

Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University (UKMO) Involvement in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1-17)

Introduction

Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University (UKMO), located in the heart of the Algerian Sahara, is strategically positioned to address unique regional and national challenges, particularly those related to energy, water, and desert agriculture. Its involvement with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is integrated into its mission through education, research, community engagement, and campus operations.

SDG 1: No Poverty

- **Involvement:** The university actively works to reduce poverty through economic opportunity. It operates the **Ouargla University Incubator (IUO)** and a Career Center, fostering student entrepreneurship, creating start-ups, and helping students secure employment, thereby promoting financial inclusion and stability in the region.
- **THE Impact Ranking:** Ranked 1501+ in the THE Impact Rankings 2025.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- **Involvement:** Given its geographic context, the university focuses research on **Saharan agriculture** and food security in arid environments. Research within the Faculty of Natural and Life Sciences centers on improving crop resilience, sustainable irrigation techniques, and date palm cultivation crucial for local livelihoods.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

- **Involvement:** UKMO organizes regular health awareness campaigns on campus, covering topics such as drug abuse, mental health, and general physical well-being. It ensures access to medical services for students and staff and contributes to public health knowledge through relevant research.

SDG 4: Quality Education

- **Involvement:** As a core function, UKMO is dedicated to providing inclusive and equitable quality education. It harmonizes its Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral programs to meet global standards. It also emphasizes lifelong learning through intensive language training centers (CEIL) and E-learning platforms.
- **THE Impact Ranking:** Ranked **201-300th** in the THE Impact Rankings 2025, demonstrating strong performance in this core area.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

- **Involvement:** The university maintains clear anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies to ensure equal opportunities and participation for all genders in academia and leadership positions. It promotes gender balance in student enrollment across all faculties, including historically male-dominated fields like Hydrocarbons.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- **Involvement:** Water management is a critical research area due to the region's aridity. The university holds research competitions and forums focused on **water treatment and resource efficiency**, such as organizing a competition for the best proposal to establish a wastewater treatment plant. Research labs use specialized modeling software (like MODFLOW) for groundwater studies.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- **Involvement:** The Faculty of Hydrocarbons, Renewable Energies, Earth and Universe Sciences leads extensive research into sustainable energy solutions. The university encourages student innovation through competitions for renewable energy projects, contributing directly to energy transition efforts in the country.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- **Involvement:** Beyond career services, the university actively fosters local economic growth by supporting research that serves the region's economic sectors (hydrocarbons and agriculture). It supports spin-offs and start-ups through its Incubator, linking academic output to productive employment.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

- **Involvement:** UMKO focuses on building resilient infrastructure and promoting innovation. Its faculties are dedicated to advanced engineering, new information, and communication technologies (NICT), positioning the university as a hub for digital and industrial innovation in southern Algeria.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

- **Involvement:** The university aims to reduce inequality by providing broad access to higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the region. It maintains a welcoming and inclusive environment and has governance structures focused on equality and diversity.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- **Involvement:** Through its urban planning and civil engineering research, UMKO contributes to developing sustainable solutions for its region. This includes studies on desert

urbanization, sustainable transportation, and local infrastructure projects adapted to the Saharan environment.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

- **Involvement:** Efforts include implementing policies for sustainable procurement and encouraging waste reduction on campus. Research focuses on responsible management of natural resources, particularly in energy and raw materials, through programs in the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

SDG 13: Climate Action

- **Involvement:** As a region severely impacted by climate change, UKMO's research addresses climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. This includes studies on carbon capture, renewable energy integration, and monitoring environmental indicators specific to arid and semi-arid regions.

SDG 14: Life Below Water

- **Involvement:** While Ouargla is inland, the university contributes through relevant environmental sciences curricula, educating future experts on integrated water resource management that impacts all aquatic ecosystems, and participating in national environmental policy discussions.

SDG 15: Life on Land

- **Involvement:** The Natural and Life Sciences Faculty specializes in desert ecology, biodiversity conservation, and combating desertification—issues crucial to the Ouargla area. Research is dedicated to protecting fragile Saharan ecosystems and promoting sustainable land management.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

- **Involvement:** The university demonstrates its commitment by actively contributing academic expertise to the development of national legislation and policy (e.g., on mining activities). The Faculty of Law and Political Sciences trains professionals in governance, justice, and effective institutions.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

- **Involvement:** UKMO prioritizes strengthening international and national collaboration. It engages with local, regional, and international partners (universities, industries, government) to implement joint research projects, capacity building, and knowledge-sharing initiatives to accelerate SDG achievement.
- **THE Impact Ranking:** Ranked 1001-1500th in the THE Impact Rankings 2025.