



Sustainability Action Lab

Expression of Interest 2026-2027

Guidance Document

Saotharlann do Ghníomh Inbhuanaitheacht
Sustainability Action Lab

TU Dublin's collaborative learning programme translating
sustainability education into real world action

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About Sustainability Action



Speaking Up! Co-Learning About Advocacy and Disability Rights

Programme: BA (Hons) Social Care

Partner: WALK

Sustainability Action Lab is TU Dublin's collaborative learning programme that translates sustainability education into real-world action.

It does this through supporting academics at TU Dublin to create environments where their students can apply knowledge of their discipline and of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) in the real-world through collaboration.

It is a whole-of-University programme, which means that all campuses, faculties, schools and disciplines are invited to take part. Academic Leads from the University lead each collaboration project, which is co-created with their Collaboration Partner.

Sustainability Action Lab is led by the Societal Engagement team, which aims to engage society in sustainability focussed education and collaborative innovation to create shared impact. Sustainability Action Lab is supported through the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strand of the HEA's Strategic Alignment in Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) initiative.

WHO IS INVOLVED

Each Sustainability Action Lab project involves a collaboration between academics in TU Dublin and a partner entity. Collaboration partners can be from all sectors of society including:

- Civil Society, e.g., Community Groups, Schools, NGOs, Social Enterprises.
- Industry – where there is a clear sustainability focus and strong SDG alignment.
- Government, State and Public Bodies, e.g., Local Authority, State Agency or other public service bodies.
- Internal TU Dublin, e.g., Access & Outreach or other functional area.

COLLABORATION PROJECT ACTIVATION TIMELINE

Expressions of Interest: Ongoing, until the start of each semester.

Information Session: The first information session will be held on **4 June at 12.00 pm**, which will introduce the programme and the Expression of Interest process.

Final dates for joining the programme are:

1. Semester 1 Projects: 22 September 2026
2. Semester 2 Projects: 18 January 2027

IMPORTANT LINKS

[Expression of Interest Form](#)

[Sustainability Action Lab Webpage](#)

PROGRAMME BENEFITS

Participation in Sustainability Action Lab will enable you to:

- Get support to create an impactful learning experience for your students.
- Develop an easy way to align with the SDGs, the GreenComp European sustainability competence framework, and the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes.
- Access support from the Societal Engagement and Sustainability Education teams.
- Help your students to gain formal recognition for the transversal skills they develop through links to the [TU Dublin STLR initiative](#).
- Gain visibility for your module through Sustainability Action Lab Impact Stories or profiles.
- Gain recognition for you and your students through our Celebration Event and Roundtable in May 2027.
- Access resources, supports and peer networking opportunities provided through the Sustainability Action Lab programme.



**Included By Design:
Designing Inclusive
Environments for Care**

Programmes:
BA Architecture
BA Fine Art

Partner: Mater
Transformation



**Enhancing Animal
Nutrition and Welfare
through Feed Quality
Assessment: Programme**

Programme: BSc
Pharmaceutical Healthcare

Partner: Dublin Zoo

PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABILITY ACTION LAB COLLABORATIONS

The following principles guide Sustainability Action Lab collaborations:

- Sustainability Action Lab collaborations are based on partnership.
- Implementation is based on a Shared Understanding of the collaboration agreed in advance with the Collaboration Partner.
- Collaborations are designed to be reciprocal – to be equally beneficial to all involved.
- The focus of the collaboration is identified through a process of co-creation to enable rich interaction and to create a high-quality co-learning experience for all participants.
- The prior learning and expertise of participants is respected throughout.
- Collaborations have a clear sustainability focus and promote the possibility of positive societal change towards achieving the SDGs.
- Activity is designed to be completed within the allocated time.
- Collaboration outputs are shared with the Collaboration Partner through an exchange that allows students to reflect on the collaboration activity and to share their reflections with the Collaboration Partner.
- Collaborations have clear personal and academic learning outcomes for students as part of programmes.
- Collaboration activity requires students to reflect regularly and critically on their learning experiences: to allow students to make sense of their experiences and to learn about themselves as learners; to ensure students link their real-world learning to their classroom knowledge; and to ensure that students reflect on, question, and challenge, the causes and effects of societal challenges.
- Collaborations are evaluated by all partners – students, TU Dublin academics, and Collaboration Partners - so that TU Dublin's co-learning programme continues to develop to meet the changing needs of participants and of society.

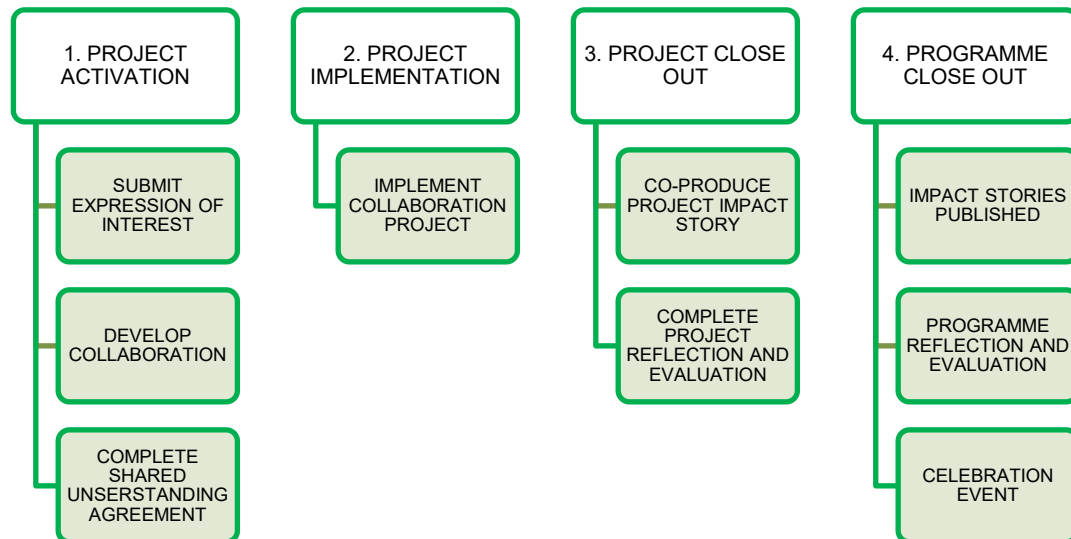
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Implementation

WHAT IS REQUIRED AT EACH PHASE

Projects are integrated into the academic calendar but have requirements at key phases.



1. Project Activation: Academic Leads identifies a project and submits a brief Expression of Interest. They then proceed to develop their project with a Collaboration Partner and complete a project description form. This form then populates Shared Understanding document, which is signed by both parties.

Support can be provided by the Action Lab Learning Coordinator and by your Sustainability Education Lead at this stage to support the development and signing of the Shared Understanding document.

2. Project Implementation: Academic Leads deliver the Sustainability Action Lab collaboration project within their programme module using a pedagogical approach suited to their discipline. Sustainability Action Lab collaboration projects typically include the following elements: introducing project context; co-learning activity; sharing student outputs with Collaboration Partner; facilitating student reflection.

3. Project Close Out: Academic Leads are responsible for ensuring that the project is completed in line with the Shared Understanding with the collaboration partner. Academic Leads also support the writing of project Impact Stories by providing updated details, quotes and approvals to the Sustainability Action Lab team.

4. Programme Close Out: Programme Close Out is led by the Sustainability Action Lab team, during which Academic Leads will be invited to contribute to programme evaluation.

Academic Leads, representative students and Collaboration Partners are invited to attend the annual Sustainability Action Lab Celebration and Roundtable. During this event, Sustainability Action Lab certificates are issued and group photographs taken. Academic Leads support their project representatives to register for the event and provide details for the certificates. During the Roundtable, project teams are facilitated to exchange experiences and impacts.

TU DUBLIN SUPPORTS

Projects within Sustainability Action Lab are supported through the following TU Dublin inputs:

- **Societal Engagement** manage the Sustainability Action Lab programme, coordinate the inputs of Strategic Partnerships and Sustainability Education, support completion of the Shared Understanding document between Academic Leads and Collaboration Partner(s), act as a contact point for Collaboration Partners during implementation and check-in at agreed intervals. They lead programme evaluation, and enable dissemination, celebration and storytelling of Sustainability Action Lab projects.
- **Sustainability Education Team.** Each collaboration project is assigned a Sustainability Education Lead, who can support Academic Leads to integrate sustainability learning outcomes into their project. The Sustainability Education Team also contribute to implementation of the Sustainability Action Lab evaluation approach. Direct supports can also be provided by arrangement, including the following workshops:
 - Sustainability Workshop
 - SDG Workshop
 - [Doughnut Economics Workshop](#)
 - [Climate Fresk Workshop](#)
- The **Strategic Partnerships Team** support collaborations by working with Societal Engagement to identify suitable partners, where this is required.

SHARING IMPACT

- Sustainability Action Lab projects are featured on the TU Dublin website as [Impact Stories](#), which showcase how students, staff, and collaboration partners are working together to build a more sustainable, inclusive future.
- Projects are also mapped geographically on to the Sustainability Action Lab Impact Map.
- A Sustainability Action Lab Celebration and Roundtable event celebrates each project at the end of the academic year. [Read about the 2026 event.](#)



Photography and The Environment: A Community Engaged Learning Project

Programmes:
BA Creative Digital Media

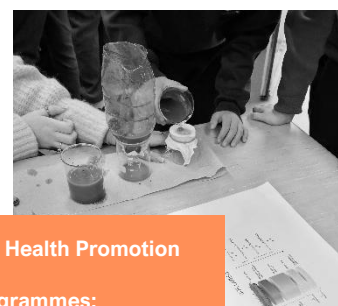
Partner: Global Action Plan



Restoring Sight: A Community-Based Eye Care Initiative

Programme:
BSc Optometry

Partner: Capuchin Day Centre



Soil Health Promotion

Programmes:
BSc Analytical Chemistry
BSc Pharmaceutical Science
BSc Medicinal Chemistry & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Partner: Liberties Community Project

Collaboration Activation

ACTIVATING YOUR PROJECT

There are three stages in setting up a Sustainability Action Lab collaboration:

Stage 1: Submit an Expression of Interest

Completing an [Expression of Interest form](#) is the first step in progressing your 2026-2027 collaboration. Academic Leads will then be contacted by the Sustainability Action Lab team to continue the onboarding process.

Expressions of Interest are welcome between:

1. Semester 1 Projects: May – September 2026
2. Semester 2 Projects: May – January 2026

Stage 2: Develop the Collaboration

Those who have submitted an Expression of Interest can avail of project development and capacity building supports. This is most relevant for academics developing new or innovative collaborations. Send an Expression of Interest early if you are interested in these supports.

Stage 3: Complete the Shared Understanding Process

A “Shared Understanding” process involves working with the Collaboration Partner to explore and agree the scope of the collaboration and ensure there is a shared understanding of what is expected of all parties. This process can start once an Expression of Interest has been received and a Collaboration Partner identified. Sustainability Action Lab 2026-2027 requires completion of the following:

- **Project Description Form.** This MS Form will be issued to Academic Leads that have completed an Expression of Interest, through which detailed project information will be collected. The form can be edited and updated prior to final submission, and a Word document version can also be provided to support off-line preparation.
- **Shared Understanding Process.** After the Project Description form is submitted, a pre-populated Shared Understanding document will be issued to the Academic Lead, which is signed by both parties. A completed and signed Shared Understanding document should be completed prior to implementation of the collaboration project.

Final dates for joining the programme are:

1. Semester 1 Projects: 22 September 2026
2. Semester 2 Projects: 18 January 2027

Contact Bernardine Carroll, Sustainability Action Lab Learning Coordinator:
@tudublin.ie

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

The Sustainability Education team works to integrate sustainability into the curriculum at TU Dublin to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of student experience across all academic programmes. University-wide strategic initiatives like the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes¹ have informed the development of Sustainability Action Lab.

Collaborations to date have exemplified how Sustainability Action Lab can support the development of the 'Planet: Sustainability focused, global citizens'² and 'Partnership: Collaborative, real-world problem solvers'³ graduate attributes in TU Dublin's students. Depending on the theme of the collaboration, there is potential to develop the "People: Digitally capable, lifelong learners"⁴ graduate attribute too.

GREENCOMP⁵ – THE EUROPEAN SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

Sustainability Action Lab can contribute to developing the competencies needed to address the UN SDGs in areas such as 'embodying sustainability values', 'embracing complexity in sustainability', 'envisioning sustainable futures' and 'acting for sustainability'.

Sustainability Action Lab has the potential to support the development of these sustainability competencies in TU Dublin's students, and in our collaborating partners too. In addition, these collaborations can create local and context specific understanding of the UN SDGs amongst the collaboration group.

¹ [Graduate Attributes | TU Dublin](#)

² Planet: Sustainability focused, global citizens. Socially engaged and responsible graduates leading the sustainability and equity agendas with passion, purpose and resilience.'

³ 'People: Collaborative, real-world problem solvers - equipped with the skills and abilities to respond proactively and effectively to future challenges'

⁴ People: Digitally capable, lifelong learners empowered to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing digitally connected world.'

⁵ [GreenComp conceptual reference model - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)