

ISCN-GULF Sustainable Campus Charter Process and Reporting

Executive Summary (January 28, 2011)

The universities represented in the Global University Leaders Forum (GULF) group recognize that achieving sustainable development is one of our society's key challenges. They believe that organizations of higher education have a particular responsibility to develop and demonstrate solutions to this issue. To set high standards for themselves and to "walk the talk" of sustainability, they have partnered with the ISCN, an international network for campus sustainability, in developing and endorsing the ISCN-GULF Sustainable Campus Charter.

23 of the 25 GULF members signed the Charter in 2010. They have taken this commitment seriously and over the last year have already actively implemented its principles of sustainable higher education management, and begun Charter Reporting as a means for transparent exchange of experience and progress. The next steps are preparing for a Sustainable Campus Conference in summer 2011, increasing opening of Charter membership to organizations around the globe, and further developing sustainable campus reporting in a manner that strengthens the exchange of sustainability experience with corporations.

Since 2006, the Global University Leaders Forum (GULF), which convenes the heads of the world's foremost universities, has included sustainability as one of its key topics. This reflects the GULF group's conviction that organizations of research and higher education have a particular responsibility in our society's journey toward a sustainable future.

To strengthen this initiative, GULF has partnered with the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN), a global organization that brings together sustainability managers, academics, and senior administrators from universities across the world. The aim is to pool global knowledge on how universities can best support sustainable development through their research and education, and by walking the talk in their own operations in order to inspire future leaders.

This partnership has led to the development and dissemination of the ISCN-GULF Sustainable Campus Charter. The Charter requests endorsing organizations to acknowledge shared principles regarding sustainability impacts of their buildings, their campus-wide planning and

target-setting processes, and their integration of research, teaching, outreach, and facilities into a “living laboratory” for sustainable development. Each Charter member commits to set its own concrete goals related to these shared principles, and to report publicly on its progress in realizing these goals.

At the 2010 WEF Davos meeting, most of the GULF members signed the Charter.

Throughout 2010, ISCN-GULF Charter Reporting Guidelines were developed to support transparent and comparable progress reporting of Charter members.

At the current GULF meeting during the 2011 WEF Davos event, first draft reports of a number of GULF schools are being shared in order to disseminate best practice between the GULF members. Draft reports are already available from about half of the GULF members that have endorsed the Charter: Brown University, Carnegie Mellon University, EPFL, ETH Zurich, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Cambridge, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University.

Other universities beyond the GULF have joined as Charter members. Some have already reported and more are expected to do so.

Topics typically covered in these final and draft reports include:

- Concerning buildings and their sustainability impacts, energy use, waste management and recycling, and building standards such as LEED or Minergie are usually addressed, while coverage of issues like handicap access and indoor air quality is more varied
- Concerning campus-wide master planning and target setting, CO₂ emissions, sustainable food operations, and sustainable transport are addressed in most reports, while coverage of issues such as diversity amongst students, faculty and staff or minimum wage policies are addressed less uniformly
- Concerning integration of research, education, outreach and facilities into a “living laboratory” for sustainability, many reports address awareness campaigns across campus and labeling of sustainability-related courses, while coverage on issues like community outreach and resources committed to campus sustainability is more mixed

The ISCN-GULF Charter Reporting Guidelines provide references to the reporting guidelines developed and disseminated by the Global Reporting Initiative, the most established sustainability reporting framework used by private and public sector organizations around the globe. By referencing the Global Reporting Initiative framework, the Charter Reporting Guidelines offer a format that enables more intense experience exchange on sustainability between universities and corporations, one of the reasons why the GULF members are convened within the World Economic Forum events.

Outlook:

After the GULF Davos discussions on January 28, 2011, the ISCN-GULF Charter Report drafts will be finalized and published on the ISCN website (www.isc-network.org) before the end of the first quarter. Charter membership will be opened to all organizations of research and higher education, including corporations with campus areas dedicated to research and development. Over the next months, the ISCN Working Groups on Building Impacts, Campus-wide Planning, and Integration of Research, Education, and Operations will pool the latest knowledge on those topics in preparation for the 2011 ISCN Sustainable Campus Conference. At that conference,

held June 8-10 at Gothenburg, Sweden, the 2011 ISCN Sustainable Campus Excellence Awards will be presented.

List of ISCN-GULF Charter member organizations

Brown University*
Carnegie Mellon University*
Columbia University
EPFL*
ETH Zurich*
Georgetown University*
Harvard University*
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
INSEAD
Johns Hopkins University
Keio University
London School of Economics and Political Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education
National University of Singapore
Peking University
Pontifical Catholic University of Peru
Princeton University
Stanford University
The University of Hong Kong
Tsinghua University
University of Cambridge*
University of Gothenburg
University of Luxembourg*
University of Oxford
University of Pennsylvania*
University of Tokyo
Yale University*

Legend: GULF member universities

*Charter members that have already prepared draft reports.

For more information on GULF

see <http://www.weforum.org/global-university-leaders-forum>. GULF is convened and hosted by the World Economic Forum

For more information on the ISCN

see www.isc-network.org. The ISCN and the ISCN-GULF Charter Secretariat are jointly hosted by EPFL, ETH Zurich, and "Novatlantis – Sustainability at the ETH Domain."

For questions on the ISCN-GULF Charter, please contact

Bernd Kasemir, bernd.kasemir@isc-network.org
c/o sustainserv Inc, 311 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02210, USA, +1-617 330 5001