



University name: University of Pécs
Country: Hungary

SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals

University of Pécs – Report on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 17)

2024

As one of Hungary's oldest and most traditional higher education institutions, the University of Pécs, with its 10 faculties, remains committed to the implementation of **the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, with particular emphasis **on Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals**.

The 2024 report presents the UP's integrated cooperation mechanisms, which serve to strengthen research, innovation and education at multiple levels through domestic, regional and international partnerships.

The University Strategy 2023–2030 defines cooperation as one of the cornerstones of institutional development, regional development and global engagement [1]. The University of Pécs' approach is in line with the **European Union's cohesion and innovation policies**, Hungary's **Higher Education Strategy (2016–2030)** and the objectives of **the European Green Deal** [2].

The university maintains long-term partnerships with ministries, local governments, civil society organisations and international universities, promoting sustainable research, capacity building and social development. Its governance model emphasises transparency, accountability and inclusiveness, in accordance with Hungarian and EU legislation.

1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal 17 calls for the strengthening of global partnerships to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The University of Pécs has recognised that cooperation between government, science, industry and civil society is essential for building social, economic and environmental resilience. SDG 17 focuses on strengthening partnerships, knowledge sharing, inter-institutional cooperation and the efficient use of resources.

In 2024, the University of Pécs continued to operate a number of **domestic and international partnership programs, networks and knowledge-sharing initiatives** aimed at integrating sustainability goals into education, research and community life.

As a leading higher education institution in the South Transdanubia region, the University of Pécs serves the development of the geographical area and economic zone with a long history and traditions, but also with a firm commitment to renewal. Located in the centre of the region, in Pécs, it primarily performs the tasks of operating a university-centred innovation ecosystem, while its influence extends beyond the city to the surrounding counties. In terms of its impact, it contributes to the regional economy, healthcare for the region's population, research and development, and innovation and the arts through knowledge transfer, seeking and creating partnerships with local and regional businesses, innovators and opinion leaders in the region.



Through its partnerships, the university contributes to educational reform, the strengthening of innovation ecosystems and sustainable urban and regional development.

2. Strategic background and institutional commitment to SDG 17

Partnership is an integral part of the university's mission and governance structure.

The university considers it its mission to be a highly recognised institution in the domestic and international higher education market, a key player in the knowledge industry shaping the future of the next generations in terms of environmental, social and economic sustainability, an important training and research partner for the Hungarian government, and a knowledge centre providing significant research services to businesses and other organisations supporting the climate goals of Hungary and Central Europe.

The UP **University Strategy 2023–2030** defines cooperation as a strategic axis in the areas of education, research, healthcare services and social responsibility.

The strategy states that the UP plays a "**knowledge-centred** role", connecting the public and private sectors. The university management encourages faculties and research centres to establish cross-border partnerships based on mutual benefits.

3. Policies and legal frameworks

The UP's collaborations are governed by Hungarian and EU legal frameworks that ensure integrity, transparency and ethical operation.

The most important regulatory documents are as follows:

- **Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education** – defines university autonomy and international cooperation rights.
- **Act CXCV of 2011 on Public Finances** – regulates the financial accountability of partnerships involving public funds.
- **Act CXXV of 2003 on equal treatment** – guarantees equal opportunities in institutional relations.
- **Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe** – promotes research and innovation cooperation.
- **National Higher Education Strategy (2016–2030)** – encourages institutional cooperation and digitalisation.

Together, these laws make sure that the UP's partnership activities are transparent, legal, and promote sustainable development.

4. National and regional cooperation

The **Sustainability Platform of Hungarian Universities** was established in 2022 on the initiative of the University of Pécs. **By 2024, it already had 16 member institutions**, including John von Neumann University and the University of Győr.

The aim of the Platform is to coordinate sustainability strategies in Hungarian higher education and to organise joint training courses, research and events. In 2024, the Platform member universities carried out nine joint actions and programmes.



In 2024, PTE renewed its cooperation agreements with the **Baranya County Local Government, the Diocese of Pécs and the Local Government of the City of Pécs with county rights** to coordinate educational, cultural and social programmes.

5. International partnerships and projects

According to the **UI GreenMetric World University Rankings**, the UP is still **Hungary's greenest university** in 2024, ranking 25th internationally. This result reflects not only the sustainable operation of the institution, but also **its extensive international partnership network**. Through its membership in **the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings Network**, the UP participates in shaping global trends in green universities.

The University of Pécs has more than **500 active partnership agreements** worldwide.

These include:

- **Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and Visegrad Fund** collaborations;
- **INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme and INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Program**;
- **European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST Action)**;
- Research alliances;
- Membership:

The University of Pécs is a member of the European university alliance called **EDUC**. The alliance was established in 2019 on the initiative of the European Commission with the aim of renewing European higher education and increasing its competitiveness.

In addition to PTE, the members of the alliance include:

- Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic)
- University of Cagliari (Italy)
- University of Potsdam (Germany)
- University of Rennes 1 (France)
- University of Paris Nanterre (France)
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International Association of Universities (IAU): As a global forum for leaders of institutions and associations, the IAU brings together nearly 600 members from more than 120 countries to identify, discuss and act on common priorities. It acts as a global voice for higher education in relation to a number of international and intergovernmental organisations, in particular UNESCO. Members benefit from a wide range of services based on their priorities. The IAU collaborates with many other higher education stakeholders, such as organisations, institutions, higher education authorities, policymakers and decision-makers, experts, administrators, teachers, researchers and students.

European University Foundation (EUF): The members of EUF are universities that share a culture of academic excellence. Together, the universities have been at the forefront of European policy making for over a decade, promoting high-quality student mobility and a strong European Higher Education Area.

Compostela Group of Universities: The Compostela Group of Universities (CGU) took its first steps in 1994 and has grown in size over the years, with members from more than 60 universities across the world.



All the members belonging to the network share the values of cooperation and integration developed around the Camino de Santiago. Honouring those values, the Compostela Group of Universities aims to foster collaboration and promote dialogue in all fields related to higher education. The CGU are convinced that diversity and multicultural environments are the key elements in the profile of 21st-century universities.

- **Domestic partnerships** with ministries, local governments and chambers of commerce and industry for the development of a smart region and circular economy.

The Chancellery of the UP, in cooperation with the Pécs-Baranya Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the partner chambers of Somogy and Tolna counties, is building a supplier database for **the UniNext Innovation Program**. The UniNext Innovation Programme was announced in December 2024 with the aim of improving the quality of life of people living in the area and strengthening the region's economic and research and development performance. A key element of the program is the Universitas Industrial Park, Hungary's largest freely developable industrial area, covering approximately 600 hectares. The development of the industrial park will lay the foundation for attracting investment to the region and contribute to the revitalisation of the local economy. Further information about UniNext is available on the programme's website.

The UP plays a key role in **the South Transdanubian Innovation Ecosystem**, where it connects academia and industry.

Cooperation with **the National Research, Development and Innovation Office** provides access to competitive funding, while joint projects with other partners are implemented in the field of green technologies.

6. Capacity building and knowledge transfer

The UP aims to increase its institutional capacity by linking research, education and the business sector. The **Szentágotthai János Research Centre** is involved in biotechnology, artificial intelligence and green innovation projects, while the **Faculty of Business and Economics** coordinates EU-funded innovation clusters.

The university runs **dual training programs** with industrial partners, which tailor educational content to the needs of the labour market.

Through its **Erasmus+ Capacity Building programs**, the UP actively participates in international educational cooperation, particularly in the South and East European region.

With the help of **GINOP Plus** and **RRF (Recovery and Resilience Plan)** funds, the university supports digitalisation, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer.

7. Good practices and case studies

7.1 Urban sustainability and municipal cooperation

The aim of the cooperation between the University of Pécs and **the Municipality of Pécs** is to promote sustainable urban development and the circular economy.

Projects aimed at energy efficiency, waste reduction and cultural heritage protection serve as national models.

7.2 Industry and innovation

The role of the university today goes far beyond imparting theoretical knowledge to its students. In the wake of changing market and social conditions, there is a growing need for universities to encourage active research and to utilise and develop its results as widely as possible.



The creation of as many innovation-based domestic inventions as possible and their conversion into market value not only represents a significant competitive advantage and thus higher revenues for the companies concerned, but is also of paramount importance in terms of economic growth and the accumulation of intellectual property.

In addition to utilising the university's intellectual products, the UP is involved in many other ways in creating a unique innovation system and achieving closer and more effective cooperation with small, medium and large enterprises.

UP Innovation pays special attention to promoting the research, development and innovation capacities of the UP and to the efficient and transparent management of services based on these capacities.

These collaborations promote the practical application of research results and the development of the university's start-up ecosystem.

8. Summary

The University of Pécs achieved outstanding results in the field of partnerships in 2024. In order to achieve SDG 17 – "Partnerships for the Goals" – the University has developed an integrated, multi-level cooperation structure that covers local, regional, national and international levels.

9. Future directions and challenges

The UP has set itself the goal of expanding its international research portfolio, creating Central European innovation clusters and actively participating in global policy dialogue by 2030. These directions are in line with the objectives of the **National Digitalization Strategy (2021–2030)** and the **EU's Digital Europe Programme**.

One of the main challenges is the sustainable financing of international projects. The university aims to address these challenges through more advanced management, data-driven decision-making and greater involvement of students and teachers.

10. Conclusions

The University of Pécs sets an example in implementing SDG 17 by transforming local initiatives into collaborations with global impact.

The university ensures that all partnerships are transparent, inclusive and sustainable by integrating national and EU legislation and its own ethical standards. The multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach of the University of Pécs proves that higher education can play a key role in regional development and the promotion of global solidarity. The University is convinced that sustainability goals can only be achieved **through partnership, shared responsibility and knowledge-based cooperation**.

The University of Pécs therefore remains committed to the full implementation of SDG 17, integrating education, research and social engagement.

References

- [1] University of Pécs Strategy 2023–2030, Chapter III – Mission and Core Values.
- [2] European Commission, 'The European Green Deal', COM(2019) 640.