

# AARHUS UNIVERSITY'S CLIMATE STRATEGY

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2020-2025

# GOALS

Aarhus University's goal is to become CO<sub>2</sub> neutral in 2040. The goal for 2025 is to reduce the university's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 35% against a 2018 baseline, and the goal for 2030 is to reduce the university's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 57% against a 2018 baseline. These ambitious goals live up to the Paris Agreement and the Danish government's goal of reducing carbon emissions by 70% in 2030 against a 1990 baseline.

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CO<sub>2</sub> reduction  
in 2025 of  
**35%**



# PREFACE

We are facing an important task: the world is being impacted by significant climate-related challenges with societal, environmental and economic consequences. And Aarhus University has an important role to play. The university's core activities are research, research-based education and consultancy of high international quality. Through these core activities, the university will contribute to solving societal challenges such as climate change.

In addition to contributing through the performance of its core activities, Aarhus University will also reduce its own climate footprint and take action to make the university's operations more sustainable. The university has set an ambitious goal in order to live up to the Danish government's goal of a 70% reduction in carbon emissions in 2030, in addition to the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to below 2° C and aiming to limit the increase to 1.5° C in 2030. At the national level, carbon emissions have been reduced by 29% against a 1990 baseline (\*Danish Energy Agency, 2019: 55). Aarhus University has thus set a goal of reducing its climate footprint by 35% in 2025 against a 2018 baseline and 57% in 2030 against a 2018 baseline. The university will also aim to achieve climate neutrality in 2040. However, a precondition for this is that the university can avail itself of such mechanisms as climate compensation.

This climate strategy supplements the university's overall strategy for the period 2020-2025. Aarhus University is contributing to realising the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by carrying out its core activities. This strategy focuses on how, by reducing its climate footprint, the university can contribute to the realisation of SDG no. 13, Climate Action.

The goal of a 35% reduction in 2025, 57% in 2030 and climate neutrality in 2040 applies to the university's Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, as well as some Scope 3 emissions. Scope 1 and 2 emissions cover the university's direct emissions: the combustion of fuels such as oil, gas, petrol and diesel (Scope 1), as well as indirect emissions from purchased or acquired electricity, heat, steam and cooling (Scope 2). All other sources of indirect emissions are categorised as Scope 3, for example emissions associated with procurement, construction, air travel and agricultural activities. The university's goals also include air travel and agricultural activities. These sources are included in the overall goals on the grounds that they account for a relatively large proportion of Aarhus University's emissions.

The climate strategy's goals and initiatives cover four areas:

- Building operations
- Procurement
- Transportation
- Waste

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\*The Danish Energy Agency, Denmark's Energy and Climate Outlook: <https://ens.dk/sites/ens.dk/files/Analyser/deco19.pdf>

Building operations, transportation and procurement are the areas in which the university sees the greatest potential for reducing its climate footprint. Waste has been selected primarily out of consideration for the environment.

In order to succeed, the university will involve staff and students, who will realise the strategy in practice through their everyday behaviour. Large numbers of students, staff and guests visit Aarhus University every day, which means that the university also has a major responsibility to encourage climate-friendly behaviour on the university's campuses.

The strategy must be implemented in a way that allows the university to continue to support research, education and consultancy of the highest quality – including in areas that require energy-hungry labs, data centres, agricultural machinery, research vessels and the like – and in a way that ensures that the university's staff can continue to exchange knowledge with international colleagues.

Aarhus University's climate footprint will be calculated and monitored in an annual climate footprint report. The 2018 climate footprint report will serve as a baseline for setting the university's overall goals. It calculates the university's Scope 1 and 2 climate footprint, and covers some elements of Scope 3 in an appendix. The climate footprint report will ultimately include all significant sources of the university's carbon emissions. As we gain a better understanding of the climate footprint of different Scope 3 sources, it may be necessary to define goals and initiatives for these areas, for example for the university's agricultural activities, which we already know to have a significant climate footprint.

The climate strategy will be in force in the period 2020-2025. To supplement the strategy, action plans will be developed detailing how goals and sub-goals will be reached. Progress on goals and action plans will be reviewed on a regular basis. Not all solutions exist as yet; the university's research must contribute to developing them. Aarhus University wants to help show the way by experimenting with new solutions and taking the actions necessary to reach the goal of reducing the university's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 35% in 2025 compared to 2018 levels.



# FOCUS AREA

## BUILDING OPERATIONS

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# FOCUS AREA

## BUILDING OPERATIONS

### BACKGROUND

Aarhus University has already taken many steps to reduce resource consumption in the university's operations. As a result, energy consumption per FTE has been reduced by 20% since 2006, despite the increasing centrality of energy-hungry research areas. Even though Aarhus University has come far, we must do even more. The university wants to take the next steps towards its goals by using smart technologies and encouraging sustainable behaviour among the users of the university's buildings, and by using the university as a living lab, giving students and researchers opportunities to use Aarhus University as a case.

GOAL	Aarhus University will reduce its carbon emissions in connection with new construction and renovation as well as operation and use of buildings.				
SUB-GOALS	Reduce the energy consumption in the university's buildings by 2% annually	Increase the proportion of sustainable energy in the university's energy consumption	Reduce the university's water consumption	DGNB certification of buildings with special focus on climate	Experiment with new solutions to reduce the university's climate footprint on the university's campuses
INITIATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Compare energy consumption in the university's buildings in order to identify potential reductions</li> <li>· Implement smart technology to reduce consumption</li> <li>· Encourage sustainable behaviour among students and staff to reduce consumption</li> <li>· Monitor water consumption to identify potential reductions</li> <li>· Give researchers and students the opportunity to use AU's campuses as a living lab</li> <li>· Map the composition of the university's energy consumption and identify potential for a greener energy mix</li> </ul>				

# FOCUS AREA

## TRANSPORTATION

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# FOCUS AREA

## TRANSPORTATION

### BACKGROUND

Transportation occurs both in the form of the daily commute to and from the university and in connection with meetings and conferences in Denmark and abroad. In relation to transportation, the university will take action on three fronts:

- Air travel
- Business travel by road vehicle
- Staff and student commuting to and from Aarhus University

Exchanging knowledge with colleagues from around the world – at meetings, in networks and at conferences – is an essential aspect of academic research. Air travel weighs heavily in the climate footprint of international universities. Aarhus University will reduce the climate footprint of its transportation activities, and will encourage staff to choose alternatives to carbon-heavy forms of transportation more often, including taking the train and carpooling as well as virtual meetings and conferences rather than air travel.

Road vehicles do not only pollute when they are driven: they pollute by existing. Aarhus University's goal is to reduce carbon emissions connected with road transport by encouraging staff and students to choose alternative modes of transportation more often, both when on official business and when commuting to and from the university. The university will introduce measures to make it easier for staff and students to reduce their transportation-related carbon emissions. Specifically, the university will reduce the number of kilometres driven, phase out the university's diesel and petrol vehicles and install EV charging stations on campus. As an additional benefit, these measures will also contribute to cleaner cities.

GOAL	Aarhus University will reduce its carbon emissions in connection with business travel and commuting to and from the university.			
SUB-GOALS	Reduce climate footprint from air travel by 30% in 2025 against 2020 baseline	Reduce the number of vehicles owned by the university by 30% in 2025 against 2018 baseline	Phase out the university's petrol and diesel vehicles by 2025, and from 2020 only purchase vehicles powered by sustainable fuels	Increase the proportion of staff and students who commute to the university using a sustainable mode of transportation
INITIATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it more attractive for staff to use virtual meeting rooms</li> <li>• Make it easier for staff to travel to selected destinations by train</li> <li>• Increase bike parking capacity on campuses to match demand</li> <li>• Take steps to make it easier for staff and students to choose a sustainable mode of transportation, for example bikes, public transportation and electric vehicles</li> </ul>			

# FOCUS AREA

## PROCUREMENT

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# FOCUS AREA

## PROCUREMENT

### BACKGROUND

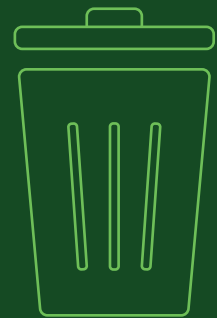
Aarhus University wants to increase its focus on sustainable procurement. The university purchases about 1.2 billion kroner worth of goods and services annually. The university can reduce its carbon footprint by changing purchasing behaviour. In addition to the direct effects of encouraging sustainable procurement, Aarhus University wants to influence the market and suppliers by setting high standards for sustainability.

The university will embrace a holistic approach to procurement that views environmental and climate impact as an important parameter on an equal footing with purchasing price and social sustainability. Sustainability must be incorporated in relation to the materials products are made of, waste products, durability, recycling/reuse and delivery.

Aarhus University also wants to contribute to the greening of society by making green investments and developing a greener investment policy. This will also indirectly influence the market.

GOAL	Aarhus University will reduce its carbon emissions in connection with procurement of goods and services, and will influence the market by creating a demand for sustainable products and services as well as making green investments.				
SUB-GOALS	Encourage a holistic approach to procurement of goods and services	Reduce the climate footprint of the delivery of goods to the university	Introduce sustainability requirements for the canteens, and reduce their climate footprint	Prolong the lifetime and encourage the reuse of the university's furniture	Make green investments
INITIATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review procurement categories on the basis of the UN's SDGs with a view to promoting a holistic approach to procurement</li> <li>Incorporate sustainability as a more central element in contracts with canteen operators, for example requiring a minimum of one weekly meat-free day, always proving a filling meat-free meal as well as reducing food waste</li> <li>Adjust the university's investment policy</li> </ul>				

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# FOCUS AREA

## WASTE

### BACKGROUND

Aarhus University wants to begin approaching waste more as a resource to be recycled or reused. With about 8,000 FT employees, 38,000 students and annual revenue of approx. 6.6 billion kroner, the university produces significant amounts of waste every day – about 1,200 metric tons annually. Aarhus University's goal is to reduce the amount of waste produced and increase the amount of waste that is recycled/reused. This will take more waste separation at the university, as well as finding ways for the university's waste to be recycled/reused.

Aarhus University currently sorts waste into 16 fractions. For example, the canteen kitchens separate food waste, IT units collect and separate electronics and cables, labs separate some types of waste and facilities management separates various building materials. However, this extensive waste separation is not necessarily visible to all of the university's users: staff, students and guests who are currently unable to separate glass and plastic waste, for example. In future, all waste must be separated at source into a minimum of five fractions, which will enable cans, plastic glass and paper (for example) to be recycled and resources to be used as efficiently as possible. To reach these goals, the university will involve the university's daily users and learn from the experiences of private households in Aarhus, where waste is separated at source.

GOAL	Aarhus University will reduce the amount of waste it produces and increase the proportion of waste that is separated and recycled/reused.		
SUB-GOALS	Produce less waste, especially residual waste	Provide facilities for daily users of the university to separate waste into at least five fractions and continue to separate into min. 16 fractions overall	Recycle/reuse 40% of the university's waste
INITIATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Make new contracts with waste removal companies to ensure that the university's waste is treated in the same fractions into which it is separated</li> <li>· Make an effort to involve staff, students and guests to increase their focus on minimising and separating waste</li> <li>· Require suppliers to minimise packaging</li> </ul>		

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