



SCIENCE AND EDUCATION  
FOR SUSTAINABLE LIFE

# Policy for SLU's global contribution to Agenda 2030

Policy document | Vice-Chancellor | 07/01/2019

**In 2015, the United Nations member states committed to Agenda 2030 with its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to tackle the global challenges and transform our world. The Agenda is universal and indivisible, and eradicating poverty and leaving no one behind are at its core. It is closely connected to several international agreements including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.** SLU, with its mission to develop knowledge and capacity for sustainable management and use of the biological natural resources through research, education and environmental monitoring, has an important role to play in the global implementation of Agenda 2030. SLU's international engagement spans more than half a century and is aligned with Sweden's Policy for Global Development.

As one of the leading agricultural universities in the world, SLU continuously strengthens its work through international collaboration. Through cutting-edge research collaborations and long-term capacity building partnerships the university develops knowledge and supports capacity building that benefit society and contribute to sustainable global development. SLU is critically researching and developing the understanding of sustainability in different contexts and dimensions through an inter- and transdisciplinary approach.

## Priorities

SLU focuses its contribution to Agenda 2030 on six areas that reflect the university's mission and strengths. Each area is linked to several SDGs and efforts will be made to monitor our contribution to the related targets. Achieving the SDGs globally will require political will, adequate financing, evidence-based policies and participatory processes to address social and gender inequalities, ensure that basic needs for food, shelter, decent jobs and income are met, while safeguarding biological and physical natural resources for the future. Central to our research will be goal conflicts, trade-offs and synergies inherent in the SDGs and the different dimensions of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. Our priorities are:

**Climate change** – Climate change fundamentally impacts all parts of society and adaptation needs to be at the core of development. SLU will further increase its efforts towards context specific solutions for increased resilience and adaptation as well as mitigation. Major challenges include transforming agriculture and food systems into resilient systems with low emissions, and balancing forestry's role to store carbon and provide biomaterials with biodiversity conservation and resilience of local communities. ▶

**Food security** – Food and nutrition security are linked to quality and diversity of agricultural production, productivity, market access and functional value chains. Reaching global food security under a changing climate requires intensification of agriculture, sustainable in all dimensions. Important aspects are inclusive livelihoods, resource use efficiency, judicious use of agricultural inputs and animal welfare. Rapid development of biotechnology, use of big data and artificial intelligence provide both opportunities and challenges in this context. Globally, changing consumption patterns, including shifting diets and new protein sources, are key drivers in food systems. Well-functioning policies and governance are central to the systems, from sustainable management of natural resources, including aquatic resources, to enabling improved livelihoods and reduction of post-harvest losses and food waste.

**Circular and biobased economy** – Efficient solutions for reuse of resources such as nutrients and water are fundamental for a circular economy. The transition to a biobased economy drives a rapid development of novel products and combined materials, e.g. for fiber, energy and medical use. The increasing demands for biomass require a better understanding of interlinkages and trade-offs between production of biomaterials, fuel and food in relation to carbon sequestration and biodiversity. Questions related to land-use and tenure rights are central to these issues.

**Biodiversity and ecosystems** – Biodiversity, on land and in water, is lost at an alarming pace; the consequences for ecosystems and ecosystem services, critical for the existence and well-being of humans, are complex and insufficiently understood. Research and monitoring of relevant indicators are needed for development of adaptive, integrated management and restoration plans for different types of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. For domesticated species, breeding programmes can play an important role for conservation and enhancement of genetic diversity.

**Global health** – Urbanisation, climate change, altered livestock systems and inadequate water management are drivers for evolving health risks from zoonotic diseases, geographic expansion of disease vectors and microbiological and toxicological threats. Sustainable use of antibiotics in livestock is key to curb the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance.

**Urban sustainability** – The ongoing rapid urbanisation affects both urban and rural areas and the drivers, dynamics and consequences of these processes need to be better understood. Facing the consequences of climate change, such as extreme weather events and sea level rise, urban landscapes, as socio-ecological systems, prompt

transdisciplinary research on the planning, design and management of urban spaces, including green infrastructure, in order to create sustainable and inclusive cities.

## Implementation

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SLU focuses its global collaboration on development of **knowledge, education and innovation** that can contribute to achieving the SDGs. **Capacity building** plays a specific role in low-income countries, where national universities of high quality have a fundamental role for education and research, and on the development in society at large. To further enhance societal impact, efforts to synthesise research results and support **science-based policy development** are a priority. Furthermore, SLU's expertise in **environmental monitoring and assessment** provides opportunities for international collaboration, including capacity development. Building on this expertise, SLU provides data for Sweden's reporting on several of the SDG indicators to the UN.

The university is actively contributing to institutional capacity development in collaboration with international partner universities. At the vice-chancellor's office, the unit **SLU Global** supports and facilitates the university's efforts to collaborate with low-income countries and regions, and promotes relevant and coherent approaches in that context. SLU will continue to focus on **strategic partnerships**, including multi-stakeholder partnerships with actors outside academia. Collaborations with a potential for long-term impact towards the SDGs are prioritised.

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Read more about SLU's work for global development at:

[www.slu.se/slu-global](http://www.slu.se/slu-global)