

# Partnering with UNU

## Establishing a UNU Hub for Global Impact

UNU Hubs are designed to advance policy-relevant solutions to global challenges through research, capacity-building and outreach.



**UNU**

## Introducing UNU Hubs

A **UNU Hub** is a dynamic way for academic institutions to collaborate with the United Nations University (UNU), designed to bridge the gap between academia and the UN system. UNU Hubs offer partner universities a platform for advancing policy-relevant solutions to global challenges and UN priorities through research, capacity-building, and outreach.

The United Nations University's network of 13 specialized research institutes offers a unique, collaborative structure ideal for partnering with academic institutions worldwide. This decentralized, interdisciplinary framework fosters innovative solutions to global challenges, leveraging diverse expertise across sustainability, development, and policy issues.

## UNU Hubs can provide:

**Access to the United Nations system:** UNU Hubs make the UN system more accessible to university researchers and students, connecting academic research with global decision-making and opening doors to career pathways in international development and policy.

**Cutting-edge, policy-relevant research:** Partners engage in research aimed at addressing the world's most pressing sustainability challenges, such as climate change, technology for sustainable development, and social resilience.

**Training the next generation of leaders:** With a focus on preparing global change-makers, UNU Hubs offer training, capacity-building, and internships that equip students with skills for working in UN agencies and intergovernmental and non-profit organizations.

## Core elements of a UNU Hub

**Research, development, and innovation:** Each UNU Hub focuses on a well-defined thematic area that directly addresses global challenges aligned with UNU's strategic goals. Hubs must have a minimum of two, and up to five, interdisciplinary complementary research clusters that generate new solutions, advance knowledge, and contribute to UNU's broader mission.

**Education, training, and capacity-building:** UNU Hubs offer joint postgraduate programmes to prepare the next generation of global leaders. Academic programmes are designed in partnership with leading institutions and are focused on developing both the technical expertise and leadership capabilities needed to tackle pressing global issues. Hubs also engage in capacity-building through tailored training and online education initiatives, empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds, particularly from the Global South.

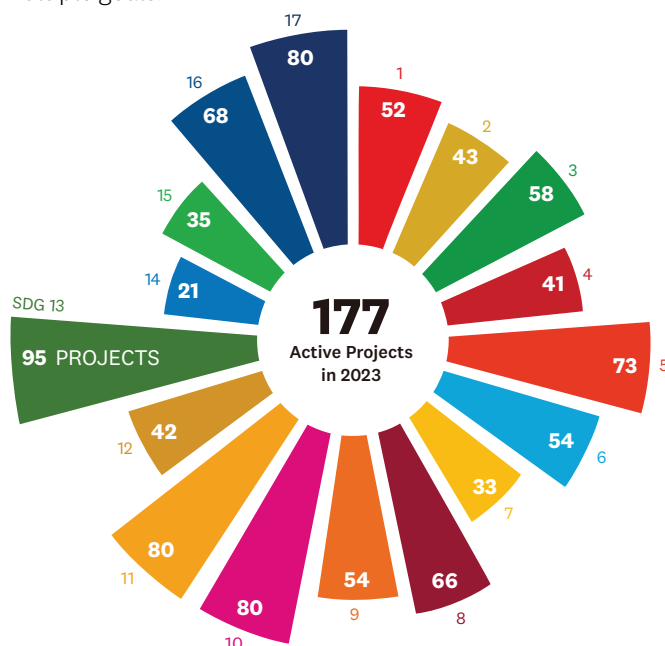
**Outreach, advocacy, and impact:** Each UNU Hub actively engages in outreach and advocacy, raising the visibility of UNU's work both locally and internationally. This includes building strategic partnerships, participating in policy dialogues, and producing research that influences global, regional, and local decision-making. Hubs extend UNU's reach by driving impactful collaborations, disseminating knowledge, and contributing to global discussions on a broad spectrum of topics.

## Thematic focus areas

Each UNU Hub is guided by a thematic focus to ensure a clear direction for research and collaboration. Themes may include:

- Environmental sustainability and resilience
- Climate change adaptation and governance
- Technology and innovation for sustainability
- Disaster management and socioeconomic impacts

UNU institute research addresses all 17 **Sustainable Development Goals**, with most projects contributing to multiple goals.



## Key requirements

Partner universities provide **resources**, designated **physical space**, and a clear **governance structure** to support the UNU Hub. Each Hub must have a dedicated director, academic staff, and support personnel, as well as a detailed funding plan covering both setup and operational costs.

The Hub should also focus on a well-defined **thematic area** aligned with UNU's strategic goals, with up to five interdisciplinary research clusters and at least one postgraduate programme (preferably both master's and PhD), in close collaboration with one or more UNU institutes.

**Engagement with the Global South**, with plans for inclusivity and strategic partnerships, is essential.

The agreement is for an initial two-year term, with renewal options based on performance, impact, and alignment with UNU's mission.

## Steps to establish a UNU Hub

### 1. Letter of interest

Academic institutions are invited to submit a letter of interest to the UNU institute they wish to partner with, outlining the proposed Hub's theme and objectives. Approved institutions are then invited to collaborate on a detailed proposal.

### 2. Proposal development

In partnership with UNU, academic institutions refine their proposal, which includes thematic focus, research clusters, academic programmes, and resources for impact in the Global South.

### 3. Senior review and approval

Proposals are reviewed by a Senior Panel appointed by the UNU Rector. Formal activities begin upon final approval, with periodic evaluations to ensure alignment with UNU's standards.

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## Founding UNU Hubs

In the first year of the initiative (2024), four 'founding' UNU Hubs were established at partner universities. Each UNU Hub partners with one or more UNU institutes specializing in an area of mutual interest.

### 1. University of Calgary, Canada

The **UNU Hub on Empowering Communities to Adapt to Environmental Change** addresses the challenges of environmental change, focusing on water studies and climate resilience. Through four interdisciplinary research clusters, the Hub aims to develop scientific solutions and a skilled workforce to help communities adapt to climate threats. Its reach extends globally, with a particular emphasis on the Global South.

### 2. Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH), Germany

Focused on engineering solutions to climate-related challenges, the **UNU Hub on Engineering to Face Climate Change** aims to foster innovative climate change adaptation strategies, with a particular emphasis on resource management, climate engineering, and environmental health, while creating opportunities for students from the Global South.

### 3. City College of New York, United States of America

The **UNU Hub on Remote-Sensing and Sustainable Innovations for Resilient Urban Systems (R-SIRUS)** focuses on using remote sensing technology to address sustainability challenges in complex urban systems. By advancing urban resilience, particularly in the face of climate-related risks, R-SIRUS aims to foster inclusivity and adaptability in cities worldwide, with a focus on solutions that can be scaled globally, including in the Global South.

### 4. Lund University, Sweden

The **UNU Hub on Water in a Changing Environment (WICE)** addresses a variety of global water challenges, particularly in the Middle East and the Global South, through sustainable water solutions and environmental informatics. It focuses on water in a changing environment, aiming to develop research and educational programmes that provide actionable solutions for water management and climate adaptation.

## Join the UNU Hubs initiative

Academic institutions can contact UNU at [mbox@unu.edu](mailto:mbox@unu.edu) to collaborate and drive global impact.