



# **Armenian State University of Economics**

## **Climate Change Action Plan**

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## **Overview**

This Climate Change Action Plan and the actions defined within, will comprehensively analyze climate action solutions based on current measures in the country and the university, water, energy and carbon reduction, social and environmental impacts and international cooperation for environmental protection and sustainable development.

We strongly believe that higher education must prepare students and conduct research to develop the social, economic and technological solutions to reverse climate change and combine our efforts to this incredible mission. We have a responsibility to act accordingly with our climate action plan that is built on our past progress and achievements.

### **1. Environmental education measures in Armenia and ASUE**

The ecological education in Armenia has always been of high importance. The relations related to ecological education and upbringing are regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, a number of environmental conventions ratified by the Republic of Armenia, the legislation of the RA, the spheres of environmental protection, and other legal acts. In 2001 the RA first in the region passed the “Law of the Republic of Armenia on ecological education and upbringing of the population”.

Under the environmental conventions, the RA has undertaken such international obligations as raising public awareness on environmental issues, ways to solve them, training of relevant staff, and etc.

ASUE, as a state university, is a part of implementation of these international obligations of the RA. Our experts, professors and specialists take part in the decision-making process and have a great contribution in it. The representatives of ASUE give their expertise on the draft laws connected with ecological education.

In addition, Armenian State University of Economics provides specializations on climate and environment. For the Bachelor’s program we have a specialization in Ecology and Environmental Economics. In Master’s program we have Environmental Economics specialization.

Moreover, we have mandatory subject “Environmental economics” for all the students, the main point of which are the sustainable development goals. ASUE has a Chair of Environmental Economics. Research and teaching at the Chair focus on the application of economic knowledge to problems of environmental and resource management, in particular the preservation of ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation. During educational courses current environmental problems are discussed jointly with their economic analysis and behavioral foundations of economic decisions.

ASUE has a huge number of partners but it is constantly looking forward to new opportunities to expand the scope of cooperation as well as exchange experiences to leverage expertise for teaching and research.

In recent years, Chair of Environmental Economics of ASUE constantly has been participating in Paris Peace Forum, which main topics are: climate, biodiversity, oceans and outer space. ASUE will continue its participation in the mentioned forum for the upcoming years as well.

It is also important to state, that every year ASUE participates in the "10 million trees" All-Armenian tree planting program and plants a massive number of trees in ASUE “Tntesaget” sport-health resort having a contribution in slowing climate change.

## **2. Carbon reduction, Water, Energy and Climate change**

### **2.1 Carbon Reduction and Climate Change**

Armenian State University of Economics measures the amount of low carbon energy used across the university each year. Low carbon energy generation sources we use at the university include hydropower and nuclear power. During the last year, we used over 350.000 kilowatt-hour low carbon energy which is equal to 1260 Gigajoule (GJ). It is to mention, that the university must develop a plan to reduce carbon usage as soon as practicable. Our short-term goal is developing carbon mitigation strategies, assessing their cost and carbon savings, and identifying a timeframe for implementation.

### **2.2 Water Usage and Climate Change**

Concerning water usage and care, Armenian State University of Economics measures the total volume of water used in the university that is taken main supply each year. We have used water from rivers, cisterns, tanks. During the last year, the total volume of water used in the university was 46.284 cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>). Moreover, in order to prevent water system pollution, on November 21, 2016 Trilateral Lease Contract was signed between "Veolia Group" - "Veolia Jur" CJSC - "State Water Committee of the Republic of Armenia", and as a result Veolia Jur has assumed the responsibilities of the Unified Operator for 15 years starting from 1 January 2017. It is the responsibility of "Veolia Jur" CJSC" to secure drinking water from pollution, including pollution caused by accidents and incidents. Water filter was installed at ASUE "Tntesaget" sport-health resort to prevent water pollution in Dilijan, Tavush region of Armenia. ASUE has two separate water lines (a permanent and emergency) hence providing the opportunity to have 24-hour water supply. Almost every office has drinkable water taps. There is a free drinking fountain at the university building, which has a faucet to cut water waste. The university staff checks the water waste on a daily basis. The water is extracted with modern submersible pumps, thus ensuring the water waste cut.

### **2.3 Energy and Climate Change**

In order to reduce energy consumption, ASUE set energy efficient LED bulbs, which use 75% less electricity than incandescent bulbs. To avoid extra energy consumption, ASUE uses a power strip to turn all devices off at once. Although not attributable to climate

actions taken by the university, another significant influence on 2020 and 2021 data is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the university was not fully occupied during this time, reductions seen in emissions from energy consumption.

### **3. International Cooperation for environmental protection and sustainable development**

The scope of international cooperation concerns the vast aspects of international issues such as the economic, social, political and environmental aspect of the world. It is understood that in the current situation of the world, some scopes of international relationships need more global cooperation. In this context, environmental preoccupation can only be addressed by the international community as a whole. For this reason, international cooperation plays an essential role in environmental protection.

#### **3.1 Membership to SDSN**

It is also worth to mention that ASUE applied for membership to SDSN (The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network is a nonprofit made by the United Nations in 2012 to advance the Sustainable Development Goals). We will be the first representative from our country and it can be the anchor for further memberships from the region. It will be a great opportunity for us to gain access to international processes, work with experts and young professionals who work in sustainability and enlarge our activity in sustainable development projects.

As a SDSN member, ASUE will continue to do its best to involve from its side in the solutions of the SDGs as much as possible. Step by step we will come up with new initiatives, new courses, and partnerships. ASUE believes that the main factor for successful implementation of the SDGs is cooperation, and it is the only way to reach a breakthrough.

In the recent years we have come closer to upbringing the younger generation with the knowledge on SDGs through specializations such as "Ecology and Environmental Economics" in Bachelor's degree, "Environmental Economics" in Master's degree and courses such as "Modern strategy of sustainable development" in Bachelor's degree and "Economic issues of climate change" in Master's degree. Additionally, we have a mandatory subject "Environmental economics" for all the students. As we prepare economists, we feel a strong social responsibility to ensure that the students who graduate from our university possess deep knowledge on the SDGs, since economics and ecological background are strongly interconnected. The younger generation we upbringing is the future of our country, and their social responsibility is one of the things that matters for us, as a state university. We do our best to strengthen the influence of SDGs in our country and in the region. From our side we will do as much practical research as possible.

### **3.2 Cooperation with the German "Copernicus Berlin" Association**

Within the frames of the cooperation between our University and the German "Copernicus Berlin" Association, ASUE hosted several dozen young people from 12 countries, more than two dozen ASUE members and organized series of international seminars, courses, lectures, panel discussions on Sustainable Development topics. ASUE, by organizing and ensuring the whole process, not only formed a platform for international cooperation, but also acted as an academic structure, which is interested in solving climate change's problems. To illustrate it further, in the educational, cognitive, experimental and entertaining format the series of events also included a crucially important "Human change, not climate change" seminar that became a wonderful chance for acquiring knowledge, skills, exchange of experience in this field. As an end point of the series of events, trees were planted in the ASUE yard. Surely, these actions will take periodical format. Another outcome of the seminar was the preparation of "time capsule", which provided an opportunity to pass on messages to future generations that will improve the ecological condition of the country and raise the awareness on climate change issue. The "time capsule" was placed at the main building of ASUE.

Taking into consideration the effective and fruitful cooperation with "Copernicus Berlin" Association, ASUE, as a distinguished state university, plans to continue it putting the emphasize on climate change topic. In the near future, our university plans to host students and staff from different countries and organize seminars and lectures on climate change. Moreover, several dozens of ASUE students and staff are planning to attend "Copernicus Berlin" Association's events that will also include global warming related topics. We are convinced, that above mentioned actions will lead a path for a better climate challenge through educating our students and staff and changing their attitude towards the environment.

### **3.3 Cooperation with the "Circle of Sustainable Europe" and "Latvian Youth Development Center"**

ASUE's Climate Change Action Plan includes expansion of current relationship with the "Circle of Sustainable Europe" and "Latvian Youth Development Center". Latter institutions' priority is carrying out meaningful activities to reduce and limit climate change and creating environmental sustainability projects throughout the world. Consequently, mutual interests of cooperation will be mainly focused on:



- Cooperation in the spheres of sustainability, environmental education, climate adaptation, water security, recycling, gender issues and circular economy.
- Development, design and conduct of training courses, seminars, sessions, lectures and events on Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change.
- Joint participation in climate change related projects.
- Collaboration with startups for the creation of sustainable business models.
- Exchange of topic related literature, information and materials.

Moreover, within the framework of collaboration ASUE representatives also attended "Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Development" webinar organized by "Circle of Sustainable Europe". We plan to increase our participation in such international webinars.

### **3.4 Cooperation with the Dutch "BILDUNG NIJMEGEN"**

Another successful collaboration in the field of Sustainable Development and Climate Change is a cooperation with the Dutch "BILDUNG NIJMEGEN" organization. Along with being a platform for innovation in education, this institution also strictly follows climate challenge, trying to cut emissions, create a cleaner and greener economy and society, and protect us from the devastating consequences of climate change. Thereby, this cooperation is a great opportunity to deepen mutual interests of both sides and create environmental sustainability projects together.

Within the framework of collaboration, "BILDUNG NIJMEGEN"'s director René Donders delivered a lecture and a presentation on the issue of climate change topic. Students were introduced to the impacts of climate change, the importance of the issue, as well as innovative learning methods and opportunities for individual development. On the long term, this collaboration will comprise events, lectures, seminars as well as discussions on the topic.