Sustainable Development Goal_15 (Life on land) 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.

INTRODUCTION

Goal 15 (Life on Land) focuses on conserving and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, halting land degradation, and stopping biodiversity loss. Earth's ecosystems are vital for human survival, supporting over half of global GDP and providing cultural, spiritual, and economic value. Yet, the planet faces a triple crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Forests cover 31% of Earth's land, but between 2000 and 2020, global forest area shrank by 100 million hectares. Land degradation now affects 15.5% of land, impacting 3.2 billion people. Agricultural expansion drives nearly 90% deforestation, with oil palm harvesting alone accounting for 7% of global forest loss. At the current pace, deforestation halting would take 25 years.

Biodiversity is declining faster than ever—1 million species face extinction, and freshwater species are increasingly threatened. Forest loss means disappearing livelihoods, increased carbon emissions, and fragile ecosystems. Land degradation also heightens climate risks and zoonotic diseases, which already cause millions of deaths and economic losses exceeding $100 billion in two decades.

Achieving Goal 15 requires shifting humanity's relationship with nature, implementing sustainable land management, and protecting biodiversity. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework sets ambitious targets for 2030 and 2050, but urgent action is needed. Recycling, sustainable diets, responsible ecotourism, and community-led conservation are key steps toward safeguarding life on land for future generations.

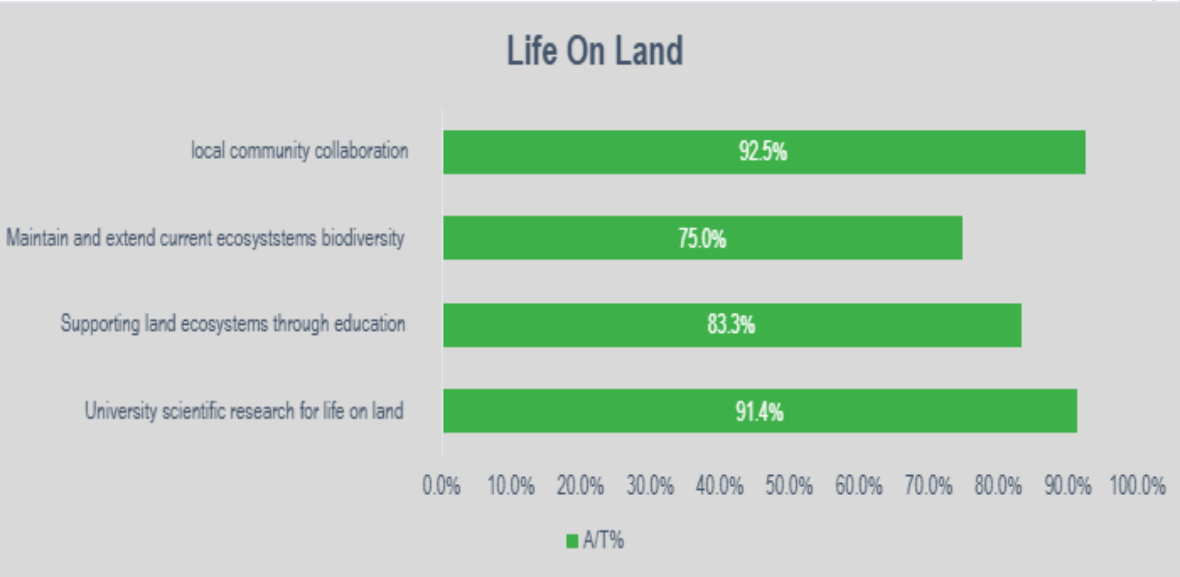
BAU is deeply committed to advancing the 15th Sustainable Development Goal (Life on Land) through a strategic focus on scientific research, educational program development, and sustainable resource management. The university's efforts aim to preserve and restore terrestrial ecosystems, combat deforestation, and actively rehabilitate degraded forests. Initiatives include addressing desertification, revitalizing degraded lands, conserving ecosystems, and safeguarding biodiversity and genetic resources while ensuring equitable benefit-sharing.

BAU also prioritizes preventing poaching and the trafficking of protected species, mitigating the introduction of invasive alien species into ecosystems, and embedding the intrinsic values of ecosystems and biodiversity into governmental policies and planning.

To demonstrate its commitment to Protect, Restore, and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, Halt and Reverse Land Degradation, and Stop Biodiversity Loss, BAU has established the following goals:

- **Advancing Scientific Research**: Conducting university-led research to promote sustainable land practices and ecosystem conservation.
- **Educational Initiatives**: Supporting educational programs that emphasize the importance of land ecosystems.
- **Biodiversity Conservation**: Preserving and expanding the biodiversity within existing ecosystems.

- **Community Collaboration**: Strengthening partnerships with local communities to foster sustainable land use practices and conservation efforts.



Strategic Achievement for SDG15/2025

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH STATIONS

BAU has established robust policies to ensure that the food served on campus aligns with the principles of sustainable farming. By adopting a conscientious approach to nourishment, BAU implements stringent guidelines and practices that prioritize environmental conservation, ethical farming, and the well-being of its community. Through these dedicated policies, BAU demonstrates a strong commitment to not only providing a nutritious dining experience but also fostering responsible stewardship of the land and its resources.

At the Agricultural Research Station, BAU has solidified its dedication to sustainable food production practices. The station is home to ten thriving greenhouses, cultivating a variety of crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and bell peppers using environmentally

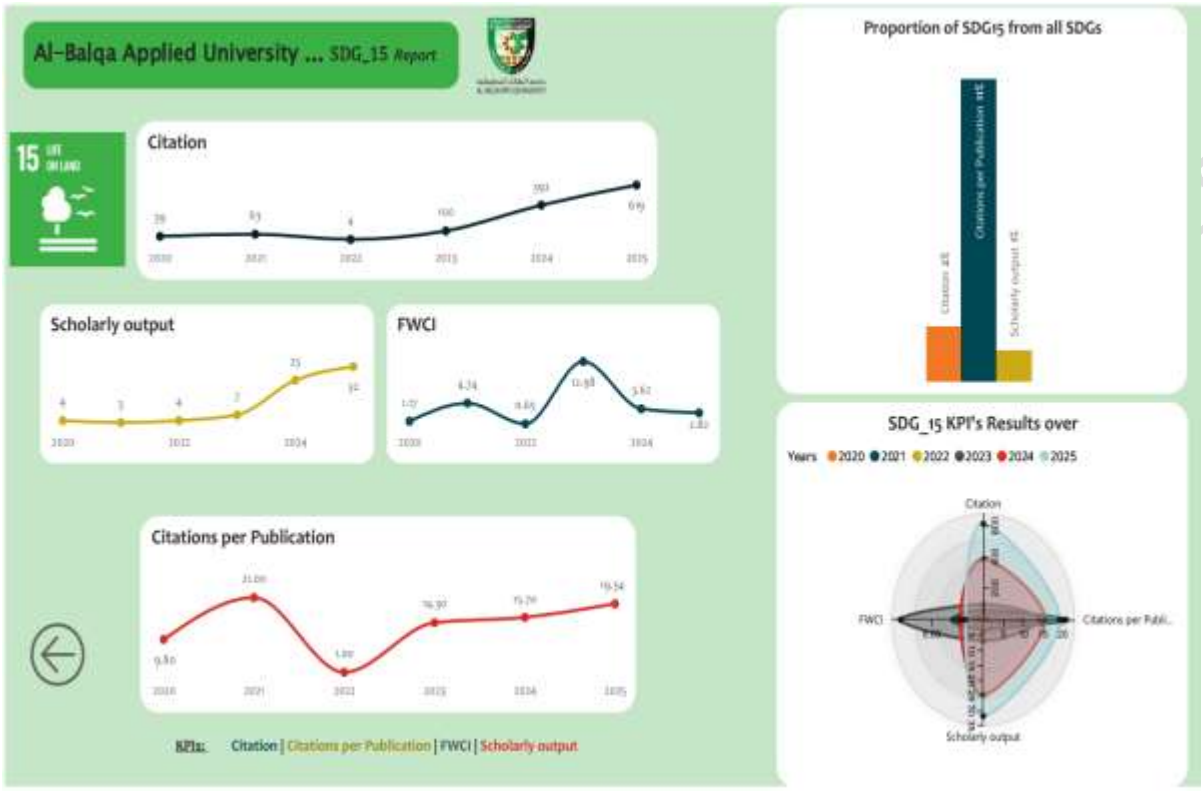
harmonious methods. In addition to these staples, the station also grows tropical fruits like dragon fruit, further exemplifying its commitment to diversifying produce in a sustainable manner. Significantly, the station has eliminated the use of chemical fertilizers, opting instead for eco-friendly practices such as on-site composting to enrich the soil while minimizing environmental impact.

A thriving community of 160 honeybee hives further underscores the station's holistic approach to agriculture. These hives produce around 500 kilograms of honey, 300 grams of royal jelly, and 100 kilograms of pollen, showcasing the harmonious relationship between agricultural practices and the surrounding ecosystem. This success at BAU's Agricultural Research Station stands as a testament to the university's unwavering commitment to sustainable, ethical, and productive farming practices.

Memorandum of Understanding between Al-Balqa Applied University and the Islamic Network for Water Resources Development and Management (Water Harvesting and Afforestation) in the areas of Hamrat Al-Sahen and Al-Aridah street

General View of Princess Tasnim Station

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



Publications at Al-Balqa Applied University within SDG 15: Life on Land 2021-2025

The SDG 15 report for Al-Balqa Applied University demonstrates steady progress in research related to Life on Land. Scholarly output increased from 4 publications in 2020 to 25 in 2025, while citations rose from 39 to 679, indicating improved visibility and impact. FWCI values peaked in 2023 (3.63) and remained above global averages, reflecting strong research quality. Citations per publication reached notable highs in 2021 (23.00) and 2025 (19.44), suggesting periods of significant influence. These trends highlight the university's commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management through impactful research.

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