speak to what AUS is capable of achieving on the world stage, and what we can contribute to create a more sustainable future for all.

With innovation at the heart of our sustainability journey, supported by our **research centers, endowed chairs** and **partnerships** with leading organizations like Beeah, SEWA and SNOC, we are committed to developing impactful solutions to complex environmental challenges.

Looking ahead, we are doubling down on our commitment to **nature-based solutions** as powerful responses to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We look forward to further engaging the AUS community through **citizen science and hands-on volunteering opportunities**.

I am excited for what we can accomplish in the year ahead as we continue building a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future—together.

Warm regards,

**Tod A. Laursen**  
Chancellor  
American University of Sharjah



## 2.2 Message from the Head of Sustainability

Sustainability has become a central topic in global dialogue for institutions across all industries and regions. At AUS, we recognize the importance of sustainability and its crucial role in securing the future well-being of our campus and our planet.

To achieve the broader institutional goals we have set for ourselves, we must prioritize sustainability. That’s why we are updating AUS’ sustainability strategy to better serve the communities on campus and beyond.

Currently, we are focusing on understanding and reducing our environmental footprint, supporting the health and well-being of our community and integrating sustainability more deeply into our academics and campus life.

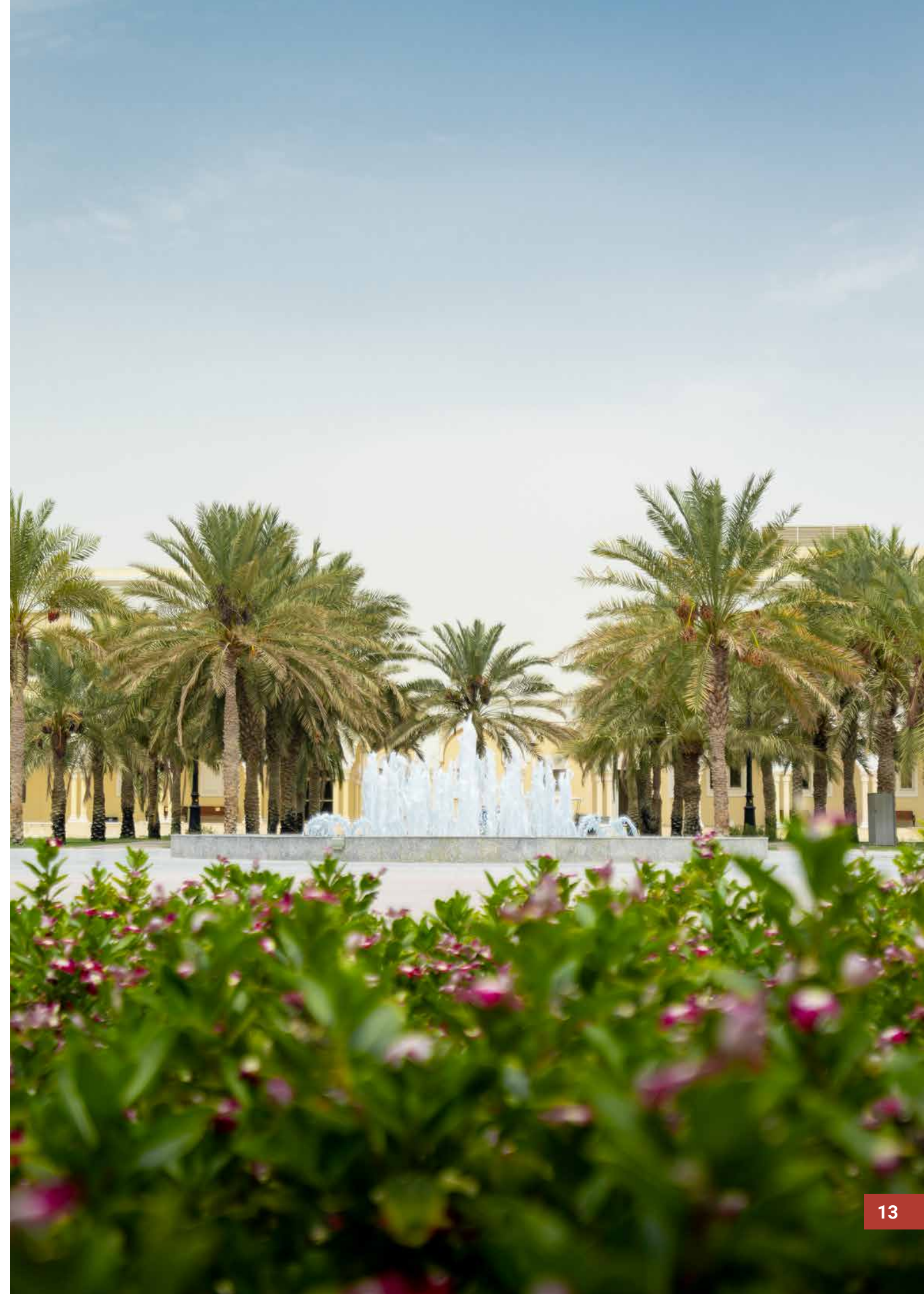
Our approach is both pragmatic and holistic—raising awareness, mobilizing our community and implementing practical solutions to our sustainability challenges. By aligning these elements, we drive progress towards our sustainability goals and share insights with the wider UAE and global sustainability communities.

Looking ahead, we aim to collaborate even more closely with the communities and stakeholders we serve to develop solutions that benefit others within the education sector and beyond. While I am conscious of the many challenges ahead, I am confident in our collective abilities as an AUS community to join hands and make meaningful progress towards a more sustainable AUS and beyond.

**Omar Al Nuaimi**

Head of Sustainability

American University of Sharjah





# 3.

## About Sustainability at AUS

### 3.1 Institutional Overview

AUS was founded in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah.

It is a comprehensive, independent, non-profit and coeducational institution of higher education renowned for its excellence in teaching, learning, research and creative work. It aspires to be globally recognized for its innovative contributions and positive impact on the Middle East region and beyond.

AUS follows the American model of higher education, integrating liberal arts and professional programs while grounding its vision in the context of UAE culture. The university prepares engaged and effective members of society who excel in their fields, communicate clearly, think critically, solve problems creatively and care about the future of the planet and the next generations.

Sustainability is a core component of AUS' vision and mission, embedded in the AUS Strategic Plan and every aspect of campus life. The university community celebrates diversity and is committed to open intellectual inquiry, ethical behavior and civic responsibility—all essential foundations for a sustainable and inclusive campus. With 95 percent of its academic departments offering at least one sustainability-inclusive course, AUS also equips students with the right academic knowledge to impact various industries and help move them toward a greener future.





AUS’ commitment to sustainability is evident through numerous initiatives outlined in this report. Since the AUS Office of Sustainability was launched in 2008, notable sustainability achievements include launching the UAE’s first university single-use plastics campaign in 2019 and receiving a 2 Pearl rating for its Engineering and Sciences Building by Estidama. The university has also repeatedly won the Green Audit Award from the Abu Dhabi Environmental Agency’s Sustainable Campus Initiative.

AUS students actively participate in sustainability-related extracurricular activities, such as the AUS EcoRep program, which promotes waste reduction, energy conservation, diversity and inclusion, and personal health. Through its sustainability initiatives, AUS is committed to being a leading voice for sustainability in the Gulf region and beyond.



### 3.2 Key Institutional Characteristics

The table below outlines key AUS institutional characteristics that highlight the scope of the university’s sustainability initiatives during Academic Year 2024–2025.

Total number of students <sup>1</sup>	6,344 (52.1% Female and 47.9% Male)
Total number of nationalities represented among students <sup>1</sup>	101
Number of students residing on campus <sup>1</sup>	1,434
Total number of faculty <sup>2</sup>	395 (includes part-time faculty members)
Total number of nationalities represented among faculty <sup>1</sup>	51
Number of faculty residing on campus <sup>2</sup>	338
Total number of staff <sup>2</sup>	645
Number of staff residing on campus <sup>2</sup>	106
Number of dependents living on campus <sup>2</sup>	880
Total campus size (m <sup>2</sup> ) <sup>3</sup> (including academic buildings, student services, student residential halls and employee housing)	363,728.27

<sup>1</sup> AUS Fast Facts - Fall 2024  
<sup>2</sup> AUS Employee Services Department, December 2024  
<sup>3</sup> Campus Development Department, February 2024



### 3.3 AUS Sustainability Framework

AUS is widely recognized for its holistic approach to sustainability in higher education.

Since 2018, the AUS Office of Sustainability has been following the international framework provided by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) for defining its sustainability strategy and initiatives, tracking progress over the years and benchmarking its success.

The AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) framework focuses on five key areas:

- **Academics and Research:** Ensuring sustainability is embedded throughout the university's teaching and research
- **Engagement:** Building awareness of the importance of sustainability and climate action among students, faculty and staff as well as external stakeholders
- **Operations:** Understanding the impact of AUS' campus operations, with a focus on energy, water and waste reduction
- **Planning and Administration:** Ensuring that sustainability is integrated in every aspect of institutional governance
- **Innovation and Leadership:** Encouraging leadership in campus sustainability through innovative initiatives

AUS is an active member of the AASHE and serves on its Advisory Council. It was also the first university in the Gulf region to be rated in AASHE's STARS. In 2018, AUS received a rating of Bronze, followed by a Silver rating in 2021. Thanks to its dedication to continuous improvement over the years, AUS achieved a STARS Gold rating in 2024. AASHE STARS is considered to be the most comprehensive sustainability assessment available for higher education institutions.

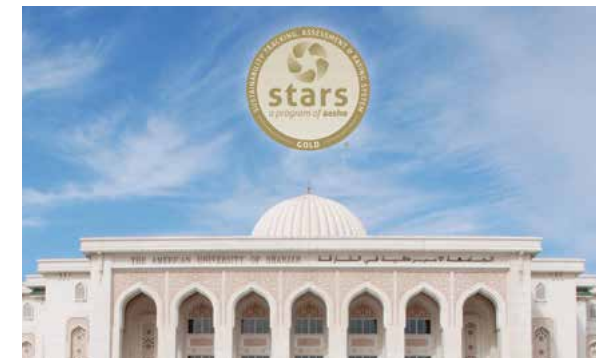


#### ABOUT AASHE

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE, pronounced AY-shee) is an association of higher education institutions headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. The association aims to improve sustainable practices in higher education by advocating sustainable innovation. AASHE encourages people involved in education to promote sustainable development in their communities. AASHE is an official partner of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals program.

#### ABOUT STARS

The AASHE STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System) program is a way for institutions to be tracked and ranked on their progress in developing sustainable solutions for their communities. An institution can be awarded a Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Reporter designation. The STARS program tracks multiple factors in an institution's overall sustainability across five key areas: academics, engagement, operations, and planning and administration, as well as innovation and leadership points for exemplary and path-breaking initiatives.



## Spotlight:

In 2024, AUS was awarded the prestigious **STARS Gold Rating by AASHE**, cementing its reputation as a regional leader in sustainability. With more than 1,200 participants across 52 countries, the STARS program evaluates achievements in five core areas: academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation and leadership. This cycle, AUS excelled with a perfect score of 100 percent in both academics and innovation and leadership, 85 percent in engagement, 35 percent in operations and 57 percent in planning and administration.



# Spotlight:

In 2025, AUS made its debut in The Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges: 2025 Edition for its commitment to environmental sustainability. The guide profiles universities and colleges "selected for their exceptional programs, policies and practices related to sustainability and the environment." It is an online resource for college applicants interested in attending universities that foster a culture of environmental responsibility.

## 3.4 Alignment with UN SDGs



The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a powerful aspiration for improving the world, outlining what needs to be done and how to do it. Educational institutions and companies globally can play a significant role in achieving this transformational change. Throughout this report, AUS' alignment with the UN SDGs is highlighted by featuring one or several icons in each section, indicating the SDGs supported by the changes the university has made or is currently making.

AUS contributes to the SDGs in several ways:



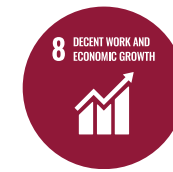
### SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

AUS actively ensures healthy lives and promotes well-being for all at all ages through initiatives such as orientation week cooking classes for students, the AUS Manbat Farmers' Market on campus and various workshops on food and health.



### SDG 4: Quality Education

AUS' commitment to quality education is evident in its high-quality and wide-ranging degree programs, with 95 percent of academic departments offering sustainability courses.



### SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

AUS contributes to decent work and economic growth by preparing and employing a skilled workforce, and fostering interdisciplinary education, entrepreneurship and strong industry partnerships, many of which fund or support research aligned with the UN's sustainable development goals.



### SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

AUS prioritizes innovation and research in developing countries, aligning with Target 9.5 of SDG 9, contributing to increasing the number of researchers in the Middle East. Additionally, AUS' academic research addresses various important societal challenges related to the UAE and the wider Middle East, with students regularly participating in sustainability-related research, developing innovations that range from green building practices to solar-powered technology.





## SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Through community outreach, volunteer projects and sustainability initiatives, AUS builds resilient, sustainable communities



## SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Through initiatives such as the Manbat Farmers' Market, AUS encourages the community to reduce food loss and waste



## SDG 13: Climate Action

AUS is dedicated to mitigating climate change and promoting environmental sustainability through carbon footprint reduction, energy efficiency and environmental conservation initiatives. AUS' academic research on climate change adaptation and resilience also addresses this global challenge.



## SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

AUS collaborates with government agencies, nonprofits, industry partners and international institutions to advance sustainable development goals through joint projects and research initiatives. By aligning with the SDGs, AUS demonstrates its commitment to a sustainable and just future and ensures that its commitments are impactful and resilient in the long term.

## 3.5 AUS Climate Action Plan

In 2022, AUS launched a Climate Action Plan, aligning the university's sustainability efforts with the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategic plan. Since then, the AUS Office of Sustainability has continuously refined the measurement and tracking of the university's carbon emissions. The plan has also seen the AUS sustainability team deliver many awareness-building and engagement activities on- and off-campus.

## 3.6 Local and Global Partnerships

To achieve its sustainability goals, AUS partnered with key external stakeholders to advance innovative solutions for environmental challenges, promote sustainable development practices and foster a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.

AUS' key partnerships include:

### UAE Universities Climate Network (UCN)

Building on its advocacy at COP27, AUS became an inaugural member of the UAE Universities Climate Network, a coalition of 33 higher education institutions nationwide. The network was established to strengthen youth and academic engagement on climate action ahead of COP28 and remains a collaborative platform beyond the event.

AUS has taken a leading role within the UNC, spearheading the Campus Carbon Neutrality Pillar—one of its four core focus areas. Leveraging its extensive experience in campus emissions reporting, AUS has guided peer institutions in developing carbon reduction strategies and contributed to workshops, public events and educational initiatives aimed at building climate awareness across academic communities.



## UAE Alliance for Climate Action (UACA)



AUS is a founding member of the UAE Alliance for Climate Action (UACA), a national coalition led by Emirates Nature–WWF that mobilizes non-state actors to advance the country's net zero goals. Launched ahead of COP28, UACA serves as the UAE's flagship platform for aligning climate commitments with the Paris Agreement and

the latest scientific evidence. AUS was the first university to join the alliance and currently represents the higher education sector on the UACA Advisory Committee, reinforcing its role as a leading advocate for climate action within academia.

## Emirates Environmental Group (EEG)

AUS has partnered with the Emirates Environmental Group and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment on a pioneering national study studying the carbon sequestration potential of UAE indigenous trees. The project aims to advance nature-based solutions that promote biodiversity, combat desertification, and enhance carbon capture.

As part of this multi-stakeholder initiative, AUS is contributing its scientific expertise to research design, field methodology, data collection and analysis. The university will also co-lead the development of the first UAE-specific carbon sequestration metrics for the Sidr Tree, marking a significant step toward localized environmental data and sustainable land management practices.

## Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD)

AUS has been a proud and active participant in the Sustainable Campus Initiative (SCI), a national program led by the Environment Agency–Abu Dhabi, that empowers university students across the UAE to take meaningful climate and environmental action on their campuses and in their communities.



Over the years, AUS has demonstrated its leadership through its student-led EcoRep program and collaborative sustainability efforts aligned with SCI's pillars of environmental auditing, community engagement and climate

action. AUS students conducted annual green campus audits, contributed to SCI national workshops and forums, and led Sustainable Action Projects on topics such as energy efficiency, waste reduction and biodiversity.

The participation has strengthened student leadership in sustainability and fostered knowledge-sharing across institutions. Through its continued involvement in SCI, AUS reaffirms its commitment to developing environmentally conscious graduates and advancing the UAE's vision for a more sustainable future.

## UNESCO's South-South Universities Cooperation Network (SUCN)

As part of its commitment to global sustainability in higher education, AUS actively participates in the UNESCO Southern Universities Sustainability Consortium Network. This network brings together universities from the Global South to develop a comprehensive Action Plan for Sustainability in Higher Education for 2026–2030, focusing on four key areas: teaching and learning; science, research and innovation; community and industry engagement; and sustainable management and administration.

AUS serves as the lead institution for developing the network's Sustainability Governance Framework under Pillar 4: Sustainable Management and Administration. In this role, AUS guides the design of governance structures and institutional strategies that embed sustainability across operations and decision-making processes. This leadership position reflects AUS' growing influence in shaping resilient, future-ready institutions aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



# 4.

## Operational Highlights

### 4.1 Annual Emissions Reporting

As part of the initial launch of the Climate Action Plan in 2022, AUS worked with Southpole, a third-party service provider, to conduct an initial greenhouse gas (GHG) study to calculate its baseline annual emissions and set reduction targets aligned with the Science Based Targets initiative. The latest report closes previous data gaps and improves data quality in a number of areas. This was achieved by working with internal stakeholders across AUS to continuously improve data collection for the annual AUS GHG report.

In 2023, AUS adopted the eMission reporting tool by UACA to track and report its annual GHG emissions across all three scopes to better align with UAE reporting standards. This tool was used again in 2024.

#### Defining Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions

GHG emissions are classified into three scopes:

**Scope 1** relates to emissions directly managed by the organization. For AUS, this includes emissions from combustion of fossil fuels in mobile and stationary sources (owned vehicles and power generators) and fugitive emissions (refrigerants) from cooling and air conditioning equipment.

**Scope 2** relates to indirect emissions from purchased electricity through external energy providers. For AUS, this includes electricity provided by Sharjah Electricity, Water, and Gas Authority (SEWA).

**Scope 3** relates to other indirect emissions, such as emissions from vehicles not owned or controlled by AUS, outsourced activities and waste disposal. This report splits Scope 3 emissions into nine categories.



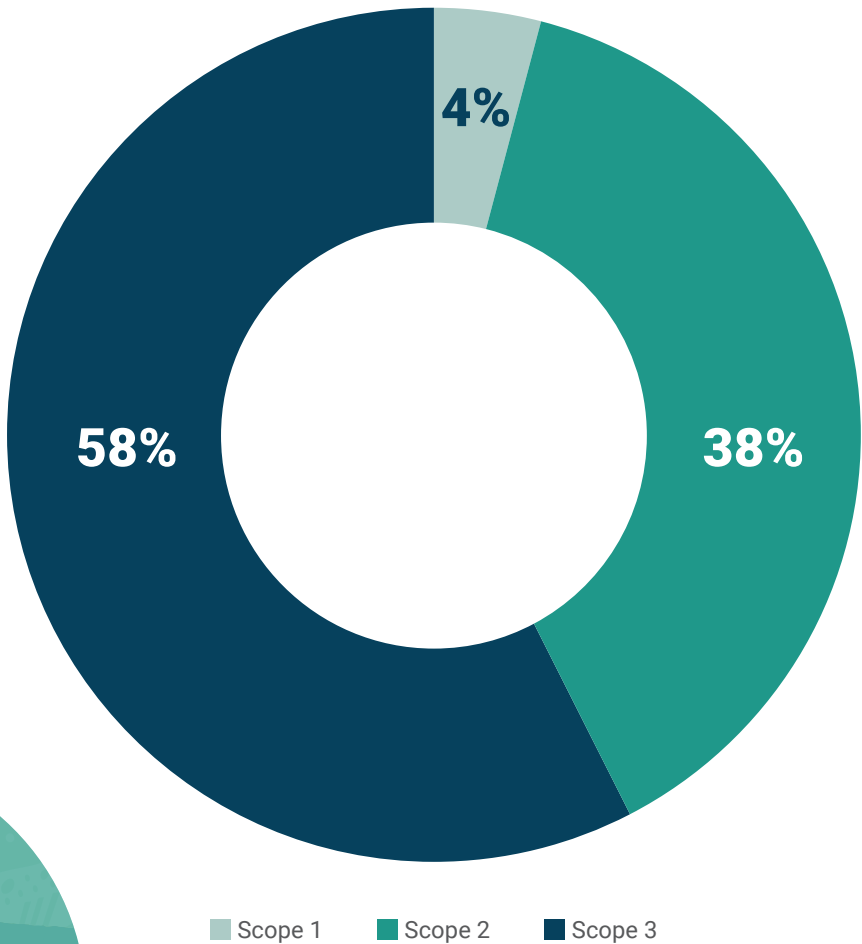
GHG Emissions in 2024

The table and figure here summarize GHG emissions produced by AUS operations from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 (FY 2024). Calculated emissions per stakeholder—students, faculty, staff and their dependents—is 6.94 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/ stakeholder in 2024.

The majority of AUS’ emissions are linked to purchased electricity (Scope 2) and fuel and energy production (Scope 3). While AUS’ total emissions increased in the 2024 reporting period, we achieved a significant drop in our Scope 2 emissions following energy efficiency retrofits across campus, particularly in academic buildings.

For more details, refer to the [full GHG emissions report](#) on our website.

Breakdown of AUS’ Total GHG Emissions FY2024 by Scope



Scope	Emissions (tCO2e)
Scope 1	
Fuel Emissions	174.3
Refrigerant Leakage	2,125.8
Total Scope 1 Emissions	2,300
Scope 2	
Electricity Consumption	22,024.1
Scope 3	
Purchased Goods	639
Capital Goods	386.9
Water Consumption	900.3
Solid Waste Landfilled	0
Employee/Stakeholder Commute	6,318.7
Air Travel	818.7
Freight Emissions	2,563
Upstream Leased Assets	926.9
Fuel and Energy Production	20,509.5
Total Scope 3	33,063
Total Emissions	57,387

FY 2024 Scopes 1-3 Emissions (UACA PLATFORM)



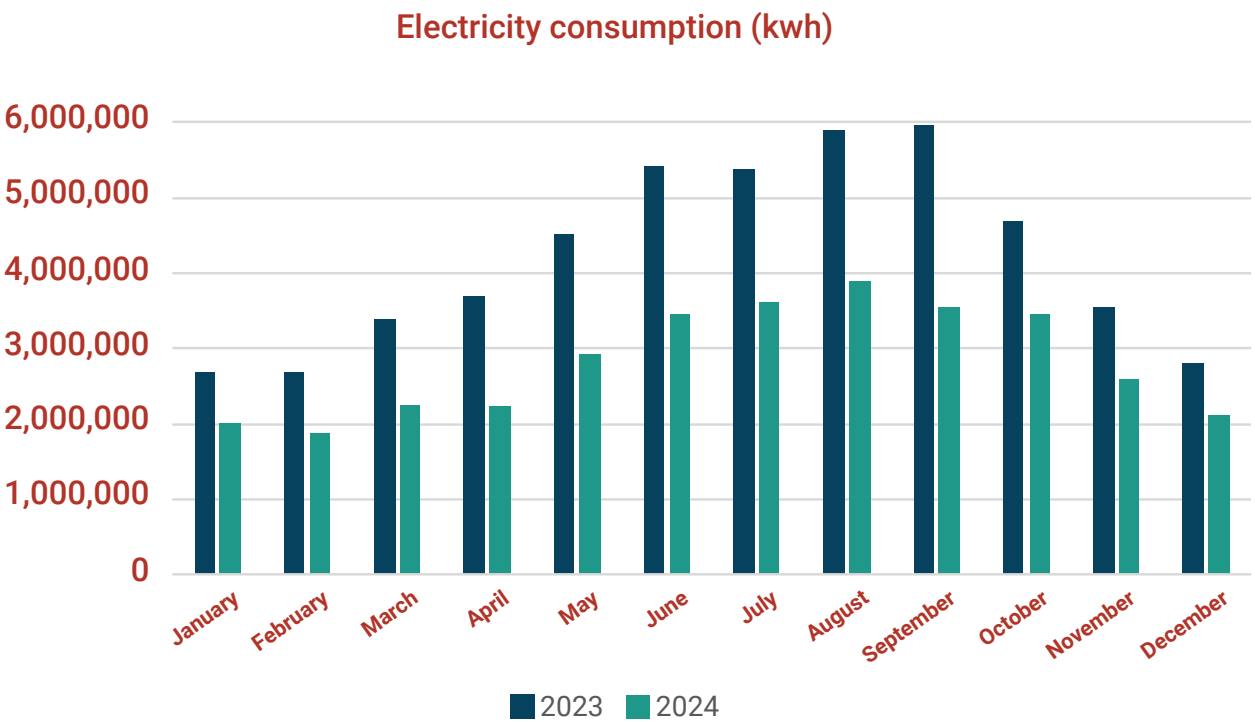
## 4.2 Emissions Reduction Initiatives: Green Buildings and Sustainable Transportation

As part of the AUS Climate Action Plan, continuous refinement of carbon emissions measurement and tracking has been a key priority for AUS to align with the UAE’s Net Zero by 2050 objectives. The AUS Office of Sustainability has progressively enhanced its methodologies to ensure precise and reliable data on carbon emissions, enabling effective monitoring and informed decisions. Alongside this, the sustainability team has led impactful awareness and engagement initiatives both on campus and in the wider community.

### GREEN BUILDINGS

AUS recognizes the crucial need for building energy efficiency to meet its net zero emission targets. Over the past years, the AUS Campus Development team has worked on improving building thermal efficiency, upgrading cooling and water systems and implementing efficient air distribution controls. In addition, all major renovation projects in the last five years followed ESTIDAMA guidelines, a green building rating system used to evaluate sustainable building development practices across the UAE.

In 2024, energy consumption decreased, specifically in academic buildings. The figure below compares electricity consumption in academic buildings in 2023–2024.



### SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

AUS recognizes stakeholder commuting as a major Scope 3 emission source and actively promotes the use of electric vehicles. To support low-emission commuting, the campus has expanded its network of electric vehicle chargers.



## 5.

Community  
Engagement  
Highlights

The AUS Office of Sustainability hosted a wide range of community engagement initiatives on campus and beyond. Below are some of the highlights from Academic Year 2024–2025. A full list of initiatives can be found in Appendix B.

## Spotlight:

## UAE Year of Community 2025

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, has announced 2025 as the Year of Community under the tagline “Hand in Hand,” a nationwide initiative that runs from January until December 2025. Rooted in the UAE’s values of resilience, ambition and openness, the Year of Community is dedicated to fostering a united and empowered society. It aims to inspire behaviours that strengthen family and social ties, encourage shared responsibility and unlock potential for sustainable growth.



## 5.1 EcoRep Program



Launched in 2018, the EcoRep Program at AUS continues to serve as a cornerstone of student-led sustainability engagement on campus. Designed as a peer leadership initiative, the program empowers students passionate about environmental issues to take

an active role in shaping a more sustainable campus culture. Through the program, EcoReps lead awareness campaigns, organize community events and encourage sustainable behaviors—on campus and within the AUS Residential Halls, where they foster lifelong habits around energy conservation, waste reduction and sustainable living. Through their continued dedication and creativity, EcoReps play a vital role in driving AUS' mission of building a more sustainable campus and community. In 2024–2025, the program delivered a series of high-impact, hands-on community engagement initiatives that reached a wide segment of the student body:



- A hands-on e-waste recycling workshop, hosted in collaboration with Ecyclex, educated students on the environmental and economic significance of properly recycling electronic devices. The session highlighted how rare minerals can be recovered from discarded electronics, helping reduce the reliance on environmentally damaging mining practices.



- A field trip to Shajar Nursery provided students with a practical introduction to native and drought-resistant plant species, with a special focus on the UAE's iconic Ghaf tree. Participants gained hands-on experience in planting Ghaf seeds, contributing to national conservation efforts while learning about the role of native flora in supporting biodiversity and combating desertification.



- A series of educational movie nights, held in the AUS Student Center, created an informal yet enriching learning environment for exploring topics such as ecosystem regeneration, sustainable agriculture, and soil health. Each screening was followed by peer-led discussions that promoted critical thinking and student dialogue around key sustainability challenges.

The EcoRep Program equips students with the skills and confidence to be sustainability leaders during their time at AUS, and prepares them to be environmentally responsible citizens long after graduation.

## Spotlight: EcoRep Insights

"My time as an EcoRep has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my university journey. It opened up new opportunities for me, allowing me to participate in impactful events, work with like-minded individuals and become part of a team focused on positive environmental change. This role has not only deepened my passion for sustainability but has also sparked a strong desire to pursue a career where I can inspire and empower others to live more consciously. Being an EcoRep also made me realize there are many aspects to sustainability beyond my environmental science education, and it truly broadened my perspective. Above all, this experience helped me realize that real change begins with awareness and community. I've seen firsthand how small actions can lead to change and create meaningful impact."

**Rawand Abdullah**  
Environmental sciences senior  
College of Arts and Sciences



# Spotlight:

## EcoRep Insights

“As an architecture major, being part of the AUS Office of Sustainability allowed me to bridge the gap between design and environmental impact. Architecture plays a critical role in shaping sustainable communities, and working at the Office of Sustainability has given me hands-on experience in working on ideas that align with both ecological responsibility and innovative design. Through our work, I’ve also realized how powerful design can be in communicating ideas, especially through social media in order to inspire our community to adopt more sustainable habits, making our initiatives more impactful. By coming together as a community, we can each play a role in creating a more sustainable future, where small actions collectively lead to significant change.”

**Snikita Moka**

Architecture senior

College of Architecture, Art and Design

“Having served as an EcoRep in the past year, I’ve gained a lot of valuable insight into the power of sustainability efforts within a university setting. This experience has allowed me to actively promote environmental awareness among peers—by organizing interactive eco-friendly initiatives and collaborating with the student community to bring positive change. Through this role, I’ve developed various skills and gained a deeper understanding of sustainable practices and their real-world applications. Most importantly, being an EcoRep has reinforced my belief that small, consistent actions can contribute to bringing about a larger impact, and it has inspired me to continue advocating for sustainability in both academic and personal spaces.”

**Khadijah Minhas**

Mechanical engineering senior

College of Engineering

“I have had the privilege of being a part of the Office of Sustainability since Fall 2022. From organizing local events to participating in international opportunities, this role has helped me contribute positively to the planet and see the impact in real time. My most favorite and enriching contribution would be the Green Living Challenge in the residential halls which allowed me to build a rewarding and award-winning experience! When I started this role, I pledged to help students recognize the EcoRep in them and I am very grateful to the office for supporting me to accomplish this!”

**Aamuktha Samrajyam**

Chemical engineering senior

College of Engineering

## 5.2 Manbat Farmers' Market



Manbat is a partnership between the Sharjah-based property developer Arada and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment that promotes healthy, locally-grown produce and supports the UAE’s National Food Security Strategy.

AUS has partnered with Manbat since September 2023 to bring an exclusive farmers’ market to campus every week.

The initiative benefits the campus community in many ways. It provides students and campus residents with fresh, locally grown produce weekly and connects the AUS community directly to the farmers who produce their food, helping to build a campus culture centered on health, nutrition and sustainability.

### 5.3 Cook for Change Program



The Cook for Change initiative is a collaboration between the Office of Sustainability and the Student Residential Life Department that helps students and faculty recognize modern food systems' impact on environmental and human health.

The cooking classes, offered for students during orientation, teach them strategies for budget-friendly meal preparation with locally sourced ingredients that have a positive impact on planetary and human health.

Later in the semester, master chef competitions were held in the residential halls, allowing students to showcase their newly learned culinary skills in a fun environment.

## Spotlight:

### Excellence in Interdepartmental Collaboration

AUS was honored with the Gold Award for Excellence in Collaborative Partnership at the 19<sup>th</sup> MENASA NASPA Conference held at New York University Abu Dhabi, recognizing outstanding interdepartmental cooperation in advancing campus sustainability.

Representatives from the Office of Sustainability and the Student Residential Life Department accepted the award on behalf of the university, reflecting the strength and impact of cross-campus collaboration, specifically in sustainability programs tailored for the residential halls such as Cook for Change and the Green Living Challenge.

## Spotlight: Student Voices

"Attending the Cook for Change classes was an incredibly enriching experience. I didn't just learn to cook healthier meals—I discovered how food can bring people together and create real impact. The session was fun, empowering and full of practical tips that I have incorporated into my daily life. It changed the way I see cooking and community."

**Jewel Johnson**  
Management senior  
School of Business Administration

"As someone who always had a negative emotion towards cooking and a hard time eating healthy, the Cook For Change classes really helped me. From learning knife skills to making healthy dishes taste good Ms. Nathalie was able to change my outlook towards food."

**Nethanya Saji**  
Environmental sciences senior  
College of Arts and Sciences

"Being a part of the Cooking for Change classes throughout my journey here at AUS has been very educational and fun. I was able to learn a lot about how to cook in a more sustainable way while keeping the amazing taste and flavor of everyday meals. The different recipes we learnt in classes packed a healthy but tasty punch to it. I wish to attend more of these classes."

**Syed Arfan**  
Computer engineering senior  
College of Engineering



## 5.4 AUS at the UAE Pavilion, COP29



At COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, AUS proudly participated in the UAE National Pavilion within the Blue Zone, reinforcing its commitment to global climate dialogue and youth-led climate advocacy. Representing AUS, EcoRep and environmental sciences student Sameera Khan delivered a presentation titled “Mindful Menus: Sustainable Catering at Conferences.”



The session spotlighted the critical role of food systems in climate action, emphasizing the environmental impact of catering at large-scale events such as conferences, weddings and public gatherings. By advocating for plant-forward menus, locally-sourced ingredients and reduced food waste, the presentation called for a shift toward more climate-conscious catering practices.

**AUS' presence at COP29** underscores its dedication to empowering students to take the lead in sustainability conversations and contribute meaningfully to the UAE's climate ambitions on the world stage.

## Spotlight: Student Insights

“I wanted to emphasize the importance of choosing local caterers who prioritize environmental responsibility and homegrown ingredients. This challenges the misconception that the UAE is just an arid land and showcases how innovative farming techniques, such as hydroponics and vertical farming, enable the cultivation and sourcing of fresh produce within the country,”

**Sameera Khan**  
Environmental sciences senior  
College of Arts and Sciences

## 5.5 AUS Green Living Challenge

This year, AUS residential halls participated in the **Green Living Guide Challenge**—a year-long sustainability competition led by the Office of Sustainability's EcoReps in collaboration with the Student Residential Life Department. With themes ranging from energy conservation and sustainable diets to eco-friendly travel and recycling, student residents engaged in monthly challenges that encouraged greener living. In recognition of their sustained efforts, the women of GH Residential Halls received the inaugural Most Sustainable Hall of the Year Award—a new honor established by the Office of Student Experience.





## Spotlight:

### Student Voice

"I really enjoyed taking part in the Green Living Challenge. I learned a lot more about how to travel sustainably, about how the smallest changes can slowly lead to a greener and better life. I love this initiative taken by the Office of Sustainability and I hope this challenge continues!"

**Yohannes Mekonnen**

Student resident in the men's residential halls

## 5.6 UCN Decarbonization Academy

In a landmark collaboration, the AUS Office of Sustainability partnered with Ajman University and New York University Abu Dhabi to launch the UAE's first online [Campus Decarbonization Academy](#) dedicated to empowering higher education institutions to advance campus carbon neutrality. This initiative marks a sector-wide effort to support the country's climate goals and aligns with the priorities of the Universities Climate Network.

As a recognized leader in climate action, AUS has played a central role in developing the academy's curriculum and delivering sessions on key topics such as climate action planning, GHG accounting and energy efficiency. The program is designed to build capacity among sustainability officers, faculty and administrators from across the UAE's higher education sector, while also welcoming public participants to raise nationwide climate awareness.

This pioneering effort underscores AUS' commitment to sector-wide collaboration and knowledge-sharing in support of the UAE's national climate goals and its landmark Federal Decree-Law No.11 (2024) on the Reduction of Climate Change Effects, which came into effect in May 2025.

## 5.7 Sharakah Environmental Day

AUS continues to promote environmental awareness among youth through its annual Sharakah Environmental Day (ENV Day)—flagship outreach initiative that engages high school students in hands-on sustainability education. ENV Day 2025 was held on the AUS campus by the Department of Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences and Sustainability in the College of Arts and Sciences, in collaboration with the Office of Enrollment Management through the Sharakah Program. The theme was "Deep Blue: Industrial Challenges and Scientific Solutions."

The event welcomed over 500 high school students and teachers from more than 25 UAE schools, offering them an immersive experience in environmental science and sustainability. Participants engaged in experimental demonstrations, lab tours and interactive educational games—activities designed to deepen their understanding of environmental issues and scientific inquiry.

Sharakah ENV Day reflects AUS' broader mission to empower future generations with the knowledge, curiosity and motivation to become environmental stewards, while showcasing the university's leadership in sustainability education and community engagement.

## 5.8 Empowering Ocean Stewards Project with Goumbook

The [Empowering Ocean Stewards project](#), in partnership with Goumbook and Atlantis Dubai, engaged high school and university students in marine conservation efforts across the UAE. Through hands-on field trips and laboratory analysis, students were trained in ocean literacy, plastic pollution awareness and scientific research methods. Mentored by AUS students, high school participants developed environmental skills and a strong sense of responsibility for sustainability. The data collected by the students will contribute to global ocean pollution databases, supporting ongoing conservation efforts in the UAE and beyond.



## 5.9 Guardians of Our Green Student Initiative

In an initiative aimed to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders, the IEEE SIGHT student club independently delivered the **Guardians of Our Green upskilling program** to a group of orphaned youth between the ages of 12 and 20 from the Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation. Launched this academic year, the fully student-led renewable energy education program engaged underserved youth in Sharjah to empower them to become advocates for sustainability and renewable energy.

### Spotlight: Student insights

"We built Guardians of Our Green with the knowledge that empowering youth with knowledge about renewable energy is essential in fostering the type of environmental stewardship our planet needs. The feedback from the participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have expressed newfound interest in pursuing careers in renewable energy or environmental science. This is exactly the kind of impact we hoped to achieve."

**Haya Taifour**  
President of IEEE SIGHT AUS Chapter



## 5.10 Ghaf Tree Planting with EPAA



In spring 2025, the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Student Experience's Community Service team partnered with the Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA) for a Ghaf tree planting initiative in the ecologically and culturally significant Mleiha desert dunes. This collaboration reflects AUS' commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement, supporting national efforts to combat desertification and enhance the climate resilience of native ecosystems. The Ghaf tree, a keystone species in the UAE's desert landscape, plays a critical role in stabilizing soil, supporting biodiversity and preserving the country's natural heritage.

Through this initiative, AUS students and staff took part in hands-on ecosystem restoration work, deepening their connection to the land while supporting long-term sustainability goals. Looking ahead, AUS is working closely with EPAA to expand opportunities for the university community to engage in meaningful environmental action, strengthening ties between academic learning and real-world impact.





# 6.

## Academics and Research Highlights

### 6.1 Sustainability Courses and Degree Programs

Sustainability is integrated throughout the AUS curriculum. About **22 percent** of undergraduate and graduate courses offered at AUS include sustainability topics. These courses are offered across all disciplines, with **21 out of 22** academic departments at AUS—representing **95 percent** of the university departments, according to the 2024 STARS Report—offering at least one sustainability-related course.

AUS also offers a range of sustainability-focused programs and degrees, such as:

#### Undergraduate Degree Programs and Minors in Sustainability

- [Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences and Sustainability](#)
- [Minor in Environmental Policy](#)
- [Minor in Environmental and Water Engineering](#)
- [Minor in Environmental Sciences and Sustainability](#)
- [Minor in Women's Studies](#)

#### Graduate Degree Programs in Sustainability

- [PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering](#)
- [PhD in Engineering Systems Management](#)
- [4+1 program in environmental sciences and sustainability with American University, Washington, DC](#)

This year, AUS introduced the undergraduate course IDS 29403 Sustainable Development, covering the concepts, principles and applications of sustainable development. It examines the challenges of sustainable development and the human role in environmental protection. The course explores the environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainable development and addresses balancing these priorities. Additionally, AUS launched a 4+1 academic pathway for AUS students majoring in environmental sciences and sustainability allowing eligible students to earn a Master of Science in Environmental Science from American University, Washington, DC, in just one additional year after completing their four-year undergraduate degree at AUS.



# Spotlight:

## Student Research

AUS students are engaged in a wide range of sustainability-related research and competitions.

Two AUS student teams were recognized by [His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan](#), Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence and Chairman of the Board of Directors at Sandoq Al Watan, for their research on climate change, the circular economy and sustainability values. This recognition came through a competition launched by Sandoq Al Watan, featuring universities from across the UAE. The research projects—“Recovery of Lithium from Spent Lithium-Based Batteries” and “Source Apportionment, Backward Trajectory and Forecasting of PM2.5 for Air Pollution Control”—earned the two teams the competition’s silver award.

In a country prioritizing digital transformation and resilient infrastructure, three AUS students turned their vision into reality by designing a system that uses AI to guide people to safety during fires. Their idea, Nadha.AI, is now a national award winner. The project won first place in the [Pioneers Track of UAE Hackathon 8.0](#), a national competition organized by the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority. Developed by computer engineering students Mohamad Dabbagh and Mahmoud Darwish, and computer science student Amr Mohi Aldeen, Nadha.AI is an AI-driven fire evacuation system that integrates with existing safety infrastructure, analyzing live data from panels and sensors. It then delivers real-time, location-specific evacuation instructions through connected speakers, guiding people away from danger as conditions evolve.

Two students from AUS’ College of Engineering secured the top two places at the [National Emirati Society of GIS and Remote Sensing \(ESGRS\)](#) Challenge—Sustainability Edition. Their innovative projects blend advanced geographic information systems (GIS) with state-of-the-art technologies, showcasing their creativity in addressing sustainability challenges. Organized by ESGRS in collaboration with the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre and the UAE Ministry of Education, the competition brought together university students passionate about GIS and remote sensing to showcase their skills in addressing real-world issues.

A blockchain-powered sustainable marketplace concept developed by a team led by an AUS student won first place at the [Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s \(ICESCO\) Youth Climate Leaders Camp](#)—Arab Chapter, held at Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park. Named Thimmar, the innovative platform connects consumers with farming communities and offers AI-optimized grocery subscriptions to cut food waste.

## 6.2 Co-Curricular Sustainability Programs

Sustainability is a shared responsibility embraced across the university’s student community. Through dynamic programs, peer-led initiatives and hands-on experiences, AUS students play a central role in promoting environmental and social responsibility on campus and beyond. Whether leading awareness campaigns, participating in global challenges, or collaborating with peers through clubs and academic associations, students are at the forefront of driving meaningful, lasting change in support of the UN SDGs. Their passion and leadership are key to shaping a more sustainable future—one initiative at a time.





## EcoRep Program:



The EcoRep Program at AUS is a co-curricular initiative led by the Office of Sustainability that empowers students to champion promoting sustainable practices on campus. As paid student workers, EcoReps serve as sustainability ambassadors, engaging

in peer-to-peer education, campaign development and event implementation. Through this hands-on experience, they develop key competencies in systems thinking, critical thinking, collaboration and self-awareness. The program encourages students to foster personal connections to sustainability values that lead to practical action, while deepening their understanding of the interconnectedness between environment, social and economic systems. As a result, EcoReps not only support institutional sustainability, but develop their own skills and confidence to become changemakers beyond the university setting.

## Spotlight:

### EcoRep Spotlight

The EcoReps, a flagship program of the AUS Office of Sustainability, were honored by the [2025 PGS Regional Sustainability Awards](#) for their stand-out commitment to both environmental and social sustainability. PGS is the Global Students Platform of the United Nations Global Compact PRME initiative, a global platform for collaboration, reflection and interactions between student organizations in the realm of responsible management education and sustainable development.



## UNESCO's Greening with STI Bootcamp:

AUS completed a pilot of the [Greening with Science, Technology and Innovation Bootcamp](#), an interactive program designed to empower students as key change agents for climate action. Over 16 weeks, multidisciplinary student teams participated in a series of virtual capacity-building masterclasses and coaching sessions hosted by UNESCO that helped them gain a comprehensive understanding of sustainable development. Alongside the virtual learning component, the teams were mentored by AUS professors to co-design solutions addressing SDG 13: Climate Action. The [bootcamp](#) has proven to be a transformative learning experience for both professors and students, resulting in student research projects that are relevant, innovative and commercially viable. Through its innovative educational approach, the bootcamp facilitated interdisciplinary, intergenerational and intercultural learning for sustainable development. The finalized curriculum will serve as a blueprint for implementation at other institutions with the goal to foster creative, science-driven solutions for addressing climate challenges effectively through collaboration.



# Spotlight:

## Showcasing AUS Impact at UNESCO's Global Sustainability Summit

In April 2025, AUS was invited to present at the Strengthening International Higher Education Cooperation for Sustainability summit, held at UNESCO's Global Headquarters in Paris. The event brought together universities, policymakers and international organizations to advance collaborative solutions for integrating sustainability in higher education.

During the summit, AUS shared the success and impact of its inaugural Greening with Science, Technology, and Innovation Boot Camp, an initiative equipping students with practical tools and interdisciplinary knowledge to drive sustainability on campus and beyond.

AUS' participation underscored its leadership in sustainability education within the MENA region, while contributing to global dialogue on the role of higher education institutions in advancing the UN SDGs through innovation and international cooperation. The invitation to present at UNESCO marked a significant milestone in AUS' expanding global engagement on sustainability in higher education.

### Future 17 SDG Challenge with QS:

AUS has been a proud partner of the **Future17 SDG Challenge**, a global initiative led by QS Quacquarelli Symonds and the University of Exeter. Multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary student teams mentored by selected faculty were matched with international corporations to work on an identified sustainability challenge. To date, the program has brought together over 300 students from nine universities to collaborate with 31 international organizations on real-world projects aligned with the UN SDGs. Through this experience, students apply academic knowledge to practical problems, enhancing their SDG literacy and developing their professional skills. The initiative reflects the university's broader commitment to sustainability through education, research and campus engagement.

### Sustainability-focused Student Clubs and Associations

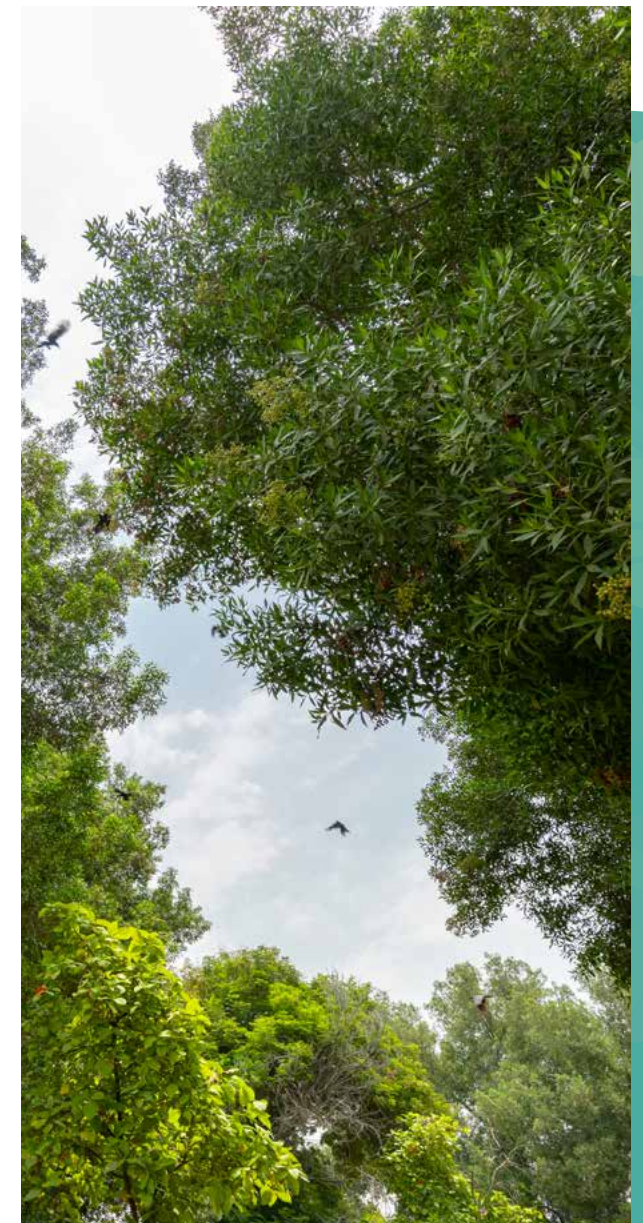
AUS hosts a wide range of sustainability-oriented student clubs and academic associations that offer students the opportunity to pursue their environmental interests outside of the classroom, demonstrate leadership skills and connect with like-minded peers. These include:

- Association of Women Engineers
- Environment Club
- Sustainability Club
- Women Empowerment Club

### 6.3 Class Collaborations

Class collaborations with the AUS Office of Sustainability play a vital role in providing students with hands-on experience to address real-world environmental challenges. These collaborations deepen students' interdisciplinary understanding of sustainability, build practical environmental problem-solving skills and nurture a strong sense of civic responsibility and community engagement. Courses that partnered with the AUS Office of Sustainability in Academic Year 2024–2025 included:

- **ENV 365:** Environmental and Sustainability Management Systems
- **ENV 150:** Introduction to Environmental Sustainability
- **ARC 501:** Architectural Design Studio VII
- **ARC 401:** 01 Architectural Design Studio V





## 6.4 Sustainability Research Centers

In Spring 2024, AUS launched three new research centers dedicated to addressing sustainability challenges and driving innovation in their respective fields.

The Materials Research Center was set up to nurture and promote groundbreaking interdisciplinary research and education activities in the field of advanced materials and sustainable structures. The center focuses on providing novel solutions and developing highly skilled human resources critical to the UAE's economic growth, particularly as it transitions from a petroleum-based economy to a diversified knowledge based economy.

The Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainable Development is dedicated to enhancing the UAE's entrepreneurial ecosystem and promoting sustainable development. Its work focuses on environmental, social and governance themes, and the role of entrepreneurship and innovation in driving sustainable growth.

The Energy, Water and Sustainable Environment Research Center aims to develop world-class research addressing global energy, water and environmental sustainability challenges. Faculty and scholars at the center are dedicated to finding practical solutions to the growing demands on resources in urban areas. The research enables AUS to contribute to several UAE strategic plans, such as UAE Net Zero 2050.

## Spotlight: Research Spotlight

AUS and [Sharjah Electricity, Water, and Gas Authority \(SEWA\)](#) have renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen their joint research in energy conservation, water network technologies, desalination, reduction of non-revenue losses, environmental sustainability, climate change, engineering management and the application of advanced technology and artificial intelligence in utility operations. The partnership leverages SEWA data resources and grants access to AUS research facilities and pilot testing opportunities.

## 6.5 Research Funding and Endowed Chairs

### Petrofac Research Chair in Renewable Energy

The [Petrofac Research Chair](#) in Renewable Energy at AUS has been awarded the Verified Sustainable Impact Project Stamp, a prestigious distinction granted by Majra, the UAE's National CSR Fund. This recognition highlights the research chair's significant contributions to environmental sustainability, economic growth and social progress, reinforcing AUS' commitment to renewable energy innovation and its alignment with the UAE's national priorities and UN SDGs.

### Sharjah National Oil Corporation Energy, Environment & Innovation Fund

In a significant step to drive sustainability and innovation, [Sharjah National Oil Corporation \(SNOC\)](#) has partnered with AUS to establish the SNOC Energy, Environment & Innovation Fund. This initiative demonstrates SNOC's commitment to advancing energy solutions and fostering transformative progress in the sector. With a pledge of 10 million AED over 10 years, SNOC will fund impactful research, promote innovation and drive sustainable initiatives that address critical global challenges. This collaboration combines SNOC's industry expertise with AUS' academic excellence and global impact, creating a powerful synergy to develop solutions at the intersection of energy and environmental sustainability.

### Sharjah Environmental Hazards Assessment Research Group

AUS recently launched the [Sharjah Environmental Hazards Assessment Research Group \(SEHAR\)](#), a new initiative dedicated to advancing scientific research on environmental pollutants and their impact on ecosystems and public health. SEHAR brings together experts in environmental science, analytical chemistry and ecotoxicology to study environmental contaminants such as microplastics, heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants.





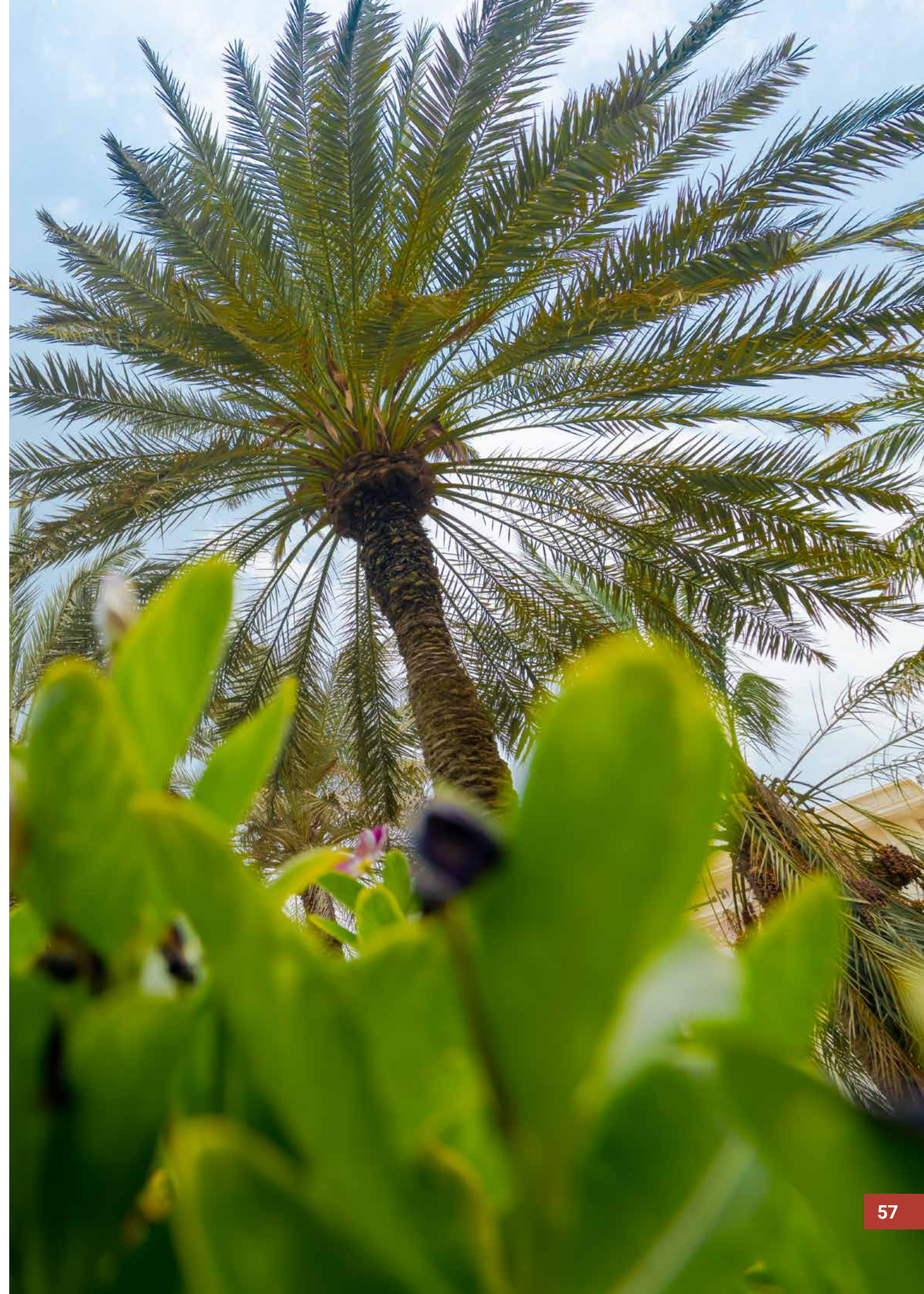
## BEEAH professorship in Environmental Innovation and Sustainable Development

With AED 5 million in funding from BEEAH, the **BEEAH professorship** in Environmental Innovation and Sustainable Development will advance interdisciplinary research in renewable energy, waste management and circular economy solutions— affirming the UAE’s position at the forefront of sustainability.



### 6.6 Research Impact



AUS made substantial research contributions aligned with the SDGs from 2021 to 2024. AUS produced 1,334 scholarly outputs, garnering 24,509 citations, demonstrating both high productivity and significant academic influence. A major strength of the AUS research portfolio is its comprehensive coverage across all 17 SDGs, with particularly strong performance in SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). Together, these two areas account for over 700 publications and nearly 13,000 citations, underscoring AUS’ leadership in advancing research on sustainable technologies, energy systems, and innovative infrastructure-domains critical to both the UAE’s and the global community’s sustainability agendas.

The field-weighted citation impact for AUS research in sustainability is also noteworthy, particularly under SDG2: Zero Hunger, indicating that AUS publications in this domain are cited far more frequently than the global average. This reflects exceptional influence and relevance. High citation counts in SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being and SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, further highlight the university’s contributions to essential public health and environmental issues.





SDG		Scholarly Output	Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)*	Citation Count
	SDG 2: Zero Hunger (2023)	31	16.83	775
	SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being (2023)	284	12.84	9485
	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation (2023)	143	5.15	3370
	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (2023)	423	1.96	6764
	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (2023)	305	1.74	6157
	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (2023)	146	3.71	3053
	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (2023)	200	1.8	3998
	SDG 13: Climate Action (2023)	168	3.4	4523

	SDG 14: Life Below Water (2023)	66	1.2	565
	SDG 15: Life on Land (2023)	40	2.07	647

Source: SciVal. Data obtained on April 30, 2025.

\*An FCWI greater than 1 indicates that the publication is cited more than the global average for similar publications with impact being above average or strong.

### 6.7 Sustainability Seminars, Conferences and Events

Several sustainability-focused conferences and events were hosted during the reporting period at AUS. These include:

- [Eighth International Conference on Smart Materials and Nanotechnology in Engineering](#)
- [Inaugural MENA-Asian Conference of the Financial Engineering and Banking Society](#)
- [Seventh International Conference on Electric Power and Energy Conversion Systems](#)
- [SEWA workshop on UAE’s energy transition challenges with research-driven solutions](#)
- [AUS College of Engineering GIS training program for SEWA](#)



## 7.

# Future Plans/ Outlook

Looking ahead, the Office of Sustainability is focused on strengthening AUS' role as a regional leader in sustainability by further integrating sustainability principles across campus operations, academics and community engagement.

Key goals for the upcoming academic year include:

- **Strengthening climate and biodiversity commitments:** AUS will continue refining campus emissions data and its decarbonization strategy while advancing biodiversity protection. This includes participation in the Nature Positive Universities pledge, collaboration with Goumbook on a mangrove restoration and citizen science project and tree planting initiatives through EPAA Ghaf Tree Program and the EEG Sidr Research Initiative.
- **Participation in UAE National Pavilion at EXPO 2025 Osaka:** The Office of Sustainability is looking at representing AUS during the final weeks of Expo 2025 in Osaka, contributing to the UAE Pavilion's programming. Through its involvement, AUS will contribute to global conversations on the SDGs and Expo's central theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives."
- **Launch of the Green Teaching Kitchen @AUS:** Launching in Fall 2025, the new pilot program Green Teaching Kitchen @ AUS is a seven-module experiential course that integrates culinary training linking food, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. The course includes a farm field trip and explores critical topics such as food waste, food systems and health equity.
- **Pilot a regenerative campus community farm:** Plans are underway to pilot a student-led community farm that reinforces hands-on learning around regenerative agriculture, food systems and composting. This initiative aims to connect food, health and sustainability in a tangible, campus-based setting.
- **Strengthening local and global partnerships:** In line with SDG 17, AUS will continue to expand its local and global collaborations, including participation in global sustainability networks, contributing to regional climate initiatives and creating shared programming with peer institutions.

As we move forward, AUS remains committed to empowering students as active participants in sustainability work—aligning university goals with the UAE Net Zero 2050 strategic initiative and embedding sustainability into the core of campus life, learning and research.



## 8.

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

**Building envelopes:** Sustainable building envelopes contribute to a more environmentally friendly construction industry. Choosing eco-friendly materials and implementing energy efficient designs reduces a building's carbon footprint.

**COP29:** The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an international treaty addressing climate change. COP is an annual summit where nations convene to discuss and agree on actions to combat climate change. COP29 was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to 22, 2024.

**Decarbonization:** the process of reducing or eliminating carbon dioxide emissions from activities such as manufacturing or energy production.

**Emirates Green Building Council guidelines:** The Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC) is a non-government organization established in 2006 to promote green building principles that protect the environment and support sustainability in the United Arab Emirates. EGBC is the UAE's official green building council and is endorsed by the World Green Building Council.

**Estidama:** Estidama is a sustainable building design methodology focused on constructing and operating buildings and communities with enhanced environmental performance. It provides a framework for measuring sustainability performance beyond traditional planning and construction phases. The program is a key aspect of the Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 to develop the emirate according to innovative green standards.

**Electric Vehicle (EV):** An EV is a vehicle powered by an electric motor that draws electricity from a battery that can be charged from an external source. This included both all-electric vehicles, which run solely on electricity stored in a battery, and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, which combine an electric motor and battery with an internal combustion engine).

**Fugitive emissions:** Emissions released unintentionally from sources such as cooling systems, air conditioning equipment, leaks from CO2 tanks or methane (CH4) tubes.



**GHG emissions:** Greenhouse gasses (GHG) are gasses in the Earth’s atmosphere that trap heat. They act like glass walls of a greenhouse—hence the name. Without this natural greenhouse effect, average temperatures would drop to as low as -18°C (-0.4°F), making Earth too cold to sustain life. However, human activities, especially industrial processes, have significantly increased the release of GHG, intensifying the natural greenhouse effect. Scientists agree that this increase is driving global warming and climate change. As a result, global temperatures have risen sharply over the past 30 years and are now the highest since records began.

**Light Emitting Diode (LED):** LEDs are a bright, attractive lighting solution with a long lifespan and energy saving design.

**Net zero:** Reducing carbon emissions to a minimal level of residual emissions that can be absorbed and durably stored by nature or other carbon dioxide removal measures, leaving zero emissions in the atmosphere.

**Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi):** This initiative provides a clearly defined pathway for companies and institutions to GHG emissions in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Targets are considered science-based if they align with the latest climate science and are consistent in limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, helping prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

**Scopes 1, 2 and 3:** These categories define the different types of GHG emissions associated with an organization's operations and wider value chain. First introduced in 2001 Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the scopes framework is now a widely adopted standard for mandatory GHG emissions reporting across many industries and countries.

## Appendix B: Community Engagement Initiatives in Academic Year 2024–2025

### On-Campus

- Movie Night: Kiss the Ground
- AUS Can Collection Drive
- Reading and Fireside Chat with Anthony Warner

- E-Waste Recycling Workshop with ECYCLEX
- Introduction to Sustainable Living with Sukriti Verma- ShiftEco
- Movie Night: The Year Earth Changed
- Panel Discussion at the Assembly of Economic Thoughts
- EcoRep Meet and Greet
- AUS Club Fair
- Manbat Farmers’ Market
- Cook For Change Program
- AUS Green Living Challenge
- Sharakah Environmental Day

### Off-Campus

- Field Trip: Shajar Nursery
- UAE Pavilion at COP29
- ACS/RSC Regional MENA Conference
- UNESCO’s Strengthening International Higher Education Cooperation for Sustainability Summit
- UCN Decarbonization Academy
- Empowering Ocean Stewards Project with Goumbook
- Guardians of Our Green Student Initiative
- Ghaf Tree Planting with the Environment and Protected Areas Authority
- 19<sup>th</sup> MENASA NASPA Conference







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