

**CHALLENGES & BEST PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABILITY
OPERATIONS IN CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES:
BARRIERS AND ENABLERS**

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ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainability is viewed as a broad, long-term, and context-dependent process. Although it is complex and requires substantial resources and a long-term vision, sustainable development is viewed as a central priority in higher education. Universities are expected to be leading in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to policymaking, advising policymakers, and supporting evidence-based decision-making related to sustainability, while also conveying sustainable principles in the way they conduct their operations. Based on in-depth interviews with directors and staff at university-based sustainability centers as well as professors, lecturers, and researchers with peer-reviewed impact publications on sustainability, we aim to pinpoint the operational challenges facing universities in their quest of sustainability integration and to identify best practices enabling this integration. The challenges include infrastructure barriers, lack of knowledge and expertise, structural and organizational challenges, and limitations in processes and tools.

Keywords: universities, Central and Eastern Europe, challenges, operations, sustainability.