



ESG Impact Index in Higher Education



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Building Sustainable Universities: IMPACTsci's Role in the SHIFT Project

From strategy to community: how a Portuguese organisation helped shape a European framework for ESG in higher education

When eight European organisations came together in 2023 to tackle one of higher education's most pressing challenges (how to make universities genuinely more sustainable, equitable, and accountable) IMPACTsci was at the table as a driving force behind the project's real-world reach.

SHIFT, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, has spent two and a half years developing a practical toolkit to help Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Europe embed Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into their operations, culture, and strategy. Now, as the project concludes, the results are in and they're open to anyone who needs them.

From awareness to action

IMPACTsci's first contribution to SHIFT went straight to the heart of the question most institutions quietly struggle with: once you've decided ESG matters, what do you actually do?

As co-developer of the ESG Awareness Initiatives Recommendations, IMPACTsci helped map 16 concrete initiatives across four areas: ESG training and education, public awareness campaigns, community outreach, and stakeholder engagement and partnerships. These aren't aspirational bullet points. They are documented, replicable models designed to give institutions something to act on immediately.

Knowing where things can go wrong

Good strategy also means honest risk assessment. IMPACTsci contributed to the identification of potential risks per actionable item within SHIFT's ESG Actions Framework, mapping severity levels and response recommendations so that institutions adopting the framework aren't caught off guard. Sustainability commitments fail not for lack of ambition, but for lack of preparedness. This work addresses that directly.

The dimension that often gets overlooked

Within SHIFT's Learning Programme, IMPACTsci took the lead on the Social dimension, the ESG pillar that higher education institutions most often treat as a given and least often measure with rigour.

The training content IMPACTsci developed covers equity and access (including diversity and inclusion policies, support for students from marginalised communities, socioeconomic affordability, universal design, and family support services) and wellbeing (mental health services and campus safety). For millions of students across Europe, these are the difference between completing a degree and dropping out.

Building something that lasts

Perhaps IMPACTsci's most substantial contribution to SHIFT was leading the entire dimension of the Project Promotion and Sustainability, the work that ensures the project's outputs don't disappear when the funding ends.

This meant developing the project's communication and promotion plan from scratch, establishing SHIFT's branding and social media presence, and creating the Community of Practice of ESG in Higher Education, a LinkedIn-based network designed to keep the conversation alive across institutions and borders long after the project closes. IMPACTsci also co-coordinated the ESG Maturity Service, a sustainability strategy tool helping institutions understand where they are on their ESG journey and where to go next.

Our collective work helped make sure SHIFT would be found, used, and remembered.

The tools are ready

All SHIFT resources, including the ESG Strategy Blueprint, the Impact Index Matrix (available in 7 languages), the Mini Learning Programme, the Awareness Game, the Micro Credential, and the open-access Assessment Platform, are freely available.

The **Community of Practice** is open to join at [linkedin.com/groups/8169180](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8169180), whether you work in a university, a policy body, or anywhere else where ESG in education matters to you.

All resources are accessible at <https://shift-esg.eu>

The project brought together eight partners from across Europe:

- University of Almería (Spain)
- University of Lodz (Poland)
- Linnaeus University (Sweden)
- Metropolitan University of Belgrade (Serbia)
- IMPACTsci (Portugal)
- Helix-connect Europe (Romania)
- ISQ e-learning (Portugal)
- ACEEU (Germany)

To learn more about the SHIFT Project follow our social media channels:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/shift-project-he/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61557214167593>

Instagram: @shift.project.he

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