Sustainable Development Goal_11 (Sustainable Cities) Report

Al-Balqa Applied University

2025

Foreword

Al-Balqa Applied University (BAU) is a prominent public university in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with a student body of over 60,000 and multiple satellite campuses across the country. BAU's vision is to excel as a globally competitive applied university, renowned for creativity, innovation, applied scientific research, and leadership. The university is dedicated to fostering Jordan's knowledge economy and society, delivering high-quality education that equips students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Spanning an estimated **11,100,000 m^2**, BAU's campuses are home to a wide array of educational, research, medical, sports, and cultural facilities. Additionally, the campuses feature extensive green spaces and recreational areas, creating a vibrant, supportive environment for student development and engagement.

BAU's main campus is located in the ancient city of As-Salt, in Al-Balqa' Governorate, home to a number of important cultural and historical sites, and a UNESCO world heritage site. Built by Macedonians, As-Salt occupied an important trading position by Roman, Byzantine, and Mamelukes. Along with its historical value, As-Salt city is located 20 minutes from the lowest point on earth, the Dead Sea and is very close to the holy baptism site of Jesus Christ on the East bank of the Jordan River. A sunny day at As-Salt rewards visitors with a breathtaking view of the holy lands.

Alongside BAU's main campus, the university's satellite campuses are hubs for quality education and research and offer students the opportunity to explore Jordan's rich cultural heritage. For example, Aqaba University College located in Jordan's only port, offers

maritime transport technology programs as well as easy access to the golden triangle of Petra, Wadi Rum and Aqaba. And Shoubak University College, which is located close to the stunning Dana Biosphere Reserve. and Huson University College in the north, which closest to Jerash which is the second to Petra on the list of favorite destinations in Jordan

Al-Balqa Governorate is a province of intellectual heritage and folklore, and it is popular for recreational and religious tourism; traveler may visit many ruins and sacred shrines for Prophet Shu'ayb (Maqam Nabi Shu'ayb), Prophet Joshua Ben-nun, Prophet Gad Ben Jacob, Prophet Ayub, Prophet Hazir, and Prophet Gilad (May Peace Be Upon Them), as well as the shrines of two of Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) Companions: Abu Obeida Al-Jarah and Dirar Ibn Azwar.

Such an integral role along with other cities of the Kingdom was deeply rooted during the establishment of the Emirate of Jordan in 1921 moving towards developing the country. Salt City was prominent with its scientific and educational legacy, which was marked by the founding of Salt School, inaugurated by His Majesty King Abdullah the First – may God rest his soul – (Prince at that time) in 1923, to be the first school in the kingdom having its graduates as great officials and leaders of the nation.

Upon firmly acknowledging the educational and scientific long history of Salt City along with its leading role in the field of education by the Hashemite leadership, Late King Hussein Bin Talal – May God rest his soul – honored Balqa' governorate by the issuance of the royal decree to establish Al Balqa Applied University in Salt city on the 22nd of August 1996. This has enhanced the city's role, commemorated the pioneers of its early graduates, and scientifically empowered its legacy which we hope to continually flourish.

Our Strategic Response

BAU operates through a network of campuses across Jordan, covering diverse climatic regions—from the highlands in the mid-west to the arid governorates in the south and far east. This geographical diversity has driven BAU to undertake extensive initiatives in climate variability and adaptation, establishing itself as a leader in climate resilience.

BAU is at the forefront of research and innovation in areas such as water conservation, drought management, capacity building, and technology transfer. Its initiatives span solar energy, wastewater treatment and reuse, and smart agriculture. The university has also

introduced specialized academic programs in fields like smart agriculture, water treatment, smart buildings, and electric and hybrid vehicles, alongside conducting numerous climate change awareness activities.

On another hand (BAU) adopts the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and Paris Agreement goals which are adopted by all nations as a universal call to protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 through ethical management of resources, openness to societies and contributing to their development and solving their problems, and creating a conscious generation of its students who adopt the dimensions of sustainable development in their lives, directing scientific research to contribute to achieving sustainable development, and strengthening national and international partnerships, also (BAU) became a member of United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), and United Nation - Sustainable Development Solution Network (UNSDSN).

INTRODUCTION:

BAU has adopted a sustainability-driven approach rooted in continuous improvement, with a mission to fully integrate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its core strategies, policies, and daily operations. This commitment has inspired transformative initiatives, projects, and programs across all faculties and campuses. Through responsible resource management, innovative teaching, impactful research, and strong national and international partnerships, BAU continues to redefine its institutional identity as a leader in sustainability.

To strengthen its contribution to the SDGs, BAU established a **dedicated Sustainability Office** and implemented best practices that have earned international recognition. Remarkably, the university ranked **first nationally and 2nd in the Arab region**, and **53rd globally** in the **2023 UI GreenMetric World University Rankings**.

These accomplishments align with the **17 Sustainable Development Goals**, which serve as a guiding framework for meaningful action toward people and the planet. By embracing these goals, BAU continuously assesses its progress and sets clear priorities for future advancement.

BAU remains steadfast in empowering students as agents of change, community leaders, and responsible global citizens. Faculty and students actively engage in sustainability-oriented education through diverse courses, academic programs, and research projects that advance SDG principles in teaching, learning, and innovation.

In alignment with its Strategic Plan 2021-2025, BAU continues to pioneer innovative approaches through training programs, applied research, and community engagement initiatives—all designed to contribute effectively to the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Cities are the engines of innovation, economic growth, and cultural exchange, yet they also face profound challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. Today, urban areas represent the future of global living. The world's population reached 8 billion in 2022, with more than half residing in cities a figure projected to rise to 70% by 2050. This rapid urbanization brings opportunities for development but also creates significant pressures on housing, infrastructure, and essential services.

Many cities are not adequately prepared for this growth. Urban expansion often outpaces the development of affordable housing and basic services, leading to the proliferation of slums and informal settlements. Currently, 1.12 billion people live in such conditions without access to clean water, sanitation, or secure housing. Urban sprawl, air pollution, and limited public spaces persist, while climate-related risks such as flooding and extreme heat threaten millions of urban residents. By 2040, more than 2 billion people could experience an additional temperature rise of at least 0.5°C, and by 2025, 1 billion people will live in areas prone to severe riverine flooding.

Cities occupy only 3% of the Earth's land but account for 60–80% of global energy consumption and 75% of carbon emissions, making them central to the fight against climate change. Inequality, congestion, and pollution affect not only urban residents but also the global economy and public health. Poorly planned urbanization results in sprawling suburbs, traffic gridlock, and increased greenhouse gas emissions, undermining sustainability and quality of life.

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, progress has been made—such as doubling the number of countries with disaster risk reduction strategies—but challenges remain. In 2022, only half of the urban population had convenient access to public transport, and up to 3 billion people worldwide still struggle to afford housing.

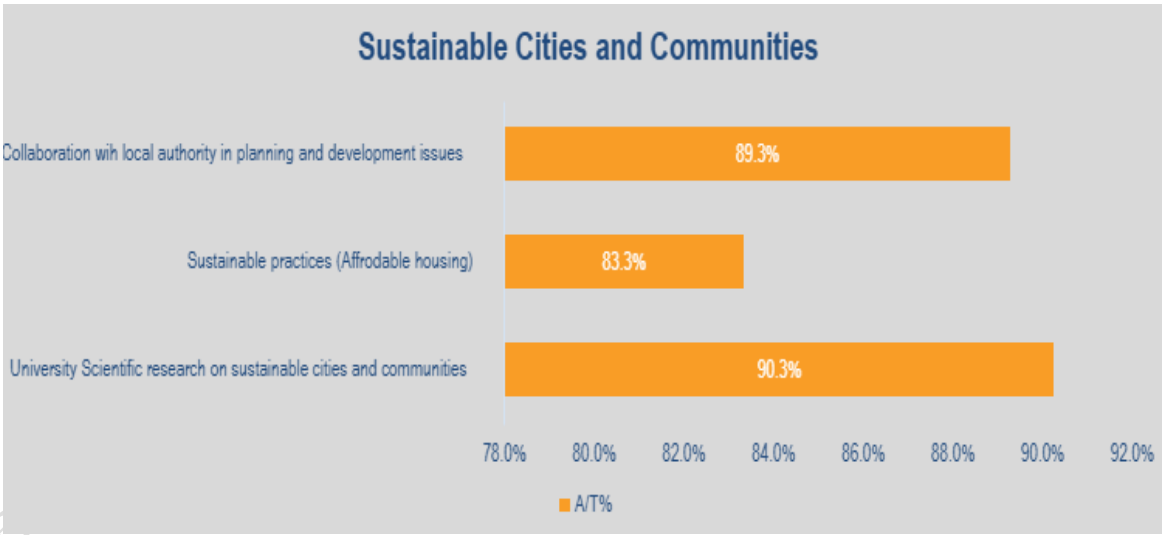
Transforming cities into inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable spaces is essential for achieving global development goals. This requires coordinated investments in affordable housing, climate-resilient infrastructure, efficient transportation systems, and green public spaces. Sustainable urban development is not just an environmental imperative it is a social and economic necessity.

The cost of implementing these measures is minimal compared to the benefits, which include improved health, productivity, and economic growth.

Ultimately, building future-proof cities demands active participation from governments, communities, and individuals. Citizens can contribute by advocating for better urban governance, supporting sustainable practices, and creating safer, more livable neighborhoods. By choosing to act sustainably, we can ensure that cities remain hubs of opportunity and prosperity without compromising the environment or social equity.

Al-Balqa Applied University (BAU) is steadfast in its commitment to global initiatives that promote progress, peace, and prosperity while preserving and celebrating community heritage, particularly in Al-Salt City, where its main campus is located.

In line with these principles, BAU is actively transitioning to green building practices. This dedication is exemplified in the construction of new buildings that integrate sustainable design features. These include centralized glass domes to harness natural light, energy-efficient LED lighting systems, and an architectural design emphasizing numerous double-glazed windows. These elements not only enhance natural daylighting but also improve ventilation, creating a healthier and more energy-efficient environment within university facilities.



Strategic Achievement for SDG11/2025

BAU's vision of fostering Inclusive, Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements is reflected in the following objectives:

- **Promoting scientific research** focuses on sustainable urban development and communities.

- **Adopting sustainable practices**, particularly in affordable housing initiatives.
- **Partnering with local authorities** to address planning and development challenges.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 at Al-Balqa Applied University (BAU) reflects its unwavering commitment to sustainable practices and community-focused development. Guided by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing's green building standards, BAU emphasizes constructing and renovating buildings to minimize reliance on artificial climate control. Key sustainable features include natural ventilation, LED lighting, water-saving faucets, smart building systems with automated doors and fingerprint access, and the use of metal cladding. These measures highlight BAU's proactive approach to energy efficiency and environmental stewardship.

BAU's partnership with the Jordanian Green Building Council further underscores its dedication to sustainability. This collaboration aims to implement cutting-edge sustainable building techniques, benefiting both BAU's campus and the wider community. The agreement facilitates the transfer of best practices for maintaining and restoring existing structures while ensuring new constructions adhere to eco-friendly and sustainable methodologies.

The university's student-led initiatives in As-Salt provide a practical demonstration of SDG 11 in action. Projects to repurpose and restore abandoned heritage buildings serve dual purposes: preserving cultural heritage and supporting sustainable urban development. These revitalized spaces are being transformed into educational institutions, libraries, and community centers, showcasing BAU's dedication to creating inclusive and sustainable infrastructure.

Through these comprehensive initiatives, BAU demonstrates a holistic approach to sustainable development. By integrating sustainable infrastructure, fostering community engagement, and adopting innovative practices, BAU reaffirms its commitment to achieving SDG 11 and contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future for both its campus and the surrounding communities.

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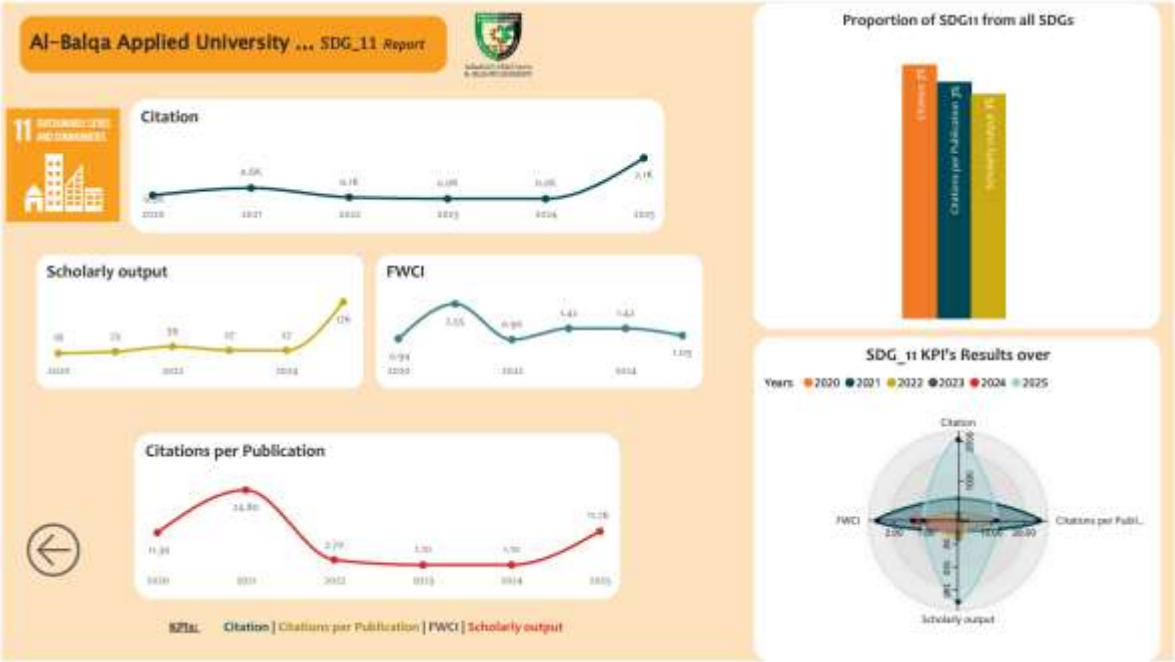
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



Publications at Al-Balqa Applied University within SDG 11: Reduced Inequality 2021 to 2025

The SDG 11 report for Al-Balqa Applied University shows steady progress in research related to Sustainable Cities and Communities. Scholarly output increased from 28 publications in 2020 to 75 in 2025, while citations rose from 0.4K to 1.8K, indicating improved visibility and impact. FWCI values remained relatively stable, suggesting consistent research quality. Citations per publication peaked in 2021 (14.86) and again in 2025 (6.00), reflecting periods of strong influence. These trends highlight the university's commitment to advancing sustainable urban development through impactful research

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