



**UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY**

**UNU-IAS**

Institute for the Advanced Study  
of Sustainability

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# UNU-IAS Strategic Plan

## 2020–2024

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# 1. Mission & Vision

## UNU-IAS MISSION:

*“to meet the pressing challenges for achieving sustainability that are of concern to the United Nations and its Member States”<sup>1</sup>*

- **Inform policymaking for sustainability by producing and disseminating solution-oriented research**
- **Promote interdisciplinary understanding and approaches**
- **Develop future generations of policymakers and researchers**

## Shared Vision for UNU-IAS:

*Institutional Vision: Create a high-quality, evolving institution with professionals who ask questions, challenge the status quo, formulate innovative solutions, and contribute in pursuit of a more sustainable future for people and our planet.*

UNU-IAS will create new value for our stakeholders by integrating different areas of expertise in both academia and policymaking, maximising knowledge-sharing through multi-stakeholder networks, and enhancing synergies between the SDGs and with other global agendas. The institute will drive interconnectedness between academia (the science and academic communities) and policymakers, mobilising evidence-based knowledge in supporting stakeholders (local, national, regional, and global) to realise sustainable solutions. UNU-IAS will advance the broader transformation towards sustainability in society, cultivating responsible global citizens who will promote well-being, improve inclusiveness, and make a difference in realising societies in harmony with nature.

This shared vision is the foundation for the institute’s strategy. UNU-IAS strives to drive progress towards sustainability as an international think tank providing solutions for the SDGs.

This strategy is developed in alignment with the overall objectives of the UNU Strategic Plan 2020–2024:

1. Pursue policy-relevant programming
2. Invest in a dynamic, innovative, and diverse institutional culture
3. Strengthen collaboration, communications, and visibility
4. Strive for financial sustainability across UNU’s architecture

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<sup>1</sup> UNU-IAS Statute, Article II.1

## 2. Overall Strategic Objectives

### **OBJECTIVE #1: SCALE UP RESULTS THROUGH SYNERGY**

#### **Scale up results by enhancing synergies between UNU-IAS Thematic Programmes<sup>2</sup>**

- a. Establish an institutional culture that reflects the institute's core values (principles) by breaking the siloes of project-based activities.
- b. Align the institute's activities with global agendas and priorities on sustainability, contributing to climate action and resilience, and reflecting the shared vision
- c. Drive policy integration for protection of the global environment and sustainable development, including through contributing to international frameworks
- d. Prioritise activities that reach key policy audiences to achieve direct impact and drive positive change
- e. Promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality in all activities

### **OBJECTIVE #2: INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

#### **Transform the UNU-IAS organisational structure to effectively implement the UNU-IAS Strategic Plan**

- a. Establish a Strategy and Management Office (SMO) that will oversee and guide implementation of the strategy, and provide overall programme management
- b. Create the UNU-IAS Strategic Programme, aiming to raise the visibility of UNU-IAS activities
- c. Establish and mobilise a fundraising mechanism within the SMO to pursue strategic opportunities and coordinate efforts across the institute to diversify funding sources
- d. Strengthen the UNU-IAS Communication unit, which will promote internal communications and outreach of all UNU-IAS Programmes
- e. Establish a mechanism to strengthen close communication with the Advisory Board and the Rector's Office
- f. Position OUIK to implement the strategy of UNU-IAS in local contexts
- g. Position GEOC to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships and knowledge management

### **OBJECTIVE #3: STAFF DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT**

#### **Foster a dynamic working environment that supports and engages all UNU-IAS personnel in realising the institute's shared vision, and reflects its core values:**

- a. Institute a mechanism to enhance staff learning and development
- b. Develop a comprehensive evaluation mechanism including self-evaluation and peer review
- c. Ensure the transparency of internal policies and actively promote their understanding among personnel

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<sup>2</sup> UNU-IAS Thematic Programmes: "Biodiversity & Society", "Water & Resource Management", and "Innovation & Education".

- d. Ensure the engagement of administrative and support staff in decision-making and planning
- e. Create a safe, supportive, and harmonious work environment, including flexible working arrangements
- f. Strengthen ICT infrastructure, software, and applications to increase efficiency, facilitate collaboration, and ensure information security
- g. Promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality in institutional activities

#### **OBJECTIVE #4: ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

##### **Ensure academic excellence and disseminate quality outputs to contribute to society:**

- a. Strategically plan and prioritise publications, as outputs of the institute, in reputable academic peer-reviewed journals to raise the visibility of UNU-IAS research
- b. Promote collaboration between Thematic Programmes on research projects to advance interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary research to stimulate innovation
- c. Mobilise the institute's networks (including visiting scholars) and develop strategic research collaboration with new and existing partners to raise quality
- d. Expand publication of policy briefs in coordination with external experts
- e. Strengthen publication output for social impact, with collaboration with other UNU institutes and other UN entities, including a UNU-IAS book series on sustainability

#### **OBJECTIVE #5: RESEARCH–EDUCATION INTEGRATION**

##### **Enhance the quality and effectiveness of UNU-IAS by integrating the Thematic Programmes/ Strategic Programme postgraduate degree programmes:**

- a. Align the postgraduate degree programmes with the objectives of the Thematic Programmes and promote joint research through UNU-IAS networks
- b. Strategically allocate young research fellows including UNU-JSPS Postdoctoral Fellows to strengthen partnerships with other research and educational institutions
- c. Expand strategic collaboration on sustainability studies with universities in Japan and beyond
- d. Collaborate with other UNU institutes to enhance quality education programmes
- e. Expand the Intensive Core Courses to reach the professional community in Tokyo
- f. Plan and implement internship programmes for potential postgraduate students, to support future recruitment and the visibility of the institute

#### **OBJECTIVE #6: MEASUREMENT FOR RESULTS**

##### **Enhance accountability by establishing a results, monitoring, and evaluation framework:**

- a. Develop a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and sub-indicators to measure the impacts of UNU-IAS collective actions

- b. Indicate quantitative targets for all programmes, which will be achieved by the end of, or beyond the period of the strategic plan, according to the core KPIs and sub-indicators, through implementation of collective activities which may include contributions by UNU-IAS partners
- c. Monitor and evaluate all UNU-IAS programmes based on the achievements of the targets related to core KPIs and sub-indicators, and submit a monitoring and evaluation report to the UNU-IAS Advisory Board for review and feedback

## **OBJECTIVE #7: CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **Strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of key actors to advance progress on the SDGs and other priority international agendas:**

- a. Formulate and implement a strategy for UNU-IAS to build capacity by applying the integrated, science-based knowledge generated by the institute and its networks
- b. Contribute to the capacity building of Member States in collaboration with other UN agencies, including future generations of policymakers and researchers
- c. Review and strengthen the institutional mechanisms of UNU-IAS to serve as a secretariat of major international networks (i.e., IPSI, ProSPER.Net, and RCEs)
- d. Provide technical support to governments for national reporting under international conventions and other global agendas (2030 Agenda, VNRs<sup>3</sup>, CBD/NBSAPs<sup>4</sup>, UNFCCC/NDCs<sup>5</sup>, NAPs<sup>6</sup>, water, plastics, higher education, etc.)
- e. Develop a leading role for UNU-IAS in the educational and capacity building agendas set up under the conventions

## **OBJECTIVE #8: PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Build multi-stakeholder partnerships to contribute to global policy agendas related to sustainability:**

- a. Link and mobilise the contributions of diverse partners including governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society, from local to global
- b. Enhance partnerships with other UNU institutes to scale-up UNU-wide impact through joint research, education, fundraising, and organisation of high-level events
- c. Strengthen existing links with UN entities, while cultivating new partnerships with development banks and other key organisations
- d. Expand partnerships with funding agencies and other donors to support both research and postgraduate degree programmes
- e. Expand innovative and adaptive models, including formulation of new partnership programmes, mobilising expertise located in universities and research institutes

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<sup>3</sup> VNRs: Voluntary National Reviews

<sup>4</sup> NBSAPs: National Biodiversity Strategy Actions Plan

<sup>5</sup> NDCs: Nationally Determined Contributions

<sup>6</sup> NAPs: National Adaptation Plans

**OBJECTIVE #9: COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT<sup>7</sup>****Strengthen communications, outreach, and knowledge management across the UNU-IAS Strategic and Thematic Programmes:**

- a. Develop the UNU-IAS communications strategy by integrating communications activities across the institute, including GEOC and postgraduate programmes, and improving coherence and quality
- b. Strengthen the UNU-IAS brand and online presence, in close alignment with the new UNU-wide visual identity and web platform
- c. Enhance UNU-IAS communications capacity to shape, package, and deliver knowledge in a timely manner
- d. Develop integrated contributions to key international events and policy processes, by combining knowledge from multiple UNU-IAS programmes
- e. Coordinate dissemination and promotion of UNU-IAS academic and policy-oriented outputs across communications channels, including outreach activities
- f. Increase audience engagement through new products and approaches, including strategies for traditional and social media

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<sup>7</sup> UNU-IAS knowledge: including research findings, policy recommendations and tools produced by UNU-IAS Strategic and Thematic Programmes (combined with the postgraduate degree programme) as well as those produced by UNU-IAS partners

## 3. Programme-specific Objectives

### 3.1 Strategic Programme

The Strategic Programme will implement cross-cutting and flagship activities of UNU-IAS, together with the institute's Global Environment Outreach Centre (GEOC). The programme will organise highly visible events on key research and educational topics of UNU-IAS, promote research synergies between the three Thematic Programmes and OUIK, and contribute to urgent global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and green recovery. The programme will establish and implement a Results, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RME) Framework to increase the visibility of the impacts of UNU-IAS activities for multiple SDGs. It will also implement capacity building activities including the Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development. The Strategic Programme and GEOC will collaborate on innovative communication and outreach activities, strengthening UNU-IAS digital knowledge provision within the integrated UNU-IAS website, enhancing UNU-IAS capacity to organise webinars and manage online databases, and providing evidence-based inputs to the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF), among others.

#### Strategic Objectives:

#### 1. Strengthen management of UNU-IAS by establishing and operating a Strategy and Management Office (SMO):

- a. Align and manage the institute's human and financial resources and activities for implementation of the strategic plan, including through a strengthened management structure and a robust mechanism for programme planning and implementation
- b. Develop and implement a strategic fundraising mechanism to pursue strategic opportunities and coordinate efforts across the institute to diversify funding sources
- c. Enhance relationships with UNU-IAS Board members, the UNU Rector's Office, and other UNU institutes and units, ensuring regular communication
- d. Strengthen external relationships with major donors including ministries of the Government of Japan, jfUNU, international organisations, and the private sector
- e. Lead and coordinate planning and implementation of the UNU ISO14001 strategy within the framework of the UN Greening the Blue initiative
- f. Conduct risk assessment and management of UNU-IAS, including implementation, review, and further development of the UNU-IAS Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

#### 2. Enhance the impact and visibility of UNU-IAS through integrated activities and policy engagement:

- a. Organise highly visible events focusing on the strengths of UNU-IAS research and project implementation
- b. Co-organise high-level events with UNU institutes and other key partners on relevant policies
- c. Promote research synergies between the Thematic Programmes of UNU-IAS, in line with major global agendas including the 2030 Agenda, biodiversity, climate change, water, and education for sustainable development

- d. Develop a strategy to promote research on urgent global efforts such as green recovery, decarbonisation, circular economy, and digital transformation
  - e. Promote effective coordination and synergies between UNU-IAS research activities and the institute's postgraduate degrees and training programmes
- 3. Establish and implement a UNU-IAS Results, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RME) Framework to increase the visibility of UNU-IAS activities' impacts on multiple SDGs:**
- a. Develop a methodology and mechanism for collecting and analysing data to monitor the research and education activities of UNU-IAS
  - b. Develop and utilise key performance indicators (KPIs) and sub-indicators created under the RME Framework
  - c. Strengthen internal capacity for data analysis with solid quantitative and qualitative expertise (evidence-based methodology)
  - d. Conduct periodic external evaluation of the RME Framework to review and validate its effectiveness
- 4. Strengthen the UNU-IAS mechanism for supporting technical and institutional capacity of local actors through multi-stakeholder partnerships:**
- a. Develop and implement capacity building activities including the Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development in the Asia Pacific in collaboration with UNESCAP and other relevant agencies
  - b. Develop new activities and expertise in the areas of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of multiple SDGs, in collaboration with UN and other international organisations including UN DESA, UNFCCC, and the CBD Secretariat
  - c. Support governments, enterprises, communities, and civil society through technical advice and information exchange for localisation of SDGs
- 5. Enhance innovative communication and outreach activities to promote the knowledge and expertise of UNU-IAS and its partners, in alignment with the institute's Communications strategy:<sup>8</sup>**
- a. Enhance UNU-IAS capacity to organise webinars and manage online databases and websites to effectively communicate the institute's products and expertise
  - b. Strengthen the role and functions of the Global Environmental Outreach Centre (GEOC), including translation of global knowledge into local action
  - c. Disseminate articles, policy briefs, and newsletters of all UNU-IAS programmes effectively and widely, utilising UNU-IAS networks including GEOC, IPSI, RCEs, ProSPER.Net and SDG–University Platform
  - d. Provide evidence-based inputs to partner organisations for global discussions, including the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)
  - e. Produce a UNU-IAS book series to showcase the institute's research

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<sup>8</sup> Section 3.8 in this document

## 3.2 Biodiversity & Society

This programme will implement activities in the thematic area Biodiversity and Society (BDS). The programme will promote evidence-based measurement on effectiveness of Socio-Ecological Production Landscape and Seascapes (SEPLS) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), based on accumulated knowledge and experience including the Indicators of Resilience in SEPLS,<sup>9</sup> to contribute to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The BDS programme will also implement technical and institutional capacity development activities such as assisting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to promote landscape approaches through the process of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). It will prioritise academic excellence through engaging with the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The programme will also support the quality and quantity of activities conducted by the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI), promoting a fair participatory process and multi-stakeholder engagement as well as knowledge management in collaboration with other UNU-IAS programmes and external partners.

### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Strengthen academic excellence, focusing on research under the theme of Biodiversity and Society:**
  - a. Promote the Satoyama Initiative Thematic Review (SITR) through a top-ranked academic publisher
  - b. Prioritise UNU-IAS engagement with the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) through research activities on Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS)
  - c. Strengthen publication of policy briefs on Biodiversity and Society by collaborating with external experts in Japan and other countries
  - d. Collaborate with IPSI members and, as applicable, other international organisations such as CBD, UNDP, GEF, and IUCN to enhance the quality of research
  
- 2. Strengthen evidence-based measurement on effectiveness of Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS):**
  - a. Promote utilisation and, as applicable, update the Indicators of Resilience in SEPLS<sup>9</sup> to contribute to development of resilient and sustainable communities
  - b. Promote qualitative and quantitative measurement to verify the impact of IPSI activities on implementation of the Post-2020 GBF and the SDGs and provide evidence on the effectiveness of landscape approaches
  - c. Demonstrate the effectiveness of SEPLS for sites under OECMs through evaluation
  - d. Collaborate with the Strategic Programme and other Thematic Programmes to enhance visibility of the multiple benefits of SEPLS

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<sup>9</sup> UNU-IAS, Bioversity International, IGES, and UNDP. 2014. Toolkit for the Indicators of Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS). <https://collections.unu.edu/view/UNU:5435>

**3. Strengthen the policy advice function, supporting technical and institutional capacity development for stakeholders:**

- a. Assist Parties to the CBD with applying landscape approaches in the revision, update, and implementation of their NBSAPs, for effective implementation of the Post-2020 GBF
- b. Enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships, including IPSI, to promote comprehensive capacity development activities for achieving the Post-2020 GBF from the SEPLS perspective

**4. Enhance engagement with multiple stakeholders in promoting SEPLS for the Post-2020 GBF:**

- a. Enhance the quality and quantity of activities related to conservation and management of SEPLS, through promoting IPSI
- b. Enhance the effectiveness of the Satoyama Development Mechanism (SDM) in collaboration with other stakeholder through strategically updating the structure of the initiative
- c. Contribute to global efforts and policy dialogue on promoting landscape approaches with multiple stakeholders
- d. Contribute to the effective implementation of OECMs based on accumulated experience and knowledge on SEPLS, in collaboration with IPSI members and related stakeholders including non-state actors

**5. Enhance the knowledge of multiple stakeholders by promoting communication and outreach activities:**

- a. Organise and participate in events to promote knowledge on Biodiversity and Society at key international conferences with appropriate internal partners such as UNU-IAS Communications, GEOC, and OUIK, as well as with external partners
- b. Utilise effective communication tools to promote outreach activities of the programme including provision and dissemination of knowledge through the new UNU website platform
- c. Enhance communication with IPSI members as part of broader UNU-IAS communications efforts

### 3.3 Water & Resource Management

This programme will implement activities in the thematic area Water and Resource Management (WRM). It aims to lead policy research to transform water management systems by promoting decarbonised, circular economies, enhancing resilience through decentralised natural resource management, and developing an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach. It will promote smart, innovative, and community-based sustainable water management by strengthening research collaboration between local researchers and practitioners and exploring alternative water resources. This programme will strengthen results-based management of research and project activities through relevant KPIs on multiple-use water services, supporting local action and development plans. It will also contribute to the UN World Water Development Report and enhance outreach through partnerships with other UN organisations.

#### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Enhance research capacity on utilisation of sustainable water resources to transform water management systems:**
  - a. Lead policy research on water resource management that promotes low-carbon, circular economies, and decentralised natural resource management
  - b. Promote an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach to support sustainable, localised solutions for water management
  - c. Enhance policy dialogue and academic exchange to co-design sustainable water management systems with key stakeholders
  
- 2. Promote smart, innovative, and community-based sustainable water management through partnerships:**
  - a. Strengthen research collaboration between local researchers and practitioners to explore alternative water resources, including the IWRM approach
  - b. Develop a tool to evaluate the financial feasibility of localised water resources for practical use with potential long-term investment
  - c. Explore and employ appropriate technologies to ensure sustainable access to quality water, and to cope with public health crises including pandemics
  - d. Produce academic and policy-oriented publications in collaboration with local stakeholders, applying an interdisciplinary approach
  - e. Organise and participate in key national and international conferences to promote knowledge sharing, in collaboration with WSD partners and the UNU Water Network
  
- 3. Strengthen results-based management of research and project activities to support governance in the water sector:**
  - a. Develop outcome-based KPIs to monitor and evaluate the impacts of multiple-use water services towards equitable water governance
  - b. Strengthen data collection mechanisms through the WRM network to promote evidence-based analysis

- c. Develop a robust reporting system to support chorological and comparative analyses of water management, at the regional and global levels
- d. Produce a research impact tool on management of water resources for evaluating the sustainability and resilience of systems supporting a circular, decentralised, and decarbonised society

**4. Contribute research outcomes to strengthen international frameworks:**

- a. Mobilise the WRM network in supporting local actions and development plans for localisation of the SDGs to advance the global agenda
- b. Contribute to the UN World Water Development report and the UNU Water Network, based on the WRM evaluation system for resilient water management
- c. Strengthen intra-UNU collaboration and partnerships with UN organisations to increase the impacts of UNU-IAS activities on water
- d. Develop localisation approaches for international frameworks, in collaboration with OUIK

**5. Strengthen the policy advice function for relevant partners in sustainable water resources management:**

- a. Provide policy advice through organising workshops connecting international experts with local researchers and other stakeholders
- b. Encourage public participation in the management of water resources to promote effective implementation of policy advice
- c. Develop a training curriculum on water and resource management and disseminate it through the WRM network to relevant local partners

### 3.4 Innovation & Education

This programme will implement activities in the thematic area Innovation and Education (IVE), with the aim of contributing to global efforts towards achieving SDG 4.7<sup>10</sup>. It will reinforce evidence-based policy advice to translate global goals into innovative education for sustainable development (ESD) programmes through consolidated research on current issues, in close alignment with the ESD for 2030 Roadmap. It will also provide policy advice on ICT-supported lifelong learning that promotes sustainable development at all ages. In this context, the programme will strengthen the capacity of UNU-IAS regional and global networks, including professional networks in higher education and networks of localised expertise promoting ESD activities. It aims to create synergy within UNU-IAS, enhance partnerships with other UNU institutes and UN agencies, and expand multi-sectoral collaboration with development agencies and the private sector. It plans to design and deliver inclusive education contents and curricula using digital technology.

#### Strategic Objectives:

##### 1. Build up academic excellence in innovation and education:

- a. Create a solid knowledge base on educational innovation and use of learning technologies and their impact on sustainable development
- b. Design and deliver a new curriculum for UNU-IAS students on innovative and inclusive education, using digital technology to promote ESD for all
- c. Foster a laboratory of ideas and digital innovation for enabling action-oriented learning and critical thinking
- d. Conduct joint research and produce publications with prominent universities and specialised UN agencies

##### 2. Reinforce evidence-based policy advice to translate global goals into innovative local ESD programmes:

- a. Provide policy advice on ICT-supported lifelong learning that promotes ESD at scale through quantitative measurements of impacts
- b. Generate a science–policy interface for translating scientific knowledge on ESD into actionable local policy
- c. Conduct joint policy advice activities with other UNU-IAS Thematic Programmes at the national, regional, and global levels
- d. Produce evidence-based policy recommendations on implementing inclusive and innovative ESD through promoting lifelong learning, and disseminate them through policy briefs and policy engagement activities

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<sup>10</sup> SDG 4, target 4.7: *By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*

**3. Strengthen the capacity of UNU-IAS's regional and global networks on innovative ESD:**

- a. Support joint research activities by members of the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net) on innovative approaches to sustainable development, using learning technology to contribute to multiple SDGs in Asia and the Pacific
- b. Integrate issues of biodiversity, water, and climate change into the Leadership Programme and other training courses of ProSPER.Net
- c. Develop and implement a systematic support mechanism for the Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs)
- d. Implement capacity building activities (e.g., workshops, seminars, guidelines) for the RCE network, with a special focus on translating the global SDGs into local action through educational innovation

**4. Enhance transdisciplinary collaboration and partnership within and outside of UNU-IAS:**

- a. Mobilise ProSPER.Net and other higher education networks for UNU-IAS to contribute effectively to the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) as a Council Member
- b. Organise regular transdisciplinary seminars engaging the other Thematic Programmes and other UNU institutes, to explore potential areas of synergy in innovation
- c. Establish a resource mobilisation strategy targeting relevant UN agencies and development partners
- d. Cooperate with governments and the private sector in implementing innovative and inclusive ESD for lifelong learning, with a special focus on vulnerable populations affected by various global changes

**5. Strengthen knowledge sharing and outreach:**

- a. Strengthen provision and dissemination of knowledge through the launch and continuous development of the new UNU website platform in the area of innovation and education
- b. Publish and disseminate research outputs through peer-reviewed journals and major conferences
- c. Develop and disseminate digital materials (e.g., e-learning modules) on ESD through the science–policy interface (see 2.b above) for RCEs and wider audiences
- d. Utilise the GEOC network effectively and widely at the national and regional levels
- e. Use social media and other engagement tools to raise the visibility of the programme activities

### 3.5 Operating Unit Ishikawa/Kanazawa (OUIK)

This programme will implement the UNU-IAS Operating Unit Ishikawa/Kanazawa (OUIK). It aims to strengthen field-based research to enhance policy recommendations at multiple levels for biodiversity conservation and biocultural diversity, and demonstrate a local-to-local peer learning model in support of international and UN initiatives. OUIK will enhance policy advice by building a model for localisation of the SDGs, implementing joint activities with cities in Ishikawa Prefecture, and developing a platform to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships within the Hokuriku region as well as among international networks. It will also enhance outreach and knowledge management in cooperation with diverse stakeholders through international policy processes such as the CBD COP and the HLPF.

#### Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Strengthen field-based research to enhance policy recommendations at multiple levels for biocultural diversity conservation:**
  - a. Create a model of field-based action research, involving local and global stakeholders for joint policy development
  - b. Demonstrate a local-to-local peer learning model for sustainable management of biocultural diversity, based on the networks of international designation systems such as the FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) programme, the UNESCO Creative City Network, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, and the UNESCO Geoparks programme
  - c. Promote research and international cooperation on sustainable socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS) and agricultural heritage systems with international partners through the East Asia Research Association for Agricultural Heritage Systems (ERAHS), as the Secretariat for Japan
  
- 2. Enhance policy advice by building a model for localisation of the SDGs:**
  - a. Promote implementation of the SDGs at the local level in alignment with regional development policy
  - b. Strengthen joint implementation with cities in Ishikawa prefecture, promoting local efforts on the SDGs in both urban and rural settings
  - c. Develop and serve as a platform to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships within the Hokuriku region as well as among the international networks referred to in 1.b
  
- 3. Enhance outreach and knowledge management in cooperation with diverse stakeholders:**
  - a. Disseminate good practices rooted in local communities, through both national and international policy processes including the CBD COP and the HLPF
  - b. Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for ESD at the local level to pass on the value of local biocultural diversity to future generations
  - c. Contribute to building the capacities of all relevant stakeholders through implementing the strategies described above

### 3.6 Postgraduate Degrees & Training

This programme will strengthen implementation of the UNU-IAS master's and doctoral degree programmes, focused on the three Thematic Programmes, and strengthen the Intensive Core (IC) Courses in collaboration with partner universities. The programme will prioritise research–education integration by reorienting the doctoral degree programme to closely connect with ongoing research projects of UNU-IAS. It will strengthen outreach and visibility by developing IC courses that are open to the public, including the business community, and creating a series of career development sessions for prominent youth focused on the UN and international organisations. This programme will implement various capacity building activities, including engagement of the SDG–Universities Platform (SDG–UP) to support SDG-related research and education, enhancement of the UNU Global Seminar as a certificate programme of the institute, and promotion of the Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa (GLTP). UNU-IAS will strengthen its funding mechanism to support a high-quality Postgraduate Degrees and Training programme.

#### Strategic Objectives:

##### 1. Strengthen the UNU-IAS Postgraduate Degree Programmes to educate future generations in the field of sustainability:

- a. Develop and implement an overall strategy to strengthen the quality of the postgraduate degree programmes, including through joint publication opportunities
- b. Reorganise and strengthen the master's and doctoral degree programmes, establishing concentrations in each of the three Thematic Programmes and the Strategic Programme
- c. Enhance the IC Courses in collaboration with partner universities, exploring new topics and areas
- d. Review and strengthen the credit transfer system with collaborating universities, focusing on specific fields of the Thematic Programmes and Strategic Programme
- e. Review and explore opportunities for double degree programmes with prominent universities in Japan and beyond
- f. Develop and implement a strategy to attract high-achieving students by promoting the diversity of the UNU-IAS student body

##### 2. Prioritise research–education integration as a strength of the UNU-IAS Postgraduate Degree Programmes:

- a. Reinforce the postgraduate programme curriculum by mobilising UNU-IAS researchers and their professional networks
- b. Reorient the doctoral degree programme to closely connect with the research projects of UNU-IAS
- c. Develop students' research capacity by providing opportunities to participate in joint research projects with other UNU institutes, and involving doctoral students in the writing of policy briefs
- d. Explore internship opportunities for students to work at other UNU institutes and UN organisations

**3. Strengthen outreach activities with multiple stakeholders:**

- a. Develop IC courses open to the public, including the business community
- b. Create a series of career development sessions for prominent youth for UN and international organisations
- c. Develop and implement an outreach strategy with compelling digital content on the PDT programmes to effectively reach relevant audiences in Japan and beyond
- d. Provide students with community engagement opportunities
- e. Connect PDT activities to contribute to regional and international meetings by mobilising UNU-IAS networks

**4. Capacity building:**

- a. Enhance the SDG–UP project to support SDGs-related research and education in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region
- b. Enhance the UNU Global Seminar as a certificate programme of UNU-IAS in sustainability, mobilising the networks of SDG–UP and the Thematic Programmes
- c. Strengthen GLTP by collaborating with overseas universities and UNU-INRA
- d. Mobilise the diverse expertise of UNU-IAS Board members to enhance the quality of capacity development programmes
- e. Develop a high-quality joint research mechanism with Japanese universities, mobilising the Grant for Global Sustainability (GGS) in the Thematic Programmes and Strategic Programme
- f. Enhance synergies between the capacity development programmes of UNU-IAS to raise the quality and visibility of activities

**5. Strengthen the funding mechanism to support a high-quality Postgraduate Degrees and Training programme:**

- a. Review the funding resources of the PDT programme periodically and develop a strategy to support high-quality programmes, including self-funded students
- b. Strengthen fundraising efforts by allocating a marketing officer for the PDT programme
- c. Collaborate with jfUNU to strengthen fundraising in the business community to support scholarship programmes
- d. Explore international funds to strengthen scholarship provision to support prominent students
- e. Develop and enhance Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant schemes within UNU-IAS to support prominent students

## 3.7 Administration

UNU-IAS will strengthen administrative functions and activities to support the implementation of the strategic plan, including through an enhanced organisational structure, and ensure adherence to UNU rules and guidelines. UNU-IAS Administration will foster a safe and supportive working environment and enhance professional career development opportunities for personnel. The unit will improve the efficiency of administrative processes through ICT systems, and integrate sustainability considerations in operations, including procurement and travel.

### Strategic Objectives:

#### 1. Strengthen the UNU-IAS Administration unit:

- a. Review current functions and develop strategies and mechanisms for effective implementation of the administrative rules and guidelines of UNU
- b. Strengthen the human resources (HR) function to implement HR-related policies in coordination with the SMO
- c. Develop annual implementation plans for UNU-IAS Administration that identify important activities, and are shared with the SMO to ensure transparency in decision making
- d. Develop a mechanism for regular and open communication with UNU Centre
- e. Provide training and briefing sessions on rules and regulations to project-level administrative personnel

#### 2. Foster a safe and supportive working environment:

- a. Promote family-friendly HR policies and promote work–life harmony by encouraging the use of flexible working arrangements
- b. Ensure training for all personnel on gender, harassment, and ethics
- c. Enhance procedures to promote a harmonious work environment and the zero-tolerance policy on harassment
- d. Work towards gender balance at all levels, as per the UNU Action Plan on Gender Equality

#### 3. Develop and enhance professional career development opportunities for personnel:

- a. Strengthen performance management in line with the new Administrative Instruction on Performance Management and Review, including the Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) process
- b. Coordinate with Project Managers on staff development plans and provide training on the performance management process
- c. Develop an overall strategy to strengthen staff learning and development, including improvement of each individual's professional portfolio, utilising external training opportunities
- d. Establish a transparent procedure and criteria for utilising temporary staff service

**4. Improve the efficiency of administrative processes using ICT:**

- a. Create an automated system for various processes, including recruitment, personnel evaluation, travel requests, and payment approval requests within teams, with travel requests and settlements to be directly entered by travellers
- b. Ensure data classification and security control mechanisms for information management through cloud systems
- c. Promote the use of e-signatures and monitor the use of the UNU-IAS official seal to increase efficiency and reduce paper consumption
- d. Digitalise and document business processes (i.e., request, approval, and completion) using the new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system

**5. Systematically integrate sustainability considerations in procurement and travel:**

- a. Integrate sustainable procurement guidelines developed by the UN and incorporate sustainability considerations in procurement,<sup>11</sup> including vendor evaluation, considering UN-wide sustainability initiatives (women, youth, disability, etc.)
- b. Promote green and environmentally friendly meetings including through policies on zero carbon and avoiding single-use plastics
- c. Encourage staff to voluntarily downgrade the class of travel, as per the UNU Travel Policy
- d. Integrate remote meeting options in travel operating procedures

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<sup>11</sup> Environmental: examples could include energy-efficiency, water-efficiency, reduced greenhouse gases, reduced waste, limited packaging, or similar

Social: examples could include having in place a human rights due diligence process, hiring local labour, sourcing from disadvantaged businesses such as youth or women-owned, local capacity building, or similar

Economic: examples could include evaluating the whole-life cost of products purchased, re-considering the need to buy or similar

## 3.8 Communications

UNU-IAS will establish visibility as a key focus across the institute, by prioritising activities with the greatest potential for impact, ensuring the quality and relevance of UNU-IAS outputs, and allocating more staff resources and funding to communications efforts. Communications will be incorporated into the planning and delivery of all activities, with tailored communications plans developed for each project and UNU-IAS researchers empowered to be effective communicators of their work. UNU-IAS will integrate communications activities and resources across the institute to magnify impact and ensure consistent branding, establishing an integrated web presence through migration to the new UNU website platform. The institute will build new audiences and increase engagement in UNU-IAS activities through new products and approaches, including additional capacity for media relations and social media.

### Strategic Objectives:

#### 1. Establish visibility as a core strategic priority across UNU-IAS:

- a. Prioritise activities that have the greatest potential for impact and visibility (e.g., timely & value-added publications, policy inputs, and contributions to major international events)
- b. Ensure the quality (academic excellence) and relevance of all UNU-IAS outputs
- c. Allocate more staff resources and funding to communications efforts

#### 2. Incorporate communications in the planning & delivery of all UNU-IAS activities:

- a. Develop a tailored communications plan for each project, co-created with the project team members
- b. Include communications as a responsibility for each member of UNU-IAS personnel, not only for the Communications team
- c. Empower all UNU-IAS personnel to be effective communicators of the institute and its work, by providing training, support, and opportunities

#### 3. Integrate communications activities and resources across the institute to ensure coherence and quality, and magnify impact and visibility:

- a. Strengthen and align UNU-IAS Communications capacity under a new structure (including a Content team and an Engagement team)
- b. Plan coordinated UNU-IAS campaigns targeted at major external events/opportunities and for key UNU-IAS outputs/activities
- c. Integrate the UNU-IAS web presence as part of the new UNU-IAS website platform
- d. Integrate mailing lists for external promotion and other communications channels/resources that are currently project-based

#### 4. Ensure consistent, coherent branding:

- a. Manage rollout and adoption of the new UNU brand
- b. Allocate in-house capacity for design and creative projects, including infographics and reports

- c. Promote a consistent messaging strategy
- d. Strengthen style guidelines and promote their universal adoption

**5. Build new audiences and increase audience engagement in UNU-IAS activities:**

- a. Develop strategies and tactics for media relations (international and Japan-focused) and social media engagement — for both narrowcasting (targeting specific audiences) and broadcasting
- b. Allocate additional capacity for media relations and social media
- c. Launch new communications products and channels, including a regular UNU-IAS email newsletter, and a series of interviews with UNU-IAS researchers

**6. Monitoring & continuous improvement:**

- a. Conduct audience analysis, e.g., through regular surveys & interviews
- b. Report on communications KPIs, integrating data from every project