

IMPERIAL

Sustainable Imperial



**Sustainable Imperial
strategy 2026–31:**
Growing our handprint,
shrinking our footprint



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Foreword

Imperial is proud to be home to world-leading researchers and teachers on sustainability, and to a community of staff and students who care deeply about creating a better future. We have more authors contributing to the latest International Panel for Climate Change report than any other organisation in the world and we celebrate a wide range of academic research, learning and projects on environmental issues.

We have committed in our Science for Humanity strategy to set a global benchmark for university sustainability, across our campuses and our academic mission. And we have outlined that Sustainable Imperial will be established as a university-wide strategic theme. It will deliver evidence-based solutions, embrace new technologies, challenge conventional thinking and open new debate in our efforts to solve this growing global crisis. That is why we were one of the first universities to sign up to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice, in recognition of our ongoing commitment to being a leader in sustainability.

This sustainability strategy, Imperial's second, sets out how we will take forward the Sustainable Imperial programme over the next five years.

We are determined to minimise our environmental footprint, striving for net-zero carbon campuses by 2040 for our direct carbon emissions, minimising our indirect carbon emissions, and embedding good practice on sustainability across the organisation.

We are just as determined to maximise our positive handprint, as an organisation that develops, teaches and helps to implement the solutions that can enable humanity to transition towards a more sustainable future, which allows both people and the planet to thrive. There are many different ways we do this across our community, from the new School of Convergence Science further growing our interdisciplinary collaborations, to the many excellent and innovative initiatives being developed by colleagues across all of Imperial.

This strategy invites all our colleagues, students, visitors, collaborators, suppliers and wider community to come on that journey with us, with each of us playing our part in sustainability both professionally and personally. Together, we can achieve great things, from the many small actions that add up to big transformations, to the breakthrough innovations that drive step change. Let's look back in 2031 and be rightly proud of the progress we have made at Imperial, and in the wider world, towards net zero and beyond.

Professor Hugh Brady
President, Imperial College London



Together, we can achieve great things, from the many small actions that add up to big transformations, to the breakthrough innovations that drive step change."

Right: Through our Sustainable Imperial strategy, over the next five years, we will ensure that active or public transport is the priority recommendation for local travel for staff and students. Support is currently available for cycling and purchasing electric vehicles, and we are working to make our campuses more cycling-friendly.



Executive summary

Sustainable Imperial: A strategic initiative

Imperial's institutional Science for Humanity strategy sets out: "Sustainable Imperial underpins our commitment to play a leading role in the global fight against climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We will set a global benchmark for university sustainability, nurturing graduates who understand and advocate for climate science, supporting our researchers to investigate and respond to planetary challenges and leading by example in our activities and on our campuses."

Our vision: A global leader in university sustainability

Our vision is to become a beacon of sustainability and to achieve our target of having net-zero campuses in our direct (scope 1 and 2) carbon emissions by 2040 and take practical steps to minimise our indirect (scope 3) emissions. Our approach? Forward-looking, evidence-based and practical solutions to reach ambitious yet realistic goals.

Our staff, students, visitors, partners and neighbours will experience visible sustainable practice across our education, our research and our campuses, which equips and inspires them to take that into the wider world.

We will minimise our environmental footprint as far as possible and maximise our positive handprint on the wider world through our academic mission and our partnerships.



ReGen Garden Project
RE:GEN is a student-led sustainability campaign, focused on protecting, restoring and expanding green spaces around campus.

Minimising our environmental footprint: leading by example on our campuses

As an energy-intensive STEMB university with world-class research and teaching on sustainability, we must do better, and we are determined to lead by example in our activities and on our campuses. We will draw on both our academic expertise and our operational skills to make meaningful progress on this over the next five years.

- We will strive for net-zero carbon campuses by 2040 for our direct (scope 1 and 2) carbon emissions, the emissions over which we have most control.
- We will continue at pace with our campus energy efficiency and decarbonisation plan. This will be supported by substantial investment and an ambitious delivery programme, as part of our wider integrated transformation plan for our campuses.
- We will reduce energy demand by optimising our Building Management Systems and installing more efficient LED lights and air handling equipment.
- We will install more heat pumps to replace gas-fuelled heating, install more solar panels, explore Purchase Power Agreements for sourcing cleaner electricity, and design sustainability and efficient use of space into our maintenance, refurbishment and new building programmes.
- Over this strategy period we will also work hard to minimise our biggest indirect (scope 3) carbon emissions, encouraging our staff, students and suppliers to own their share of responsibility alongside us.
- We will shift our purchasing further towards more sustainable suppliers and products – including a 20% sustainability weighting in all major contracts, training purchasers across Imperial to embed sustainable purchasing practices, and engaging with our major suppliers to come on the sustainability journey with us. Recognising the challenge of accurate reporting, we will work with suppliers and help lead the higher education sector work to improve data and reporting practices.
- Our sustainable business travel policy is already reducing our carbon footprint, as colleagues adopt more climate-conscious travel practices.
- We will introduce better tools to book and monitor travel, ask frequent travellers to 'skip a trip' to reduce travel volume, and encourage lower-carbon travel modes for those who travel.
- Given that our diverse and growing global student population have long journeys to campus, we will work with the student community and Imperial College Union to better understand travel habits, consider the appropriate sharing of responsibility, support more sustainable adjustments, where possible, and co-develop a sensible approach to inform and influence student travel habits.
- While it is possible to get direct campus carbon emissions to zero using existing technologies, tackling indirect emissions is more complex. As a global university with a large travel, computing and purchasing footprint, Imperial expects to have significant residual carbon emissions despite our best efforts to be as sustainable as possible.
- Mindful that the carbon markets are still maturing, over the next five years we are going to explore – with the Imperial community – what is an appropriate approach to residual emissions for the university, and pilot carbon removal and carbon pricing projects to learn from approaches.
- Beyond carbon, we will adopt visible good practice and make significant progress on our wider sustainability programme, including reducing our overall waste per capita, delivering our new sustainable food and drink policy, supporting active travel and further campus greening, and engaging our staff and students on solutions.

Maximising our positive handprint through our academic mission and partnerships

We recognise that the best way to strive for net zero and a more sustainable future, not just for Imperial but for humanity, is to maximise our contribution to the global transition through translating and scaling-up our excellent research, innovation, teaching, policy influence and partnerships on sustainability. This approach seeks to address some of the hardest unsolved global challenges, engage for change, and grow the skills to tackle them. Although it is hard to quantify, we aim for this positive contribution to vastly exceed our residual emissions.

- We will support sustainability through our research and partnerships, including driving positive change through responsible investment, collaborating on specific projects, and providing global sustainability skills and leadership through our education and the influence that our well-informed and capable graduates have on society.
- We will encourage a culture for staff and students to act sustainably in their everyday decisions across our campuses. Our faculties and departments, with the support of the Sustainability Hub, will develop and deliver their own sustainability action plans to embed stronger local sustainability practices.
- We will pilot our new Imperial Sustainability Sandbox – a whole-campus sustainability initiative, which brings together collaborations between academic staff, students and professional services teams to support stronger operational sustainability practices by drawing on our community's skills, knowledge and talents. These practices will feed into our research and education programmes on sustainability by drawing on our campus operations. The sandbox will serve as a convening point to explore potential built environment projects, delivered across our research and enterprise teams and initiatives to research, study, improve, test and visibly demonstrate sustainable practices on Imperial campuses.



White City Campus
Developed with sustainability in mind, combining best-in-class sustainable building practices with spaces for sustainability startups.



Silwood Park Campus
Researchers at Silwood Park, our rural campus, explore ecological research, spanning areas from climate and biodiversity to marine ecosystems.

Nurturing graduates on sustainability

The Imperial Class of 2030 programme will equip all our graduates with the climate and environmental science literacy, skills and confidence to advocate, influence and lead in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation. We will endeavour to embed climate and sustainability education into our formal teaching through the curriculum, whilst scaling up online training opportunities and offering lifelong learning on sustainability to those already in the workforce. Additionally, we will develop a pipeline of project opportunities for students to develop deeper insight and cultivate understanding of real-world situations, as well as interlinking with extracurricular opportunities driven by the student community.

Increasing our positive impact through research and innovation

Sustainability research and innovation is already an area of significant strength across Imperial, as evidenced by the numerous large-scale projects carried out by departments in all our faculties, ranging from sustainable food to direct air carbon capture, and high-profile prizes (such as Notpla, Earthshot Prize winner 2022). The School of Convergence Science Mission on Sustainability will add a layer of ambition to Imperial's impact by developing large, ambitious, convergence science research programmes together with departments, partners and external stakeholders. With the objective to have significant impact on the world's most pressing environmental challenges for its missions, the School of Convergence Science will work extensively on the relevant translation and innovation dimensions necessary to effect change.

Beyond Imperial: partnerships for sustainability

Imperial's mission is 'to be useful', which is why we are growing our collaborations with a wide range of partners on sustainability. Imperial's policy engagement programme will use the latest evidence from our world-leading academics to inform the policy conversations that really matter. Our investments and research partnerships in energy are guided by the Imperial Zero Index: we will only work on programmes related to a sustainable energy transition and we will only work with companies who demonstrate a credible commitment to that transition. We are also collaborating with the higher education sector and our neighbours to develop and implement good sustainability practices.

Our ambition over the next five years

We will minimise our environmental footprint as far as possible and maximise our positive handprint on the wider world through our academic mission and our partnerships.

Insects gather at artificial light

Researchers hope this work into why insects gather at artificial light will motivate us to think twice about light pollution and how to improve life for nocturnal wildlife. Credit: Dr Samuel Fabian.

Minimising our environmental footprint

We will minimise our environmental footprint by embedding sustainable practice across our campuses.

Campus carbon and energy

We aim to have net-zero campuses for our scopes 1 and 2 energy emissions by 2040. This means replacing gas for heat and power with heat pumps and the reuse of waste heat; electrifying our small vehicle fleet; installing more solar panels; and improving our energy efficiency to make space for electric heating within available grid capacity, alongside the wider decarbonisation of the UK's National Grid. We are also exploring the potential for using ground source as well as air source heat pumps on our campuses, and for using natural, low-Greenhouse Warming Potential refrigerants. We will reduce our campus scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 25% by 2028–29, against a 2018–19 baseline, as we work towards our 2040 target.

Case study:

Trial borehole on Queen's Lawn for heating and cooling buildings

As part of developing our future energy strategy, we conducted a feasibility study in 2025, through boreholes (a deep hole drilled into the ground) on the Dangoor Plaza. This was to determine whether the ground below our South Kensington Campus is viable for installing energy-saving ground source heat pump technology. A continuous loop of pipework was installed to measure how much heat we can draw from the ground, potentially providing sustainable heating and cooling for the campus, thereby reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.



Case study:

Silwood solar panel switch-on

As part of Imperial's journey to net-zero campuses by 2040, Silwood Park Campus has become a key location for solar panel installation. The installation consists of 86 solar panels that will help provide power for the campus's Controlled Environment Rooms. The solar projects at Silwood are due to be completed during 2026, and are projected to generate 11% of the campus's electricity needs.



Our targets:

Focus on energy efficiency and demand reduction

We will improve energy use monitoring and continue to improve the energy efficiency of our campuses by optimising building heat and ventilation controls, making our buildings more comfortable to work in as well as more energy efficient. We will make visible changes to our campuses by installing modern efficient LED lighting, to reduce energy demand, and we will reduce energy loss through upgrading air handling plants, including, where applicable, laboratory ventilation.

Introduce low-carbon heat and power supply

We plan to decarbonise our heating networks, replacing gas use, starting in South Kensington with a phased introduction of heat pump technology by 2031. We will introduce sources of low-carbon power through self-generation (solar PV where possible) and will enter long-term, low-carbon energy contracts, such as Purchase Power Agreements, where practicable.

Design and deliver the net zero programme for years 1–5

The delivery of Imperial's net zero carbon strategy is led through a phased programme of works. Phase 1 (years 1–5) will focus on designing the overall delivery model and implementing high-impact, costed interventions.

Key early actions include energy efficiency works such as the Silwood solar project (year 2) and the development of a Strategic Technology Plan to guide future investments. Building fabric upgrades will be later in the net zero programme, to be part of the wider transformational programme at South Kensington – balancing building-embodied and operational carbon.

Our planned works will be reviewed annually to be re-evaluated and re-costed. This will ensure our work makes good sense technically and allows for new innovations to be harnessed.

Measures of progress:

- annual scope 1 and 2 tCO₂e total and intensity of scope 1 and 2 in tCO₂e per staff and student FTE

Case study:

LED lighting upgrades

In 2024, upgrade works began to switch to low-energy LED technology. Our priority is to lower demand to reduce our carbon emissions and, by switching to LED, we save power on lighting. This upgrade will reduce energy consumption by 137,680 kWh per year, reducing Imperial's carbon footprint by 28.5 tonnes per year.



Buildings and construction

We aim to design, operate and maintain buildings that reduce our environmental impact, and are more comfortable to work in, in line with leading sustainability standards.

We will achieve sustainable buildings that meet Imperial's operational needs by:

- reducing energy use intensity in all new building projects
- reducing embodied carbon in construction
- ensuring no new fossil fuel systems are installed
- reducing building water consumption
- minimising construction waste
- delivering measurable biodiversity net gain
- promoting circular economy principles and responsible sourcing within materials and construction practices

We have established a sustainable buildings guide for new construction, which will be reviewed and improved further during this five-year period. The guide sets out a range of sustainability standards, including fossil-free heating and minimising embodied carbon through material selection, structural efficiency and low-carbon procurement strategies. We have modified this for projects below £5 million, to ensure sustainability is embedded in all our retrofit projects.

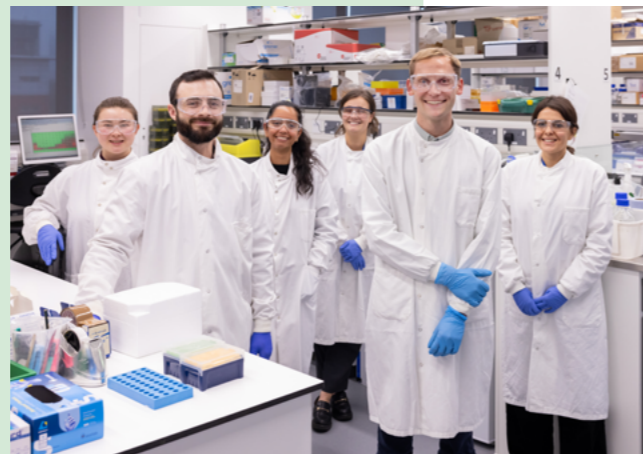
Imperial's goal is to be sector leading. By the end of 2026 we will review Imperial's sustainable building standards against emerging good practices – in recognition that standards are changing across university, commercial and public sectors. To inform the review, and as part of our upskilling, we will aim to deliver at least one smaller Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) Outstanding pilot project to understand planning requirements and their impact. We will also partner with other institutions, where relevant, to develop best practice.

We are developing clear criteria on sustainability into our commercial partnerships and leases, committing ourselves, our partners, and our tenants to meet at least minimum good practice standards, while striving for best practice. During this strategy period, we will develop a green leases policy to formalise this approach and support teams to align with it.

Case study:

Imperial's first fossil-fuel-free building

The Sir Victor Dahdaleh Building is Imperial's first sustainability-led retrofit. We have transformed one of our older buildings into a hub for cutting-edge heart and lung research and teaching facilities for Imperial researchers. The project replaced gas boilers with air and water source heat pumps to provide efficient heating, cooling, ventilation and power. Alongside installing electrical heating, improving the building fabric was central to energy efficiency, making it a more comfortable environment for staff and students.



Our targets:

- continue to apply BREEAM excellent for all new build projects
- achieve at least BREEAM very good for major refurbishment projects of our existing buildings (£5 million+)
- achieve London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) band B for all new builds by 2031
- undertake whole life carbon assessments for all projects over £5 million
- have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B by 2031 for all properties in Imperial's investment portfolio
- establish green leases policy for commercial partnerships and leases

Measures of progress:

- percentage of new build and major refurbishment projects achieving relevant BREEAM status
- percentage of investment portfolio properties with an EPC rating of B

Case study:

Delivering low-carbon infrastructure

The design for the new Academic Building on our White City Campus was nominated for an industry award for the work done by the Imperial and Careys teams to reduce embodied carbon. It will be part of the pilot group for the UK Green Building Council's new net-zero standard for construction, a national framework for verifying net-zero performance in the built environment.



Procurement

We will use procurement as a catalyst for change and influence with our supply chain.

We will reduce consumption and, wherever possible, purchase goods and services that are manufactured, used and disposed of in an environmentally responsible way – so that we **buy less and buy better** than we would have otherwise.

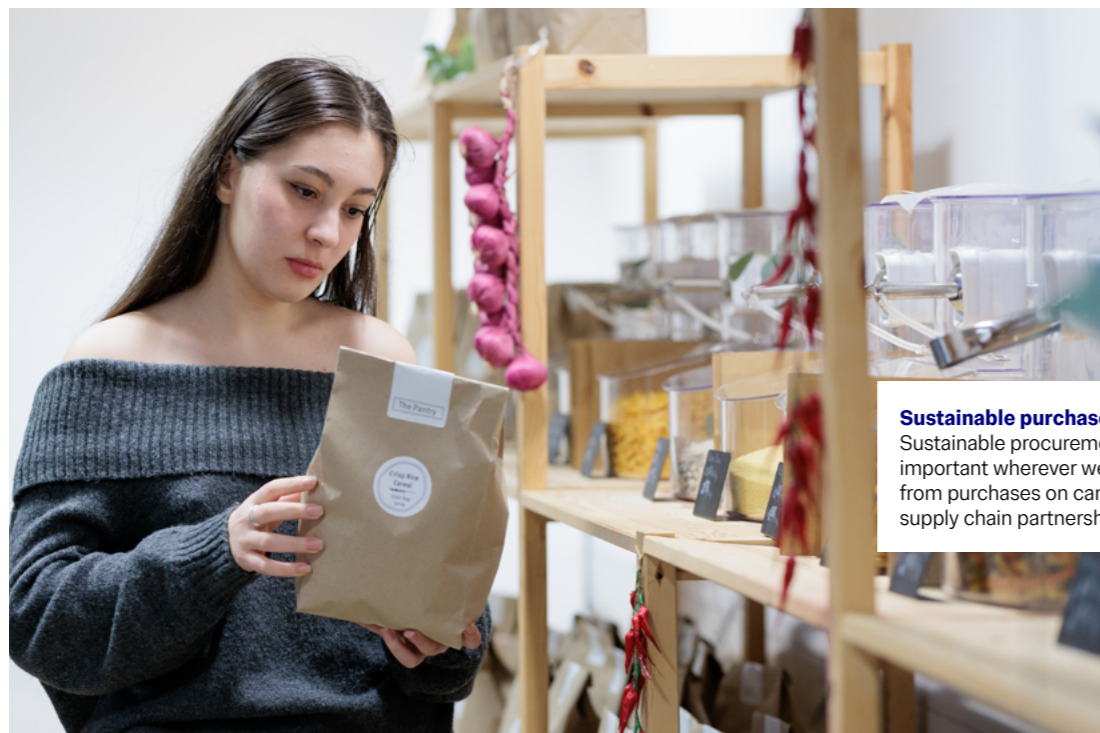
Procurement accounts for nearly half of our scope 3 emissions. Our established sustainable procurement strategy, policy and toolkit, launched in 2024, is already helping us build a stronger approach to reducing these emissions, working alongside teams to embed the policy into everyday operations.

Imperial is committed to significantly reducing the environmental impacts of its supply chain. By 2028–29, we will engage with our top 250 suppliers, who collectively represent 75% of our procurement spend, to submit their sustainability data through the Net Positive Supplier Tool. We will develop a pathway for how Imperial aims to decarbonise supply chain emissions, working with our academic colleagues.

By 2031, all tenders will have a sustainability weighting to ensure that environmental and social criteria are given greater consideration in our procurement decisions. A 20% sustainability weighting will continue to be applied to all major tenders (over £100,000) and 10% to minor tenders. We will work with underperforming suppliers to improve their sustainability performance and continue to build long-term supplier relationships through regular engagement, including forums, symposia, and local partnerships near our campuses.

To **embed sustainable procurement** across Imperial, all key members of staff involved in procurement will receive targeted training within the next 1–3 years. By 2031, we will expand this support to faculties and departments with internal procurement targets focused on local spend. We will work to align with the sector and national procurement consortia to strengthen practice, including lobbying our funders to support this.

Operationally, we will explore opportunities for consolidating the purchase of key goods, where this can save costs and improve sustainability. By 2031, we will undertake category-specific projects to identify more sustainable options – starting with commonly-purchased laboratory items. We will collaborate with the academic community to drive innovation in sustainable procurement, and benchmark our practices against recognised standards such as ISO 20400.



Sustainable purchases

Sustainable procurement decisions are important wherever we make them – from purchases on campus to our major supply chain partnerships.

Our targets:

Supply chain footprints are hard to estimate, so our targets focus on practical actions that should drive greater supply chain transparency and sustainability.

- 80% of our top 250 suppliers by contract value assessed through the Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool or other similar platform by 2031
- 80% of our top 250 suppliers by contract value directly engage with Imperial's sustainable procurement ambitions by 2031
- 100% of tenders over £100k incorporate our 20% sustainability weighting throughout 2026–31

We will aim for a reduction in the intensity of procurement-related scope 3 carbon emissions by at least 15% by 2031, striving for 28% by 2031, against the baseline year 2024–25.

Measures of progress:

- percentage of major (over £100k spend per year) and total suppliers assessed on environmental policies
- percentage of major suppliers (over £100k spend per year) with a credible net-zero plan
- percentage of suppliers engaged via the Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool or similar platform
- percentage of strategic tenders incorporating sustainability weighting (by value or volume)
- number of staff members trained in sustainable procurement practices
- procurement-related scope 3 carbon emissions per staff and student full-time equivalent

Case study:

Addressing the challenge of accurate measurement of supply chain footprints

Imperial is working actively with peer institutions through the Higher Education Procurement Association's Responsible Procurement Group to improve sector approaches to quantifying and reducing procurement emissions. An Imperial expert is currently chairing a technical review of the higher education sector's approach to quantifying scope 3 procurement emissions, in collaboration with sustainability and procurement experts from across the sector. This work is aimed at making the technical methodology more accurate, transparent and easier to use.

Laboratories

We aim to deliver sustainable laboratories and laboratory practice that enable our net-zero carbon and sustainability journey and proactively meet key funders' requirements to further Imperial's research and academic excellence.

Imperial is committed to embedding sustainability across all laboratory environments (wet labs, dry labs, teaching labs and workshops) to improve Imperial's lab sustainability practices across waste management, water use, procurement and energy efficiency.

To achieve this, we will **develop a strategy for dry labs and workshops** to ensure all types of labs can take part in a sustainability programme, including exploring sector partnerships to co-develop a LEAF engineering module.

An action plan will be developed and introduced to refresh internal audits for currently accredited labs for continued compliance with funder requirements and sustained achievement of LEAF awards at Imperial. We will also expand engagement efforts to increase participation in LEAF schemes across our faculties.

We will drive improvements in lab efficiency by developing **sustainable lab guidance for design and operations**, informed by benchmarking and sector expertise. Audits from Green Light Labs will help assess current performance and identify opportunities. Building a network with experts (e.g., International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories, Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, and other universities) will be key to identifying solutions for what a net-zero lab looks like, addressing common challenges across the sector, such as procurement, engineering labs and efficiency benchmarks.



Sustainable research

Our state-of-the-art facilities support a wide variety of ecological and evolutionary research, including at our plant growth room at Silwood Park Campus.

We will **build internal capability** and awareness by delivering relevant training, including expert masterclasses, online modules on core principles, workshops and refresher courses for staff, as outlined in the engagement pillar of the strategy. These efforts will be underpinned by including LEAF data in Imperial's sustainability dashboard for faculties and departments, the expansion and strengthening of the Lab Sustainability Champions Network and the launch of an annual LEAF celebration and feedback event.

To align with evolving funder requirements, with experts across the university, we will develop sustainability guidance in partnership with the Research Office to **future-proof project bids**. We will strengthen **collaboration beyond Imperial**, such as with the NHS Trust and sector-wide partners – to co-create joint operational sustainability initiatives and share best practices across the community.

Our targets:

- all labs (e.g. dry labs, workshops, teaching labs, wet labs) to achieve relevant sustainability certification by 2031
- establish a suitable sustainability assessment method for dry labs and workshops
- establish sustainable lab guidance for design and operations

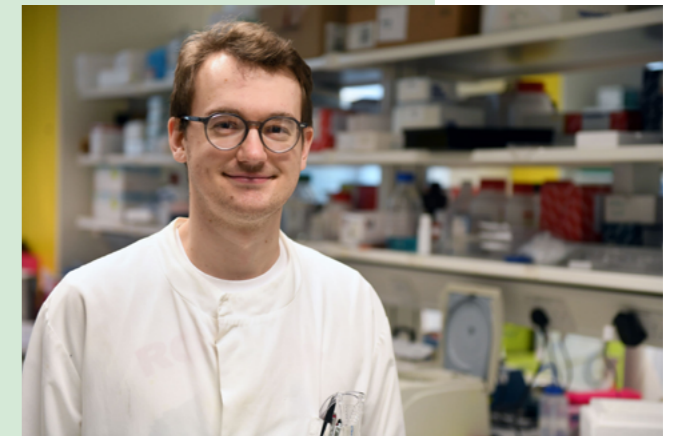
Measures of progress:

- number of labs achieving bronze, silver or gold LEAF
- percentage sign up of labs to a relevant sustainability scheme

Case study:

Silver LEAF award for the Division of Digestive Disease, Department of Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction

The division, based in the Faculty of Medicine, achieved a Silver LEAF certification with their innovative laboratory practices. Sustainability is integrated into governance through their highly committed divisional sustainability committee and standing agenda items in lab and health and safety meetings. This is further supported by energy-efficient procurement, optimised use of ultra-low temperature freezers, centralised equipment operation, and a strong focus on reduction and reuse. The division goes above and beyond, with active collaboration with the wider scientific community, including knowledge-exchange meetings on lab practices.



ICT

We aim to integrate sustainable practices across all ICT operations to reduce our environmental impact and increase sustainable computing as far as possible.

We will **measure our ICT impacts** by baselining our ICT emissions, including embodied carbon and emissions from electricity use of our hardware (e.g. monitors, laptops, desktops), emissions created from our own or co-located data centres, cloud use and all other ICT use. We will also baseline our impacts from our ICT waste.

Imperial will **strengthen the sustainability of its ICT operations** by achieving Green DiSC bronze and silver awards for central ICT systems and extending the life of hardware, against a balance of performance and user requirements, through in-house repairs and reuse of equipment within refurbishment projects. We will embed sustainability into research bids and encourage the use of central computer services over personal devices, where possible. We will explore Green DiSC for computation-heavy research groups.

To **increase energy efficiency in our data use**, we will introduce a sustainable data centre for high-performance computing (HPC) and reduce reliance on the aging South Kensington data centre (non-HPC) by moving applications to the cloud and more sustainable data centres. To **increase awareness of sustainable computing**, we will launch ICT short courses and wider communications around the sustainable use of computing infrastructure across the university.

We will start to **understand the impact of artificial intelligence (AI)** through collaborative work between ICT, research technical professionals and academics, other universities and groups with a focus on data centres and AI. We will establish a Sustainable AI Working Group to assess current and projected AI-related emissions, including tools such as Microsoft Copilot, and identify responsible AI usage.

ICT-enabled sustainability is a key pillar of our work over the next five years, showcasing university-wide sustainability on campus, and utilising Wi-Fi and the My Imperial app to promote sustainable behaviours amongst staff and students. This work will be set out in the ICT sustainability roadmap, due to be published in 2026.

Our targets:

- a full ICT emission and ICT waste baseline developed by September 2028
- achieve ICT sustainability certification (Green DiSC silver) for all central functions by 2028
- establish, as standard practice, a five-year warranty for all Imperial laptops purchased, and investigate refurbishing laptops first before disposal by 2028
- establish ICT sustainability guidance for computational research by 2028
- establish detailed understanding of our AI emissions and impacts by 2031

Measures of progress:

- ICT emissions (CO₂e) from purchased hardware, owned and collocated data centres, cloud use and other purchases

Case study:

Transforming research through sustainable data centres

Imperial launched a new supercomputing facility and ICICLE partnership (Imperial, Intel and Lenovo), enabling next-generation HPC for researchers. It provides early access to emerging technologies to support all faculties. This will give access to next-generation HPC to help tackle global challenges, with sustainability in mind. Imperial's future high-density computing systems will be water cooled, consuming less power, and producing fewer carbon emissions with the water conserved with a closed-loop system.

Travel

We will promote **climate conscious and environmentally responsible travel** among staff and students for university-related travel.

We have implemented our Sustainable Business Travel policy, which focuses on **travel for work**. Over this strategy period, we will introduce better tools for booking and monitoring travel. We will engage with our community to co-create projects and campaigns with faculties and departments to trial different methods to reduce emissions to potentially scale up across the university. This will range from encouraging frequent travellers to 'skip a trip' to reduce travel volume, to encouraging and enabling the use of lower-carbon travel modes for those who are taking short-haul trips to Europe.

Given that our diverse and growing global student intake has long journeys to our London campus, we will engage with our student community and Imperial's Student Union to understand their **student travel habits (for education)**, consider the appropriate sharing of responsibility between Imperial and our student community for travel emissions, and support more sustainable adjustments where possible. We will co-develop a sensible approach to inform and influence student travel habits and our postgraduate sustainable travel fund will remain open. We will connect students with the unique opportunities available across London during vacations, and work with teams across Imperial to enhance the attractiveness of our campuses.

While **daily travel (commuting)** for our staff and students accounts for around 1% of our total carbon footprint, sustainable commuting is important. Support is available for cycling and purchasing electric vehicles, and we are working to make our campuses more cycling-friendly. Over the next five years, we will ensure that active or public transport is the priority recommendation for local travel, engage with our local councils to improve provisions across our campuses, improve the provision of EV charging points at all campuses and ensure that we continue to support our community with active travel.

Our targets:

- aim for a sustained 30% reduction on business travel (travel for work) carbon footprint per FTE by 2030–31 compared to 2022–23
- engage with our community and Imperial College Union to understand student travel habits and support adjustments where possible
- acquire more robust data to improve benchmarking and develop smart targets and goals for student travel

Measures of progress:

- annual tCO₂e per FTE for business travel
- annual tCO₂e per student for university-related travel



Residual carbon emissions and offsetting

While it is possible to get direct campus carbon emissions to zero using existing technologies (scope 1 and 2), tackling indirect emissions (scope 3) is more complex and dependent on market conditions, supplier action, and staff and student behaviours, especially when set against plans for growth in student numbers and increased technology use.

As a global university with a large travel, computing and purchasing footprint, Imperial expects to have significant residual carbon emissions despite our best efforts to be as sustainable as possible. We are committed to reducing the negative impacts of these areas as much as we can, while continuing to support our staff and students in carrying out world-renowned research – growing our positive handprint value.

The challenge of residual emissions is shared with our peers and is one that we are determined to address as it is vital to ensuring our sustainability aims, and institution, remain robust and reputable.

We will engage our staff and student community to consider, in principle, what is the most appropriate approach to residual emissions for a university, as a charity using public funds for education and research.

Mindful that the carbon markets are still maturing, over the next five years we will pilot potential practical approaches for carbon removals and carbon pricing. We will run a series of pilot projects and schemes to test out and learn from approaches, looking at options that could be scaled up to balance travel residual emissions, at least, as these are the hardest to reduce.

We will also explore options to balance out our residuals through our wider positive impact (research, education) and insetting (local projects, projects on campus, supply chain collaboration).

Imperial's Carbon Pricing and Residual Emissions Working Group was established at the end of 2023 to discuss approaches to managing residual emissions. The Working Group is a mix of operational staff (Finance, Property Sustainability and Faculty) and academic staff who are experts in environmental policy and business.

Our targets:

- experiment with practical approaches to carbon removals and carbon pricing through pilot projects and schemes
- explore what is an appropriate, in principle, approach for Imperial through wide engagement with the community

Measures of progress:

- establish an approach to manage residual emissions
- annual scope 3 tCO₂e total and intensity of scope 3 in tCO₂e per staff and student FTE

Case study:

Imperial's Transition Pathways Explorer modelling net-zero routes

Imperial has developed a carbon calculator to model potential emission reductions and projected levels of residual carbon emissions. The Explorer considers items such as population growth, staff and student travel, building construction and refurbishment, procurement and building energy supply and demand – which can all be set at different levels of ambition. The Explorer tool has been developed to aid decision-making to help Imperial achieve net zero by 2040.



Reducing and reusing
To reduce plastic use and encourage reuse, we are installing and upgrading hydration stations across our campuses.

Water

We will prioritise **efficient water management through targeted infrastructure upgrades and operational improvements.**

We will install Automatic Meter Reader (AMR) pulse sub-meters across the top 50 high-priority buildings and areas to improve data accuracy and enable proactive water-use management. This will be supported by actions such as retrofitting tap fittings, replacing low-flow showerheads, and installing flow restrictors or aerators on bathroom and kitchen taps.

Sub-metering will be extended to plant rooms and third-party buildings, and rainwater harvesting will be integrated into all new builds and retrofit projects, where feasible. We will continue validating past sub-metering installations, local condenser cooling and water-saving lab practices, and transition from centralised to localised autoclaves to reduce process water demand and improve efficiency.

Alongside central interventions, we will build a culture of good water practice across Imperial, which will be embedded in the engagement pillar of the strategy, including student engagement through our Sustainable Halls campaign. We will pilot projects that showcase innovative ways of saving water.

Our targets:

Against the baseline year 2024–25

- we will achieve a 10% reduction in water consumption for Imperial-operated buildings by 2030–31
- we are aiming for a 5% reduction in water consumption for third-party managed buildings by 2030–31

Measures of progress:

- percentage reduction of total water consumption against baseline for Imperial buildings and third-party buildings

Biodiversity

We will **expand the diversity of plants**, focusing on **pollinator friendly and drought tolerant species**, increase the number and diversity of trees and hedgerows and promote staff and student **engagement in biodiversity action** and greenspace satisfaction. This includes Silwood Park, our rural campus, as Imperial's outdoor laboratory for research and teaching in ecology, evolution and conservation.

We are requiring a minimum of **25% biodiversity net gain** per project as part of the South Kensington Campus transformation plan. Plans include measurable improvement in green space satisfaction, reduction of sealed surfaces, and implementation of nature-based solutions to combat heatwave impacts, assist surface water attenuation and build climate resilience. These specifications were developed by Imperial's Biodiversity Working Group, which brings together operational staff, academic experts and student representatives.

Our targets:

- a minimum of 25% biodiversity net gain per project as part of the South Kensington Campus transformation plan, plus general increase in biodiversity across our campuses with smaller projects
- establish the impact of biodiversity improvements on staff and student satisfaction

Measures of progress:

- percentage biodiversity net gain per project from the South Kensington Campus transformation plan
- quantitative biodiversity metrics (e.g. increase in area (m²) of wildflower meadow and lawn with reduced mowing)
- habitat improvements in percentage of tree, shrub and ground layer cover; species diversity within habitat; size of habitats/sites since the 2021 baseline
- repeat the green satisfaction survey every three years
- analysis of pollinator populations through pollinator surveys and bioblitzes

Case study:

Grey to green transformation

Our redevelopment of Beit Quad, opened in June 2025, included:

- 35m² of hard surface replaced with soft landscaping
- over 60m² planted with trees, shrubs, perennials and pollinator-friendly plants
- six new tree species (including native varieties)
- increase from six to 33 species of herbaceous, perennial and shrub plants
- four species of low-growing, dense hedging
- year-round flowering and nectar supply for pollinators



Food and drink

We will implement Imperial's new **Sustainable Food and Drink Policy 2026–31**, setting out a five-year plan to reduce emissions, waste and environmental damage from our catering provision.

This includes increasing **plant-based food** options and ensuring all outsourced campus food outlets align with our no-beef policy, which will be included in contract renewals. **Carbon labelling** will be introduced to help inform staff and students of lower-emission food choices.

To reduce the impact of catering operations, we will **phase out single-use plastic** items and introduce **reusable cup and container** systems, following feasibility trials. We will also tackle **food waste** through improved practices, clear signage and engagement with our staff and student community.

Staff and student engagement will be central to delivering this strategy. We will support **collaborative projects** that apply to real operations, and run campaigns to promote more sustainable behaviours around food choices and waste reduction.

We will work closely with **suppliers** to review policies, gather their sustainability information, and set internal guidance to help us choose the most sustainable suppliers where possible. With support from the central procurement team, and tools like NET Positive, we will ensure supply chains reflect our sustainability ambitions.

Our targets:

- 10% increase in plant-based options, to 40% of our offering by 2031
- no outsourced outlets serving beef by 2031
- reduce plastic containing takeaway boxes by 75% by 2031
- create internal guidelines to benchmark our suppliers against, and engage with them on change
- replace equipment in outlets and implement electrification to reduce the carbon emissions of our assets by at least 53% (subject to investment)
- reduce edible food waste by 10% by end of 2026, a further 2% by end of 2027, and set further smart targets for the future

Measures of progress:

- percentage of plant-based options
- count and percentage of outsourced outlets serving beef
- count of single-use plastic containing takeaway containers/cups/plastic bottles
- percentage of catering suppliers with environmental assessment documents and net-zero policies
- percentage of targeted catering assets replaced with lower energy consumption assets and energy consumption change
- average food waste per plate (g)



Case study:

Introduction of seaweed-based packaging from Notpla into all our Taste operations

Notpla was founded by Imperial alumni Pierre Paslier and Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez, who first developed the edible bubble Ooho while studying on the Innovation Design Engineering programme. The company has since grown into a global leader in sustainable materials, creating packaging that is home-compostable, plastic-free and made from renewable seaweed extracts.



By using Notpla packaging across our campus outlets, annually, we expect to:

- replace over 450,000 single-use plastic items
- save around 1,185kg of plastic (more than the weight of a Fiat 500)
- cut 13,300kg of carbon emissions, equivalent to ten return flights from London to New York

Waste

We aim to **generate less waste and recycle more of what we do**. We aim to decrease the proportion of our waste which goes for incineration by ensuring more recyclable material ends up in the right bin.

From our waste analysis in May 2025, we found that our biggest waste streams are food waste, cardboard, non-recyclable paper and single-use catering items. Food waste will be a priority as it is our largest stream, it decreases the quality of other streams when it ends up in the wrong bin, and it is closely interlinked to single-use catering items. We will improve waste segregation through front-of-house interventions such as better bin labelling and engagement with users, and back-of-house interventions, such as sorting, baling, washing, refilling, repairing and reusing, where possible.

By the end of 2026, building on our 2025 waste report, we will develop a waste strategy with the help of relevant academic experts and operational colleagues. This will include establishing task and finish groups on specific aspects, such as circular procurement, to agree our five-year action plan.

By 2031, we will:

- have **engaged and informed** all staff and students about waste and circular economy through revised staff and student inductions, bolder communications, regular campaigns, and collaborative research through the Imperial Sustainability Sandbox initiative
- change the feel of campuses by increasing the proportion of **reusable and recyclable items** that staff and students come into contact with
- analyse our **procurement of consumables** and explore the biggest opportunities for reducing, reusing and recycling
- continuously **improve our waste data** by establishing more robust baselines and extending analysis to all campuses



Circular economy

We are committed to wasting less and moving towards a circular economy where materials are used for as long as possible, including through engagement on waste and recycling.

Our targets:

Through tailored options focused on reduced consumption and resource optimisation, we will:

- reduce total waste per FTE by at least 10% by 2031
- reduce general waste per FTE by at least 20% by 2031

Measures of progress:

- annual tCO₂e per staff and student FTE from waste
- total and general waste per staff and student FTE

Case study:

Waste Composition Analysis with staff and students

Staff and student volunteers established Imperial's first 'Waste Composition Analysis station' to collect data on the contents of our general waste. Over 300kg of waste samples were analysed to create a waste profile for the South Kensington Campus, and measured how well recyclables are being captured versus how much 'leaks' into general waste.



Our positive impact on people and our future

We will nurture, grow and celebrate our community's impact on the wider world.

Sustainable Lab Awards

Members of our community from across Imperial are making significant improvements to their labs through the LEAF scheme.



Hydration Launch Hammersmith
Our hydration stations and reusable bottles are helping reduce single-use plastic.



Bugs, Birds and Beasts Day at Silwood Park
This popular family event brings our community into the heart of our rural campus.



Hammersmith Indoor Plant Session
Greening the insides of our buildings is as important as our outdoor spaces.



White City and Hammersmith Litter Pick
Staff and student litter picks happen across the year to make a positive impact on our local communities.



The Queer Ecology Walk
Our annual Sustainability Month programme includes events which celebrate the intersectionality of our community.



Enviro-menstrual
Hosted by the Women's Environment Network to raise awareness of the plastics in conventional menstrual products and share examples for more sustainable options.



Paddle and Pick
Imperial volunteers litter picked the canal by bell boat or kayak during London Climate Action Week.



SCR Pop-up
Our Sustainability Hub runs a busy schedule of pop-up events across our campuses throughout the year to talk to our community.



Hallow-green
Our seasonal sustainability events for staff and students are as fun as they are informative.



Big Butterfly Count Wormwood Scrubs
Community science is an important part of our biodiversity programme.

Maximising our positive handprint

We will use the knowledge and capability across our students, academic, research, operational and technical staff to create sustainable solutions across our education, our research and our campuses. Through our external partnerships and collaboration, we will use our expertise to accelerate a sustainable transformation for industry and society.

Nurturing graduates on sustainability

Imperial will be a global leader in science-led, future-ready sustainability education, as described by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will design and deliver ambitious world-leading cross-faculty and Lifelong Learning courses, modules and programmes in sustainability science.

Imperial Class of 2030 graduates will possess the knowledge, skills and confidence, and have the opportunities, to apply their disciplinary learning to tackle sustainability challenges and make a meaningful impact in and on the world.

We will integrate relevant sustainability teaching and learning into core disciplinary subjects, providing opportunities for students to apply their learning to sustainability problems. We will incorporate sustainability considerations into our teaching laboratory-based practices, including computational elements. We will aim for students to graduate from their programmes with the literacy, green skills and confidence necessary to advocate, tackle and influence the challenges of climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and their consequences on people and the planet.

We will map our existing taught programmes against the SDGs to understand how and where sustainability is being taught at Imperial, and identify disciplinary relevant gaps in provision. We will then work with academic departments to contextually embed sustainability education into degree programmes as part of STEM education.

We will align key **Imperial Lifelong Learning** programme components with sustainability thematic areas and ensure our programmes teach sustainability and provide relevant skills and knowledge training for **individuals, businesses, governments and other knowledge organisations**. We will bridge the gap between discovery and practice to give individuals, businesses and communities the skills needed to drive impact in sustainability personally, locally and globally.

Our current offering for businesses, individuals and lifelong learners:

- Sustainable Finance and Investing: Unlock Global Investment Strategies
- Sustainability Leadership
- Responsible Leadership in a Complex World
- Executing Sustainability Strategies Programme
- Emerging Technologies in Global Security & Resilience: From AI to Sustainable Smart Cities and Natural Environments
- Sustainable Futures: A Global Climate Summer School
- Sustainable Business for Planetary Health Summer School

Case study:

The Education for Sustainability Special Interest Group

The Education for Sustainability Special Interest Group offers all staff access to a community of practice to explore and develop pedagogical approaches, practical strategies, helpful content and the support needed to embed education for sustainability into teaching and the wider curriculum. Moving forwards, this may act as a hub for Continuing Professional Development materials for staff.

Case study:

Harnessing Imperial's innovation for global impact

Imperial was named the Outstanding Entrepreneurial University of 2025 for its work on scaling innovation from West London to the world at the Times Higher Education Awards. Through initiatives and facilities such as Imperial Enterprise Lab, Advanced Hackspace, Imperial Incubator and the climate innovation centre, Undaunted, this ecosystem supports science-based entrepreneurs with taking their ideas and turning them into startups, scaleups and – ultimately – global businesses.

Case study:

Introduction to Climate Change module developed by the Grantham Institute

Available to all students and staff, our online course delves into the science behind climate change, strategies for mitigation and adaptation, the reliability of climate change information, how climate change intersects with broader sustainability issues and Imperial's ecological impact. The course provides the knowledge and skills to help make informed and climate-conscious decisions in daily life, study and future career.

Measures of progress (Imperial Class of 2030):

- % of graduating students who complete a relevant climate/sustainability education programme
- progress of curriculum evolution across taught degree programmes by establishing appropriate measures with education leaders

Measures of progress (Lifelong Learning):

- number of sustainability-related courses
- number of enrolments on sustainability-related courses
- number of external businesses taking our sustainability courses
- satisfaction scores



Creating a sustainable future together

We aim to inspire everyone at Imperial by engaging them with visible sustainability good practice on our campuses, and inspiring them to have an active role at the university, at home and in society.

We will continue to build and amplify **our existing initiatives**, schemes, campaigns and events to enable everyone to play their part and join the journey. We will work with staff, students and local community to provide skills, resources and space for sustainability discussions, to allow our community to be well equipped and share best practice for positive change.

We will continue to grow our **Sustainability Month**, strengthen our Sustainable Halls campaign, further develop our **Green Careers Fair**, continue to play a key role in delivering the London Student Sustainability Conference, and introduce an annual Staff Sustainability Awards. We will scale up our **Green Impact** scheme and our **Staff Champions Network**. We will run more competitions and challenges on a variety of sustainability themes which our community can take part in remotely.

We will scale up our work with **local partners** such as South Ken ZEN+, local councils and community groups across our campus areas, by collaborating on more events and initiatives.

We will scale up our **sustainability training** programme. Core offerings will include our bespoke Climate Literacy training as well as Climate Fresk workshops, and sustainability inductions for our staff and students. Imperial's sustainability training programme will be supported by additional specialised training opportunities to be part of Imperial's development offerings – such as sustainable procurement and managing sustainable labs.

Case study:

Awareness into action with Green Impact initiatives

The Research Office Green Impact team delivered a range of initiatives to encourage colleagues to adopt sustainable practices at work and at home. Activities included a launch week featuring gardening and litter-picking events, the introduction of food and book swaps and soft plastics recycling boxes with informative signage, and organising art-based sustainability competitions open to staff and their family and friends.



Case study:

Student-led project helping peers reduce their carbon impact

Following the launch of a climate action survey, a student-initiated project began in the Department of Earth Science and Engineering. The team is close to completing the next phase of the project jointly with Civil and Environmental Engineering: embedding a tailored, open-source carbon footprint calculator into the survey. The tool uses data from our Property division to estimate emissions linked to student halls of residence. It incorporates London-specific data and is being refined so students can complete it in under 10 minutes.

Case study:

Collaborative work through student interdisciplinary challenge teams

Each academic year, new interdisciplinary, inter-cohort teams are formed as part of the Grantham Institute-led doctoral training programme. Challenge Teams collaborate on projects which tackle a series of contemporary issues and translate research challenges. Projects include fighting fast fashion, climate-friendly eating, designing sustainable student welcome boxes and creating a tool for the general public to reduce their own climate impact.



We will introduce new initiatives to scale up engagement across the university to empower and enable our community to use their voice for change and provide opportunities for them to lead and partner on sustainability activities and projects, so that together we can deliver the Sustainable Imperial vision.

We will pilot our new Imperial **Sustainability Sandbox**, a whole campus sustainability initiative. The initiative involves the collaboration between academic staff, students and professional services teams to support stronger operational sustainability practices by drawing on the skills, knowledge and talents of our academics and students, feeding into our research and education on sustainability by drawing on our campus operations. The sandbox will include paid graduate student internships. It will also offer potential sustainability topics for our environmental Master's students and interdisciplinary challenge teams, as well as opportunities for undergraduates through programmes such as the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme and StudentShapers, engaging with students as partners in Learning and Teaching. The sandbox will serve as a convening space to explore potential on-campus built-environment projects delivered across our research and enterprise teams and initiatives to research, study, improve, test and visibly demonstrate sustainable practices on Imperial campuses.

We will convene our **Academic Experts Network** to consult on operational projects or ideas, lead or advise in research, and co-create strategies, guidelines and resources for our communities.

Case study:

Project fund to support staff and student initiatives

The Faculty of Engineering is piloting a £100,000 project fund supporting local sustainability initiatives involving staff and students in improving our sustainability practices. This will explore opportunities to try out and embed new approaches, drawing on our research and operational expertise and offering exciting learning opportunities for our students.

Case study:

From pop-ups to posts: student ambassadors driving sustainable awareness

Our student ambassadors supported the delivery of a successful Happy Halloween-green campaign. The ambassadors engaged over 300 students and staff at pop-up events with activities to promote sustainable Halloween and tips and challenges to raise awareness about Imperial's reuse schemes. The ambassadors also created video content for social media, gaining over 3,000 views, and extending the campaign's reach and impact.



We will introduce a **Sustainable Imperial Student Ambassadors** programme. The programme will be open to all Imperial students, providing them with opportunities to boost their sustainability knowledge, build useful skills for future careers, and grow their handprint by inspiring others to take action.

We will support departments and faculties to develop and deliver their own **sustainability action plans** to progress sustainability issues that can best be tackled locally. This can include adopting schemes like LEAF or Green Impact, reducing departmental footprints from energy, purchasing and travel, and growing the sustainability content in education and research. It will be supported by data (through our sustainability dashboards for departments), guidance and an offer of facilitation to departmental committees to support and plan development.

We will **embed sustainability** into other existing initiatives across the university as appropriate, such as Imperial's Leadership Academy, awareness-raising initiatives such as Women at Imperial and Mental Health Awareness Week, and outreach events such as the Great Exhibition Road Festival, to reach existing audiences and demonstrate the necessity for sustainable considerations in all activity areas. We will work alongside other staff networks and student societies/clubs on events to appeal to existing interests e.g. arts, sports and hobbies, to reach those not yet engaged with sustainability.

Our targets:

- grow our existing campaigns, including our staff sustainability champions network, with at least one established team/member across each department
- by 2028–29, we will have a Sustainable Imperial student ambassador representing each faculty and across as many departments as possible. By 2031, we aim for Sustainable Imperial ambassadors to widen their reach into the local area, assisting the community with sustainability engagement activities
- scale up our sustainability training programme
- develop our whole-campus projects initiative – the Sustainability Sandbox
- departments will develop and deliver their own sustainability action plans to progress sustainability issues that can best be tackled locally

Measures of progress:

- number of students participating in our various sustainability initiatives
- number of staff participating in our various sustainability initiatives
- number of faculties and departments with sustainability committees and sustainability action plans

Increasing our positive impact through research and innovation

We will continue to support our researchers and innovators to investigate, discover and respond to planetary and societal challenges sustainably, across our faculties, departments and research partnerships. Our research covers a range of sector-based areas, with impact on people and planet at the heart of everything we do.

We will continue to strengthen our multi-disciplinary approach to global problem solving. In addition, we will develop and demonstrate scalable solutions to climate challenges within the sustainability mission of the new School of Convergence Science, and Undaunted, Imperial's climate accelerator programme.

Case study:

Imperial's leading contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Over the next five years, 664 leading experts will compile and assess the latest and most important evidence on climate change for the Seventh Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). By contributing 11 authors, Imperial has more contributors than any other higher education institution globally.

Reports of the IPCC have provided authoritative information in support of international climate policy discussions, including the scientific evidence underpinning the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Once finished, the report will help shape policies to tackle climate change throughout the 2030s.

Case study:

Electric Power Innovation for a Carbon-free Society Centre (EPICS-UK)

With researchers from the Faculty of Engineering and the Business School involved, the EPICS Global Centre tackles the most difficult barriers that power system operators must overcome in order to safely run fully decarbonised grids. The research teams connect with grid operators on six continents to understand their challenges and develop solutions that will have immediate application in the real world. Imperial is leading the UK's involvement in the centre, which is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The approaches and tools being developed enable grid operators to securely run higher shares of wind, solar and storage resources to confidently manage very highly decarbonised systems, accelerating progress on climate targets around the world.



School of Convergence Science – Sustainability

Bringing people, institutions and knowledge together to supercharge a healthier, more prosperous, future for humanity and our planet

Within the new School of Convergence Science, we are focused on future-building, with one key area being sustainable futures. This has been established to provide the evidence and tools to map realistic routes towards a greener future, mobilising our convening power and working with staff and students to share our evidence effectively.

Broader than a research institute, nimbler than a faculty, and with the drive and focus of a startup, our new School will operate within a new model for a STEMB university. This long-term, mission-led research and demonstration programme will draw together and deeply integrate diverse expertise across Imperial and our external collaborators. This new model will ensure that Imperial delivers coordinated sustainability research at great scale, breath, impact and urgency.

Our concept of convergence involves working closely with all stakeholders – local communities to multinational industries – from posing the initial research questions right through to piloting solutions, including across our own campuses, that demonstrate a clear and viable way forward.

The School of Convergence Science exists to stimulate and facilitate bold new convergence research, with delivery led by departments, across all faculties.

Measures of progress:

- number of new collaborations (e.g. grants, co-authoring, joint studentships)
- number of impact case studies
- growth in accelerator programmes



Our research community

Through our School of Convergence Science, we are building a deeply integrated research community to seek, design, test and demonstrate realisable routes to a clean and healthy future.



Sustainable outreach

Bugs, Birds & Beasts Day is an outdoor celebration of the natural world, packed with exciting activities and discoveries at our Silwood Park Campus.

Beyond Imperial: partnerships for sustainability

Imperial Zero Index

Imperial's framework, the Imperial Zero Index, has been designed to **assess how our energy industry collaborators are performing in their commitment, strategy and operational efforts towards net zero, and guide our decisions on who we partner with and how.**

Imperial published its first outcomes of the framework in 2025, and this will be repeated annually. We expect to disengage from all academic and research collaborations with companies that do not meet our criteria. The Index is also being used to inform our socially responsible investment decisions.

Imperial engages with a range of companies across research and education, with a long history of collaboration, and we recognise that the fossil fuel industry will play a critical role in enabling global decarbonisation. Fossil fuel companies have both the expertise and resources that are going to be required to drive true change at scale, and Imperial can contribute most effectively to this by engaging with the sector to facilitate, challenge and accelerate change. We have the expertise – in science and engineering, business and management – to make a vital contribution.

“Transitioning to net zero is one of the greatest challenges facing the world right now. Science and technology are critical for creating a more sustainable society, but universities cannot act alone.” Professor Hugh Brady, President of Imperial

We have implemented an ‘engagement for change’ approach and pledged to only carry out research with fossil fuel companies where: the research is strongly aligned to the decarbonisation of their business; and only if the company demonstrates a credible strategic commitment to achieving net zero by 2050.

With all our fossil fuel company partners, whether current or prospective, we will clearly outline our expectations regarding transitional performance, and the themes of research that we will conduct together. All research and education projects must be aligned with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement; funding aimed at extending existing hydrocarbon extraction practices is not permitted.

The ambition of the index is to increase accountability and ensure academic engagements at Imperial and beyond are with partners who want to enact a genuine transition, preventing potential ‘greenwashing’.

Our targets:

- continuing to run index assessments annually to our current and potential new fossil fuel company engagements
- increasing awareness of the process and its use, primarily within Imperial's departments managing relationships with companies in the oil and gas sector
- effectively communicating the outcomes of the index to our community on an annual basis
- continuing to review the criteria with our expert academic community

Measures of progress:

- partners scoring higher annually as a result of engagement with the index and imperial researchers

South Ken ZEN+

We will continue to be an active member of the South Kensington Zero Emissions Nature Positive (South Ken ZEN+) Programme, an initiative of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group. This collaboration of 22 arts, culture, education and science institutions in South Kensington accelerates efforts to cut emissions, promote sustainable practices and adapt to climate change.

In recent years we have taken part in collaborative efforts to define a neighbourhood carbon footprint, mapping decarbonisation scenarios, exploring decarbonisation options for heat and energy for the neighbourhood, and drafting a neighbourhood-level Charter for a Sustainable Supply Chain. We have participated in in-depth sustainability knowledge-sharing workshops on a range of topics from climate risk assessments to decarbonising pensions and investments. We have established Imperial student partnership projects to support South Ken ZEN+ activity.

Over the strategy period, we will work together with South Ken ZEN+ in a range of ways, including: delivering shared training on climate literacy and sustainable procurement; furthering partnerships projects with Imperial students; embedding the South Ken ZEN+ Supply Chain Charter with our stakeholders; greening the neighbourhood to provide better climate resilience and a network of nature corridors; and contributing actively to knowledge-sharing so we can learn from each other and support each other to make greater progress on our journey towards a zero emissions, nature-positive future.

Case study:

Student challenge team biodiversity project collaboration with South Ken ZEN+

This collaboration between Imperial students and South Ken ZEN+ engaged residents in the local area on urban wildlife, focusing on expanding knowledge and awareness of the nature and biodiversity found in cities and towns. A pilot programme was developed, creating a decision tree to help people overcome obstacles they encounter when planting native pollinators in window boxes and balconies. The pilot is now used by Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.



Policy Fellowships

We will make our climate and sustainability expertise accessible to a wider community of policymakers by providing on-campus deep-dive Policy Fellowships. Building on Imperial's current policymaker support, through current centres and research groups, such as the Centre for Environmental Policy and the Environmental Research Group, and the sustainability mission of the School of Convergence Science, this programme will connect researchers and policymakers directly, producing research and policy solutions in collaboration that will contribute to decarbonisation.

These fellowships will deepen Imperial's policy offerings to UK and international governments through collaboration between Imperial's Policy Forum, the Grantham Institute, School of Convergence Science, and our Faculties and Imperial Business School. We will explore development of taught courses for policy stakeholders, in line with Imperial's AI and Quantum Fundamental courses. By 2031, we will have delivered 10 climate-focused Policy Fellowships.

Case study:

Collaborating for impact

Our Policy Fellowship fosters collaboration between senior civil servants and Imperial experts to shape government thinking on vital climate and sustainability issues. Projects have covered areas such as AI transparency in energy systems, natural capital, and resilience strategies. These collaborations provide valuable insights to inform policy development and regulatory approaches, demonstrating how academic-government partnerships can support evidence-based decision-making on complex sustainability challenges.

Case study:

Partnership to improve local air quality

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust with Hammersmith and Fulham Council and Imperial College London have set up a new three-year partnership to improve local air quality. The partnership was launched on our White City Campus in February 2025 and has a number of objectives, including:

- raising public awareness of air quality issues in the borough, such as different sources of pollution and areas with high pollution levels
- helping residents to reduce their exposure to pollution
- developing evidence-based solutions to improve air quality in the borough
- public engagement (such as educational campaigns and citizen science initiatives), seminars, joint funding bids, and workshops and training sessions for Hammersmith and Fulham council staff, residents and stakeholders.



Research partnerships portfolio

We are actively working to grow research collaborations that support the transition towards a more sustainable future. We have already established several new centres, including:

The **Bezos Centre for Sustainable Protein** launched in June 2024. The centre will develop innovative and evidence-based solutions through the design, delivery and commercialisation of alternative food products that are economically and environmentally friendly, nutritious, affordable and tasty. The centre, spanning seven Imperial academic departments, will advance research into precision fermentation, cultivated meat, bioprocessing and automation, nutrition, and AI and machine learning.

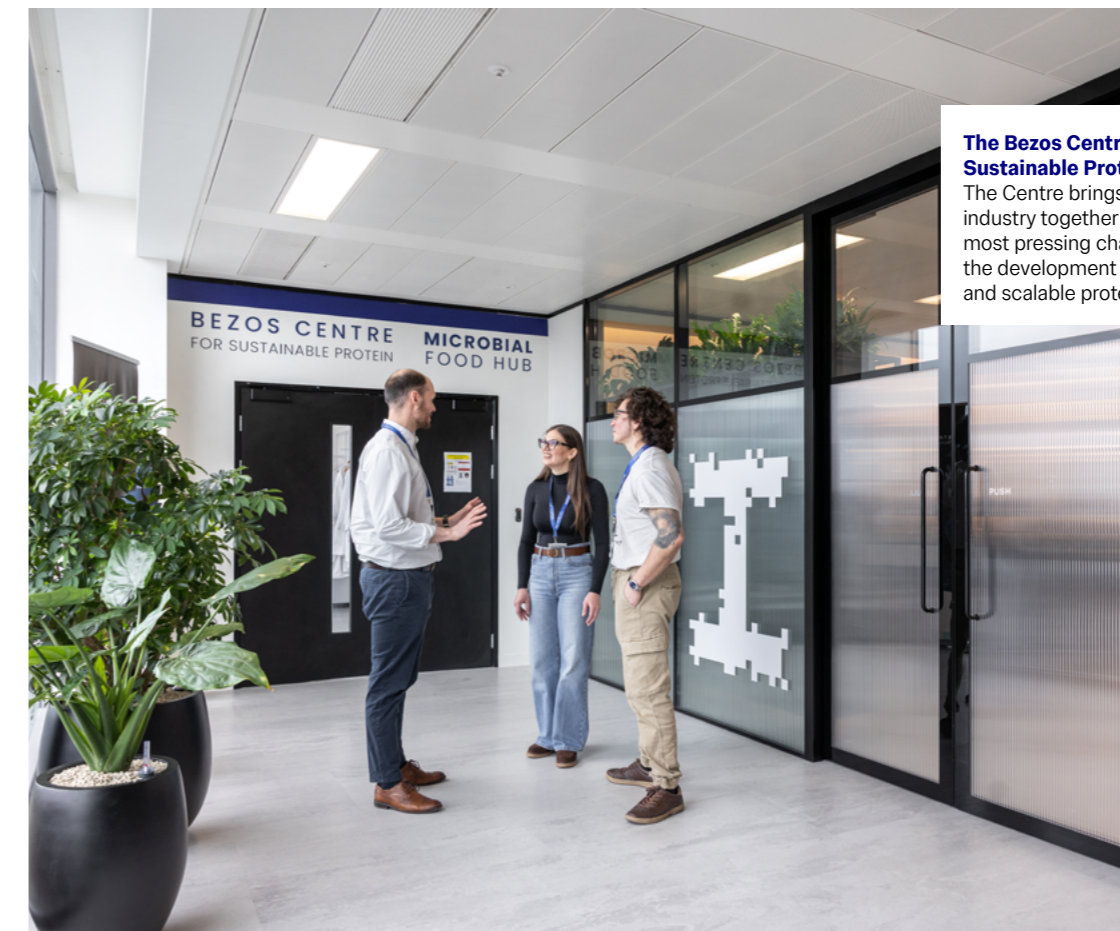
The **Hitachi Centre for Decarbonisation and Natural Climate Solutions**, launched in 2023, will provide solutions and research to help tackle the issue of global pollution, of which CO₂ is one of the greatest sources. The initial focus is on decarbonisation and climate repair, with projects covering carbon management, decarbonisation of energy and transport, and CO₂ removal – looking at new technologies and nature-based solutions.

The **Rio Tinto Centre for Future Materials**, founded in 2024, is reimagining materials usage from extraction to processing to reuse – in order to meet the challenge of delivering critical materials for the energy transition. A partnership across four continents, the centre unites academics, industry, governments and communities.

We will continue to grow our portfolio of partnerships to support sustainability research and innovation over the next five years and beyond.

Measures of progress:

- new partnerships and large awards for sustainability challenges



The Bezos Centre for Sustainable Protein

The Centre brings academia and industry together to address one of the most pressing challenges of our time – the development of nutritious, affordable and scalable protein solutions.

Appendices

KPIs: Minimising our environmental footprint

We will minimise our environmental footprint by embedding sustainable practices on our campuses.

Area	Ambition	Headline targets	Headline measures of progress
Campus carbon and energy	To achieve net zero campuses for scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2040.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce our campus scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 25% by 2028–29, against a 2018–19 baseline. Net-zero campuses without offsetting for our scopes 1 and 2 energy emissions by 2040. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual scope 1 and 2 tCO₂e total and per staff and student FTE.
Buildings and construction	To design, operate and maintain buildings that reduce our environmental impact and are more comfortable to work in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new builds to achieve BREEAM Excellent. Major refurbishment projects over £5 million to achieve at least BREEAM Very Good. Undertake Whole Life Carbon assessments for all projects over £5 million. Establish green leases policy for commercial partnerships and leases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of new build and major refurbishment projects achieving relevant BREEAM status.
Procurement	<p>Use procurement as a catalyst for change and influence with our supply chains.</p> <p>Reduce consumption and, wherever possible, purchase goods and services that are sustainably procured and supplied – so that we buy less and buy better.</p>	<p>Implement practical actions that drive greater supply chain transparency and sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of our top 250 suppliers by contract value assessed using the Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool, or other similar platforms, by 2031. 100% of tenders over £100,000 incorporating our 20% sustainability weighting throughout 2026–31. <p>Reduce the intensity of procurement related scope 3 carbon emissions by at least 15% by 2031, striving for 28% by 2031, against the baseline year 2024–25.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of major (over £100,000 spend per year) and total suppliers assessed on environmental policies. % of major suppliers (over £100,000 spend per year) with a credible net zero plan. % of strategic tenders incorporating sustainability weighting (by value or volume). Procurement related scope 3 carbon emissions per staff and student FTE.

Laboratories	Deliver sustainable labs and lab practice that enable our net zero carbon and sustainability journey. We will proactively meet key funder requirements to amplify Imperial's research and academic excellence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All labs to achieve relevant sustainability certification by 2031. Establish a suitable sustainability assessment method for dry labs and workshops. Establish sustainable lab guidance for design and operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of labs achieving bronze, silver or gold LEAF. % sign up of labs to relevant sustainability scheme.
ICT	Integrate sustainable practices across all ICT operations to reduce our environmental impact and increase sustainable computing as far as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve ICT sustainability certification (Green DiSC Silver) for all central functions by 2028. Establish ICT sustainability guidance for computational research by 2028. Establish a well-grounded understanding of our AI emissions and impacts by 2031. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual tCO₂e per FTE from purchased hardware, owned and collocated data centres, cloud use and other ICT purchases.
Travel	Promote climate conscious and environmentally responsible travel among staff and students for university-related travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sustained 30% reduction on business travel (travel for work) carbon footprint per FTE by 2030–31 compared to 2022–23. Engage with our community and Imperial College Union to acquire robust data, understand student travel habits and support adjustments, where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual tCO₂e per FTE for business travel. Annual tCO₂e per student for university-related travel.
Residual carbon emissions and offsetting	We are committed to reducing the negative impacts of our residual emissions as much as we can, while continuing to support our staff and students in carrying out international, world-renowned research – growing our positive handprint value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiment with practical approaches to carbon removals and carbon pricing, through pilot projects and schemes, to test and learn from approaches. Explore what is an appropriate, in principle, approach for Imperial through wider engagement with the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an approach to residual emissions. Annual scope 3 tCO₂e total and per staff and student FTE.

Water	Prioritise efficient water management through targeted infrastructure upgrades and operational improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% reduction in water consumption for Imperial-operated buildings by 2030–31, against baseline year 2024–25. 5% reduction in water consumption for third-party managed buildings by 2030–31, against baseline year 2024–25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % reduction of total water consumption against baseline for Imperial buildings and third-party buildings.
Biodiversity	Grow green and biodiverse spaces across our campuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 25% biodiversity net gain per project as part of the South Kensington Campus transformation plan, plus general increase in biodiversity across our campuses with smaller projects. Establish the impact of biodiversity improvements on staff and student satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % biodiversity net gain per project from the South Kensington Campus transformation plan. Habitat improvements in % tree, shrub and ground layer cover; species diversity within habitat; size of habitats/sites since the 2021 baseline.
Food and drink	Implement our new Sustainable Food and Drink Policy 2026–31, to reduce emissions, waste and environmental damage from our catering provision. Mature our sustainable eating practice across our campuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% increase in plant-based options, to 40% of our offering, by 2031. No outsourced outlets serving beef by 2031. Reduce plastic-containing takeaway boxes by 75% by 2031. Reduce edible food waste by 10% by end of 2026, a further 2% by end of 2027 and set further SMART targets moving forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of plant-based options. Count and % of outsourced outlets serving beef. Count of single-use plastic containing takeaway containers/cups/plastic bottles. Average food waste per plate (g).
Waste	Generate less waste and recycle more of what we do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce total waste per FTE by at least 10% by 2031. Reduce general waste per FTE by at least 20% by 2031. Analyse our procurement for the biggest opportunities on reducing, reusing and recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual tCO₂e per staff and student FTE from waste. Total and general waste per staff and student FTE.

KPIs: Maximising our positive handprint

Using the knowledge and capability across our community to create sustainable solutions across our education, our research and our campuses. Through our external partnerships and collaborations, we will use our expertise to accelerate a sustainable transformation for industry and society.

Area	Ambition	Headline targets	Headline measures of progress
Nurturing graduates on sustainability (Imperial Class of 2030)	Imperial Class of 2030 graduates will possess the knowledge, skills and confidence, and have the opportunities, to apply their disciplinary learning to tackle sustainability challenges and make a meaningful impact in and on the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate relevant sustainability teaching and learning into core disciplinary subjects, providing students with opportunities to apply learning to sustainability problems. Integrate sustainability considerations into our teaching laboratory-based practices, including computational ones. Map each of our existing taught programmes against the SDGs to understand how and where sustainability is taught, and identify disciplinary relevant gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of graduating students completed a relevant climate/sustainability education programme. Progress of curriculum evolution across taught degree programmes by establishing appropriate measures with education leaders.
Nurturing graduates on sustainability (Lifelong Learning)	Our Lifelong Learning programmes teach sustainability and provide relevant skills and knowledge training, bridging the gap between discovery and practice, to drive impact in sustainability personally, locally and globally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align key Lifelong Learning programme components with sustainability thematic areas, teach sustainability, provide relevant skills and knowledge training for individuals, businesses, governments and other knowledge organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of enrolments on sustainability-related courses. Number of external businesses taking our sustainability courses.

<p>Creating a sustainable future together</p>	<p>We want everyone at Imperial to experience visible good practice on sustainability on our campuses and feel like they have an active role to play at the university, at home and in society.</p> <p>We want to introduce ways to engage people on sustainability to encourage everyone to recognise and improve their impact and take that with them beyond Imperial.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grow our existing campaigns, including our Staff Champions Network, with at least one established team/member across each department. Establish new initiatives such as Sustainable Imperial Student Ambassadors (where we aim to have an ambassador representing each faculty and across as many departments as possible by 2029). ■ Scale up our sustainability training programme. ■ Develop our whole-campus projects initiative – the Sustainability Sandbox. ■ Departments will develop and deliver their own sustainability action plans to progress sustainability issues that can best be tackled locally. 	<p>Student engagement measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of students participating in our various sustainability initiatives. <p>Staff engagement measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of staff participating in our various sustainability initiatives. ■ Number of faculties and departments with sustainability committees; and sustainability action plans.
<p>Increasing our positive impact through research and innovation</p>	<p>We will continue to support our researchers and innovators to investigate, discover and respond to planetary and societal challenges sustainably.</p> <p>Our research covers a range of sector-based areas, with people and planet at the heart of everything we do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Amplify Imperial's convening power, advisory and thought leadership. ■ Enhance the visibility of Imperial's flagship research initiatives. ■ The School of Convergence Science will develop a virtual cohort of PhD students and inform the creation of new interdisciplinary Master's programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of new sustainability-related collaborations. ■ Number of impact case studies. ■ Growth in accelerator programmes.

<p>Beyond Imperial: partnerships for sustainability (Imperial Zero Index)</p>	<p>We will assess how our energy industry collaborators are performing in their commitment, strategy and operational efforts towards net zero, with an 'engagement for change' approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to run index assessments annually to our current and potential new fossil fuel company engagements. ■ Continue to review the criteria with our expert academic community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners scoring higher annually as a result of engagement with the index and Imperial researchers.
<p>Beyond Imperial: partnerships for sustainability (Policy Fellowships)</p>	<p>We will make our climate expertise accessible to a wider community of policymakers by providing on-campus deep-dive Policy Fellowships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliver 10 Policy Fellowships by 2031. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of Policy Fellowships.
<p>Beyond Imperial: partnerships for sustainability (research partnerships portfolio)</p>	<p>Imperial is working actively to grow research collaborations that support the transition towards a more sustainable future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to grow our portfolio of partnerships to support sustainability research and innovation over the next five years and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New partnerships and large awards for sustainability challenges.

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