

#SCI4NET0

CALL TO ACTION

TO RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS FOR THE NET-ZERO TRANSITION

JOINT POSITION ADOPTED DURING COP26

8 NOVEMBER 2021

CESAER
The strong and united voice of universities
of science and technology in Europe

 **ISCN**
International Sustainable Campus Network

**SCIENCE
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Shaping the future of research 2011 - 2021
TEN YEARS OF SUPPORTING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE


University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

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TO RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS FOR THE NET-ZERO TRANSITION

The partners of the Science for Net-Zero Symposium [CESAER](#), the International Sustainable Campus Network ([ISCN](#)), [Science Europe](#), and the [University of Strathclyde](#) are calling for a collaborative, systems-based approach to tackling the Net-Zero emissions challenge, and are taking immediate steps to lead by example.

We share a vision of a world where research and education communities work together and in interaction with industry and society at large to solve urgent global challenges. We believe that research and education will underpin a sustainable relationship between the use and preservation of natural resources, and human activity.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13 prompts everyone to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This goal is closely connected to the other Sustainable Development Goals, whether they are about societal conditions, our institutions, or the natural world. Failure in one area will undermine efforts in others. A successful transition to Net-Zero requires a systems perspective informed by new forms of research to understand how we best navigate this complex landscape.

As an immediate step, we today **commit to supporting and enabling concrete actions which will help the research and education sector to address the many challenges of global sustainability**. We recognise that the rapid transformation of our societies and environment, both through climate change and policy responses, poses challenges that cut across all traditional boundaries. Action will be taken in six key areas, positioning our collective research system to rise to the challenge of Net-Zero.

I. Responding to the complexity of the Net-Zero challenges by addressing them in an interdisciplinary way

- A. Advocate cross-disciplinary research and education programmes that foster the rapid transformation of our societies required to address climate change and adaptation.
- B. Identify, and deal with, the organisational and cultural barriers that slow down our responsiveness.
- C. Implement research support mechanisms and programmes that support multi- and interdisciplinary research with the breadth to deal with these issues.

II. Developing the next generation of students and researchers for the Net-Zero Transition

- A. Define university programmes for students at all levels and in all disciplines to develop skills needed to realise the Net-Zero Transition according to the various contexts.
- B. Develop leadership training to understand sustainability and move towards the Net-Zero Transition.
- C. Implement programmes that stimulate a new mindset for researchers that enables them to consider potential environmental and societal implications of their research.

III. Reducing our own organisational carbon footprint

- A. Implement the Net-Zero Transition principles in our universities, research organisations, research programs and activities.

- B. Identify areas of intervention in our own activity and propose solutions for making our research activities, infrastructure, and university campuses more 'green' by reducing the energy consumption and other environmental impacts.
- C. Re-assess the need for teaching and research related travel by reinforcing alternatives, such as online meetings and rethinking in-person activities.

IV. Supporting the Net-Zero Transition in policymaking at all levels.

- A. Engage with communities and governments at all levels in policy development for the integration of the Net-Zero Transition goals.
- B. Develop guidelines and share practices with others.
- C. Support the adoption of Net-Zero Transition principles in all policy areas, beyond universities and science policies.

V. Improving the shared understanding of what needs to be done.

- A. Provide scientific contributions to raise awareness mobilising the different audiences involved.
- B. Improve how science is communicated to, and created with, citizens, acknowledging the different needs and highlighting context-specific challenges.
- C. Contribute to evidence-based policy by providing and supporting expertise able to translate research outcomes, linking with and enabling leaders to deliver for the communities they serve.

VI. Facing the challenges together.

- A. Encourage cross-sectoral collaboration by involving other stakeholders as appropriate (businesses, NGOs, cities and regions, and other stakeholders) in joining efforts to achieve the Net-Zero Transition.
- B. Promote international collaboration, cooperation and learning to bring global understanding of the challenges posed and to build bridges between cultures, countries, and continents.
- C. Recognising the complexity of the challenges we face, we agree to adopt 'systems-thinking and approaches' in bringing together the expertise and societal partners required to address them, and we recognize our responsibilities to engage aligning policy objectives to maximise the effectiveness of our effort.

ACCELERATING OUR JOINT EFFORTS

We acknowledge that actions will be developed by each organisation according to their distinctive missions, visions, and priorities. Further, we understand the complexity of this challenge, and will endeavour to support and enable actions that accelerate the Net-Zero Transition by learning and collaborating.

We invite other organisations that share our vision to commit to these actions and work with us towards a sustainable future with Net-Zero emissions, joining us in future COP meetings to assess progress.



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CESAER is the European association of leading specialised and comprehensive universities of Science & Technology that: champion excellence in higher education, training, research, and innovation; influence debate; contribute to the realisation of open knowledge societies; and deliver significant scientific, social, economic, and societal impact.

Web www.cesaer.org
Email info@cesaer.org
Twitter [@CESAER_SnT](https://twitter.com/CESAER_SnT)

ISCN is a global network of 90 universities in over 30 countries. The mission of the network is to provide an international forum to support higher education institutions in the exchange of information, ideas, and best practices for achieving sustainable campus operations and integrating sustainability in research and teaching.

Web international-sustainable-campus-network.org
Email iscn@epfl.ch
Twitter [@ISCNSecretariat](https://twitter.com/ISCNSecretariat)

Science Europe is the association representing 38 public research funding and performing organisations across 28 European countries. It brings together the scientific expertise of its members to push the frontiers of how scientific research is produced and delivers benefits to society. It advocates science and the scientific community to help build the European Research Area and shape the global scientific agenda.

Web www.scienceeurope.org
Email office@scienceeurope.org
Twitter [@ScienceEurope](https://twitter.com/ScienceEurope)

The University of Strathclyde is a leading international technological university based in Glasgow. Inspired by the founding principle as 'a place of useful learning', its mission is to make a positive difference to the lives of its students, to society and to the world. It is a member of CESAER and ISCN and works closely with government, industrial and NGO partners on the Net-Zero Transition.

Web www.strath.ac.uk
Twitter [@UniStrathclyde](https://twitter.com/UniStrathclyde)

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