



Universidad de Costa Rica- SDG 15 Report: 2023-2024 (submitted by UCR to the IAU HESD Cluster, May 2024)

Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) promotes an institutional culture oriented towards sustainability, through its strategic planning and institutional policies 2021-2025, aiming at strengthening an environmental dimension in all its substantive areas: research, academic affairs, and social outreach.

During the period 2023-2024, UCR continued developing multiple and diverse programs and activities that contribute to understand how we can better integrate with our communities to find ways in which we can jointly fulfill the achievement of Agenda 2030.

1. Activities with IAU:

In February 2024, the University of Costa Rica was virtually represented at the Conference on SDGs, organized by the University of Bergen, particularly in the session “A Whole-Institution Approach for ESD and the SDGs”, with the presentation “Education for the SDGs at the UCR”, by Dr. Ana María Durán Quesada.

In this activity, Ana María Durán Quesada, Ph.D., professor at UCR’s School of Physics and researcher at the Research Center on Environmental Pollution([CICA-UCR](#)) shared some current initiatives at UCR that contribute to an institutional approach for education of sustainable development:

- Students’ participation in programs devoted to reaching SDGs allowing them to interact with peers of different careers, backgrounds, and countries.
- Several workshops conducted each year in which a whole international community contributes to expand horizons for SDGs.
- Goals for equity and equity for the goals resonate in our university to continue the development of a modern curriculum in which understanding the role of our professional development for SDGs is a priority.
- Classwork that includes seminars, workshops, emphasizing interactions, training, and lab work, where students take part in research activities with UCR professors and international experts, in a modern infrastructure with state-of-the-art labs, among others.

In general terms, as Dr. Durán stated, UCR is contributing to education on SDGs through four main areas:



- The integration of SDGs and strategies as part of the course work, through hands on training on the relevance of those goals from the curriculum perspective.
- Open doors approach towards the community to ensure that it has access to institutional participation on SDGs in teaching, research, and social outreach.
- Focus not only on the national context, but also on regional, socioeconomical and political contexts to strengthen partnerships for the goals at different levels. Regional integration is key, so no one is left behind.
- Integration in multi, inter, and transdisciplinary groups to engage in problem solving, fostering the development of working groups for an integral view for SDGs.

2. Documentation of actions with impact on SDGs:

At UCR a lot of institutional and interinstitutional efforts are done to benefit Costa Rican society through different projects, and it is very important to share their relationship with Agenda 2030 fulfillment. For this, our institutional Planning Office continued documenting it through the following "[Aportes a los ODS](#)". By 2022, they registered 507 actions within UCR projects contributing to SDG 15. They will update this information to include 2023 numbers around mid-2024.

3. Interdisciplinary and regional projects:

Some of the projects related to SDG 15, that have been developing through this period, include the following:

- Research and Social Outreach Program Biodistricts¹ of Torres River:

UCR's Academic Unit: School of Architecture

This project contributes to territorial management based on research for the comprehensive conservation and connectivity of the ecosystems of the Torres River micro-basin, creating the conditions for the healthy and inclusive enjoyment of the ecosystem benefits of the river and territorial resilience. Among its axes are adaptation to climate change, promotion of gender equality, poverty reduction and promotion of social innovation. UCR serves as a counterpart of public and private initiatives within this project, which are transdisciplinary from their formulation, management, and research components.

¹ A biodistrict is a political-administrative unit whose management understands a territory as a social and ecological system, where territorial planning and governance are aimed at improving and stimulating ecosystem services.



- Interdisciplinary Program of Research for the Comprehensive Management of Water and Soil Resources, at the Experimental Basin of Abangares River:

UCR's Academic Units: Research Center for Sustainable Development, School of Surveying, School of Civil Engineering, Research Institute on Health, Research Center for Atomic, Nuclear, and Molecular Science, Research Center on Marine Science and Limnology, and UCR's Chemical Regency.

Its objective is to promote the sustainable use of resources, with emphasis on the supply of water for human consumption. This basin is one of the most studied in Latin America and has reached the category of experimental basin, which attracts national and international researchers from multiple areas of knowledge.

- Educational Community Spaces for the understanding and fulfillment of SDGs 2030:

UCR's Academic Unit: Research Center Observatory for the Development (CIOdD)

This social outreach project serves as a tool to promote environmental, social, and economical practices, in different areas of the country and opens spaces for education and reflection on SDGs, with the support of 24 students of different majors and from UNDP, through training at the communities, including workshops, maps of water resources, recycling centers support, etc.

- Social Outreach projects on Environmental Management:

UCR's Academic Unit: UCR Regional Campuses

UCR is distributed around the country with 8 campuses and 4 regional branches. Around the different regional campuses, it also fosters an environmental culture of all its activities in harmony with environmental sustainability. At the national level, there are near 200 ongoing social outreach projects led by UCR professors where students contribute to fulfilling the communities needs in different areas. Just to mention some examples, at the Caribbean Regional Campus and at the Atlantic Regional Campus, through these projects the Institution promotes environmental education and comprehensive waste management, as well as the protection of water resources, among others.



Source: UCR's web page. May 2024.

4. Knowledge Dissemination on SDG 15 related issues:

UCR's Academic Unit: UCR's Channel and other platforms

Throughout the year, our university shares through its institutional platforms, such as its TV Channel and streaming platform [UCRQ.tv](https://www.ucrq.tv), free access productions, such as documentaries. It also offers reports and educational information, in different articles at its weekly newspaper "[El Semanario](#)", "[C+T](#)", and its web page, including topics related to SDG 15. Further information on some of these: [Publicaciones relacionadas con ODS 15.xlsx](#)

5. Other active Institutional Initiatives:

- o Network of Protected Areas (RAP in Spanish)

It is a special and multidisciplinary research unit, attached to the Vice-Rector's Office for Research of UCR. It is dedicated to the protection of natural reserve areas owned or managed by agreements, which for national and institutional convenience protect diverse natural resources. It protects 14 areas and 5 more others will be integrated soon.

For more information: <https://www.rap.ucr.ac.cr/recursos/videos>



- o Unit of Environmental Management (UGA)- Environmental Award

As part of UCR's Administration Vice-Rector's Office, UGA articulates internal efforts in environmental matters and designs mechanisms towards their administrative management. By the end of 2023, it launched a new edition of UCR Environmental Award, which promotes an environmental culture and implementation of good practices.

For more information: https://www.facebook.com/UGAUCR/?locale=es_LA

6. Internationalization Activities:

- o Visiting Scholars Program

This program is aimed at supporting UCR academic units to invite outstanding faculty or experts from abroad to contribute to strengthening their academic work and internationalize their curriculum, through a biannual call administered by the Office of International Affairs and External Cooperation. For 2023, within this Program UCR received high level scholars from the Real Botanical Garden of Madrid, Spain; Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Italy; Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil; Universidade Fluminense, Brazil; University of Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico, who offered workshops, participated in Seminars, Encounters, among others, within the framework of topics contributing to SDG 15 fulfillment.

7. Future collaborations:

To foster more interaction with other partner universities from HESD CLUSTER, we have created brochures, shared information through our social networks, and we have been coordinating internal meetings to promote opportunities within the Cluster. Additionally, we hosted the first [UCR's International Week 2024](#) during April 16-19, 2024, where we had a Webinar on IAU opportunities of internationalization for our professors and researchers, with the participation of IAU's Program Officer, Ms. Isabel Toman.

Besides, in order to promote networking opportunities to explore further collaborations within SDG 15 with interested partners from HESD CLUSTER, we share this important information prepared by our Vice Rector's Office for Research [DOSSIER DIPROVID.pdf](#), in order to promote some new synergies.