PHOTO: EIVIND SCHNESTL, UiB

SDG Bergen

In this special section of the UiB Magazine, the innovative SDG Bergen initiative is presented. TEXT SVERRE OLE DRØNEN

SDG Bergen is a strategic initiative at the University of Bergen (UiB) to engage critically with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Initiated by Rector Dag Rune Olsen and the UiB Rectorate, SDG Bergen has contributed to positioning UiB as the premier SDG-oriented university in Norway. UiB's Vice-Rector Annelin Eriksen is the leader of SDG Bergen.

In the inaugural 2019 Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings, based on the SDGs, UiB was the only Norwegian university to be ranked. UiB was ranked number 53 in the world for its social and economic impact.

UiB has taken national leadership on the SDGs through its leadership in the National Committee for the 2030 Agenda in Norway's university sector and as host of the annual National SDG Conference Bergen, which was first held in February 2018.

Internationally, UiB has made its mark across the 17 SDGs, with particular emphasis on SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals and SDG14: Life below water. In October 2018, UiB was announced as official SDG14 Hub for United Nations Academic Impact. In November 2018, UiB was made SDG14 Cluster leader for the International Association of Universities. The research centre Ocean Sustainability Bergen (OSB) handles the practicalities surrounding UiB's SDG 14 roles.

Through SDG Bergen Science Advice, UiB wants to establish an annual presence at the UN High-level Political Forum and to provide science advice to the UN system, international organisations and national governments. By partaking in science diplomacy, academia can contribute to better informed decision-making.

‹ **SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP:** The University of Bergen has been appointed official SDG14 Hub for United Nations Academic Impact and SDG14 Cluster leader for the International Association of Universities. PHOTO: EIVIND SENNESET, UiB

Taking a global SDG lead in ocean science

The University of Bergen has taken on a global leadership role on SDG 14, Life below water, and will act to inspire and motivate partners worldwide to create greater knowledge towards a sustainable ocean. TEXT SVERRE OLE DRØNEN

On 24 October 2018 it was announced at the UN in New York that the University of Bergen (UiB) has become the official Hub institution for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life below water, for United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI). In November, at the annual conference of the International Association of Universities (IAU) it was announced that UiB will lead the university network's SDG14 Cluster, underlining UiB's strong position in the marine sciences.

"We are delighted to have been invited by UNAI and IAU to these prestigious roles and look forward to working with them and other international actors to promote knowledge, research and education for a sustainable Ocean," says Rector Dag Rune Olsen, who initiated SDG Bergen, a strategic initiative at the university.

The research centre Ocean Sustainability Bergen (OSB), a part of the SDG Bergen initiative, handles the practicalities surrounding UiB's SDG 14 roles.

Community engagement

UNAI has selected 17 universities worldwide for Hub status, one on each SDG, whereas IAU has chosen 16 member universities for its SDG Clusters and leading on SDG17 itself.

"We look forward to using our expertise in the marine sciences to bring both current and future partners together to make sure that the implementation of SDG 14 is done with scientific knowledge at the core," says Professor Lise Øvreås, OSB's academic director, adding:

"Above all we look forward to interact with the other UNAI SDG Hub institutions and IAU Cluster universities to bring about the partnerships needed to reach all of the Goals by 2030."

UiB was the first university in Norway to institutionalise the SDGs, primarily through SDG Bergen, OSB and the annual National SDG Conference Bergen. This work includes the establishment of SDG Bergen Science Advice, which runs the day to day operations related to scientific advice and science diplomacy at the university.

"Having a dedicated group has helped us a lot in this work, as has working closely with the broad range of marine sciences found across the university. After all, marine science is one of three focus areas at the university," says Professor Edvard Hviding, who is the academic director of SDG Bergen Science Advice.

> "To reach the ambitions at the core of the SDGs we need to work together in partnership across borders and academic disciplines."

He points out that Bergen as a city always has been dependent on the Ocean and thus UiB was ideally positioned for the SDG14 Hub and Cluster statuses.

Education key to SDG14 success

The two professors point to the crucial job that lies ahead for all universities and higher education providers in terms of engaging critically with the SDGs.

"Our students are among the driving forces for sustainability and change towards a so-called green economy. At UiB we are currently in the process of evaluating how we can feature issues of sustainability across disciplines as part of our education," says Øvreås.

Øvreås and Hviding, along with former OSB Director Peter M. Haugan, are among the driving forces behind UiB's pursuit of a more ambitious approach to critically engage with the SDGs. This includes unconventional and innovative measures, such as teaming up with Bergen-based tall ship Statsraad Lehmkuhl to create a study programme as part of a circumnavigation of the globe so as to educate future leaders on sustainability issues.

"This is only one of a number of measures UiB is currently undertaking to critically engage with the SDGs. For us this all goes way beyond SDG14. Our approach runs through SDG17, Partnerships for the Goals, as we believe that to reach the ambitions at the core of the Goals we need to work together in partnership across borders and academic disciplines," Hviding says.

FACTS

UiB and SDG14

- United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) invited 17 universities worldwide to be Hubs for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The University of Bergen (UiB) was invited to be UNAI Hub for SDG14, Life below water.
- UNAI member institutions were selected as exemplars for their innovative research, teaching and community engagement related to a specific Goal.
- The International Association of Universities (IAU) has appointed UiB to lead its SDG14 Cluster.

From research to policy

When discussing sustainable development, terms such as science advice and the science-policy interface have become paramount. What is this all about?

TEXT SVERRE OLE DRØNEN

We asked veteran UiB researcher, Professor Silvio Funtowicz, to provide some clarity and critical thought on the subject, based on his experience providing scientific advice to policy-makers.

Encouraging citizen participation

"I have been engaged in science advice, sustainable development and the use of science for governance and policy for decades. Providing knowledge that is relevant to support political and policy-value processes," says Funtowicz on the emerging interest in the so-called science-policy interface.

He is, however, critical of those who equate knowledge with academic knowledge, and believes that a broader understanding of knowledge needs to be deployed. Something he has been involved in, encouraging citizen participation in knowledge creation.

"There is a lot of knowledge that goes beyond disciplinary science which is just as effective and relevant to political decision-making, such as the knowledge of fishermen and farmers," he says, and in that sense "science diplomacy might enable to relate a variety of knowledge sources, coming from a variety of countries and traditions."

The struggle for the right language

Funtowicz believes that one of the main challenges for academics is to be clear about what problem they are being asked about, and to adhere closely to the brief they are given.

"The problem for academics is that they are not used to the political-institutional ecosystem. Moreover, in that system, it can be a struggle to find the appropriate language. In an institution like a university, there is great freedom. Nevertheless, when you give advice to policy-makers, you must listen to, and study the context in which your advice or opinion will be used. Understanding how the policy-makers themselves understand the problem is a first and necessary condition."

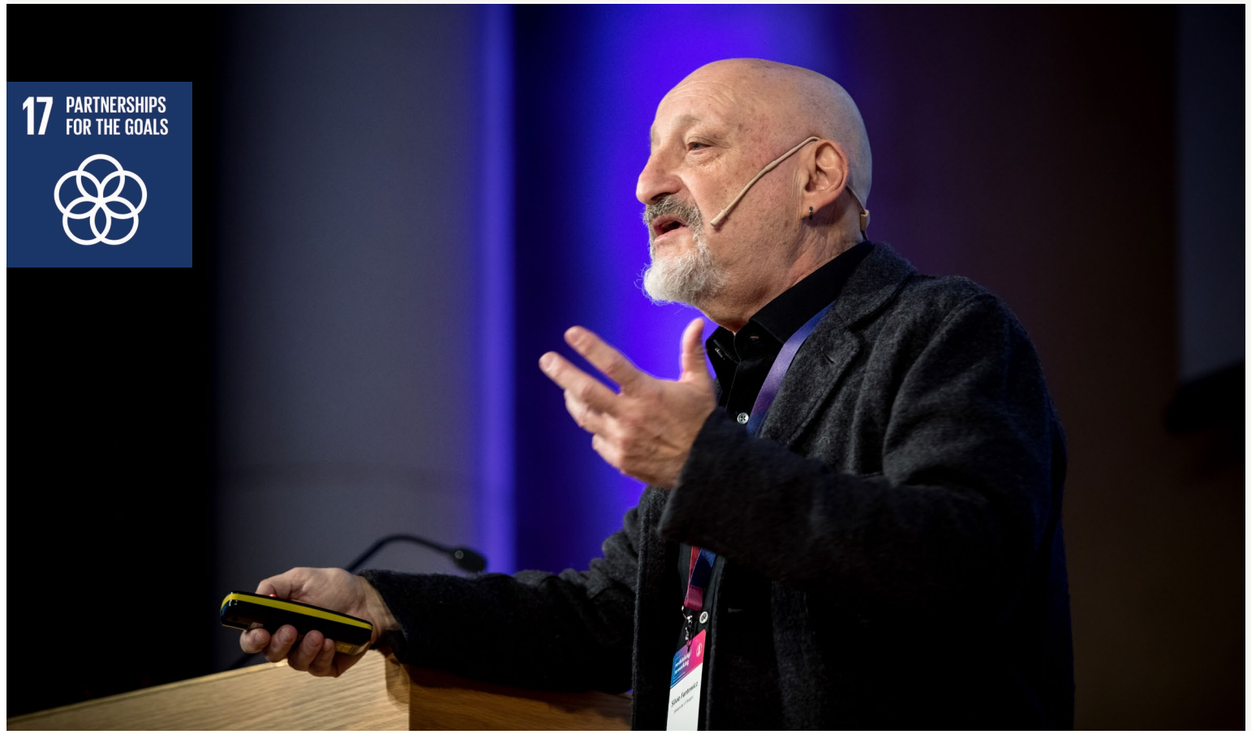
> "When you give advice to policy-makers, you must listen to, and study the context in which your advice or opinion will be used.

Even with these restrictions in mind, he believes that researchers have plenty of space to present their ideas to policy-makers, as long as they understand the policy subject and the context.

Tailoring your policy brief

One of the most common ways of providing science advice to policy-makers is via a policy brief. A short print or presentation containing policy recommendations based on scientific findings.

"Your policy brief has to be tailored and customised to the process," Funtowicz says, "however, it is just one element of the relevant knowledge, and is mostly a kind of reflection on the evidence. The brief might have diverse functions, and works differently depending on the circumstances. You have to be aware that it is different talking to a minister or to Parliament, and the brief should reflect that."



‹ **THE POWER OF SCIENCE:** Silvio Funtowicz discussing scientific advice and the societal impact of research at the 2019 SDG Conference Bergen.
PHOTO: EIVIND SENNESET, UiB

Science advice and sustainability

Six lessons learned

In 1998, Silvio Funtowicz organised an EU-sponsored panel at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in New York, with a critical look at the challenges in the use of science for sustainable development. Looking back, he feels little has been done in facing the challenges of sustainable development – even with the establishment of the SDGs. However, he did learn some lessons from the process which he wants to share:

1. When dealing with complex practical and political questions, the traditional solving strategy of reducing value issues to techno-scientific problems must be changed. Keep values explicitly in, rather than making them invisible.
2. Science and technology can support the policy effort but cannot replace the process that is fundamentally social, political and institutional.
3. We have not yet answered the question of what we want to sustain and why. We cannot sustain everything; more precisely, we do not want to sustain everything. Clearly, we do not want to sustain unsustainable practices and lifestyles.
4. How and who is going to make those choices? Setting goals might be a good idea but sustaining democratic socio-political processes and fair institutions to achieve those goals is urgent.
5. We need to answer the question: who and what is the subject of sustainability? Make it an inclusive WE rather than an exclusive THEM.
6. Sustainability is not in the future but in the present.

‹ **URBAN SPRAWL:** An aerial view of Johannesburg, one of the cities studied in the Urban Enclaving Futures research project. PHOTO: EDWIN REMSBERG/REDUX/NTB SCANPIX

Urban research takes on the SDGs

How do enclaves that arise as cities within a city, impact on urban planning and the creation of liveable and sustainable cities for all citizens? TEXT SVERRE OLE DRØNEN

This is one of the central themes in the research project Urban Enclaving Futures, which looks at the development of city enclaves beyond classic economic understandings of urban development. The researchers study social, cultural, spatial and other dimensions to fully understand the impact of enclaving in modern cityscapes.

Making a case for urban sustainability

A major component of the project is taking on board issues of sustainability by looking at how enclaving impacts on creating sustainable development, comparing the African cities of Accra, Johannesburg and Maputo.

"What you find in the rise of the urban enclaves is the so-called self-sustaining city," says Professor of Anthropology Bjørn Enge Bertelsen at the University of Bergen (UiB), before asking, "how do these enclaves, often behind walls, engage with the city outside of the enclave and how does this impact on the overall sustainability of both the local community and global goals to create a sustainable world?"

In the workshop, the researchers discussed sustainable city planning as a central part of the project. These enclaves are extremely car-based and use more energy than the cities as a whole. Current development of urban enclaves does not promote sustainable city planning in terms of transportation and use of public transport.

> "The rise of enclaving is the final blow to the modern fiction of urban planning."

Urban enclaving and the SDGs

The project touches on many of the 17 SDGs, but Bertelsen wants to move beyond traditional Western notions of Africa as a poverty-stricken continent, and instead prefers to focus on the rapid growth and its consequences – and possibilities – for Africa.

This is why the project has singled out one SDG of particular interest for the project and its researchers.

"SDG 11 on urban planning is one of the sustainability issues of interest for the project," says Bjørn Enge Bertelsen elaborating on this, "enclaving in its multiple forms and representations and manifestations kills the notion of urban planning. The rise of enclaving is the final blow to the modern fiction of urban planning. This is why we need to think about what city planning means in the age of enclaving and how this impacts on sustainability issues."

Science advice on urban development

As part of its SDG-orientation the project aims to contribute with scientific advice to bring critical dimensions on global sustainable development to decision-makers internationally and nationally.

"The world is becoming urban but what that means is also changing; we are no longer talking about cities in the conventional sense and enclaving is a prime symptom of this transformation. For this project it is therefore important to make our research and findings available to stakeholders and policymakers – aiming also to enter into dialogue with these and offering science advice about, for instance, the new forms of inequalities as well as possibilities that arise," says Bertelsen.

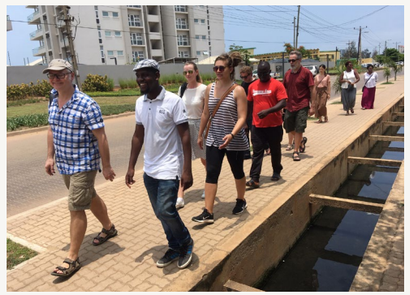
There will be further Urban Enclaving Futures workshops in Accra in January 2020 and in Johannesburg in January 2021, where the SDG-orientation in the project will be elaborated upon.

Search for **#UrbanEnclaving** on Twitter

FACTS

Urban Enclaving Futures

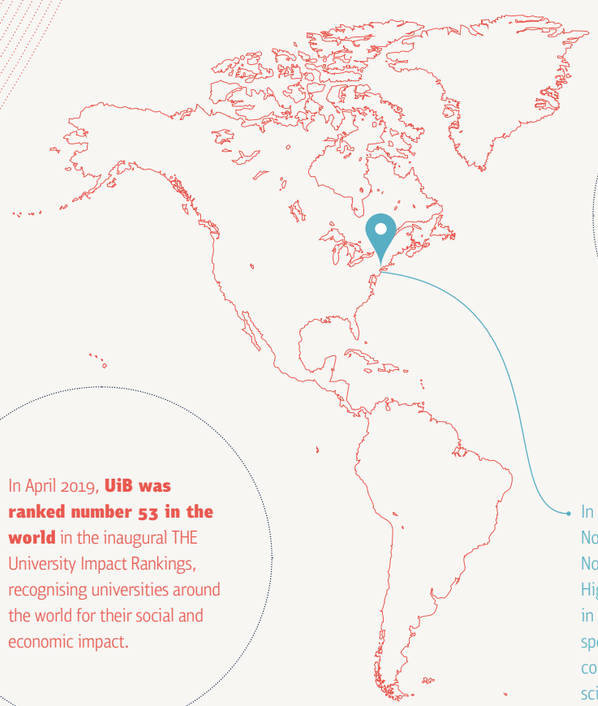
- *Urban Enclaving Futures: Patterns of global futures in three African cities* is an interdisciplinary research project funded by the Research Council of Norway.
- The project looks at how enclaving is changing the cityscapes of three African urban areas: Accra in Ghana, Johannesburg in South Africa, and Maputo in Mozambique.
- The project engages with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.
- Read more at: **uib.no/en/urbanenclavingfutures**



CITY PLANNING IN THE AGE OF ENCLAVING: Professor Bjørn Enge Bertelsen leading the way for researchers in the Urban Enclaving Futures project on a field trip of Maputo, Mozambique in January 2019. PHOTO: SVERRE OLE DRØNEN, UiB

World Wide SDG

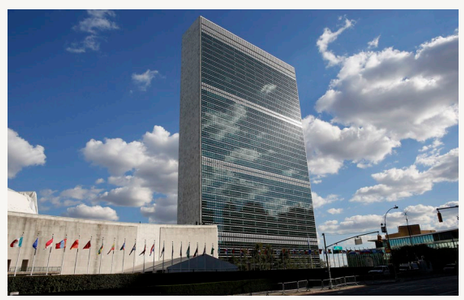
UiB was the first university in Norway to institutionalize the SDGs, including establishing the SDG Bergen initiative. So what has SDG Bergen been up to in the past year? We select some highlights.



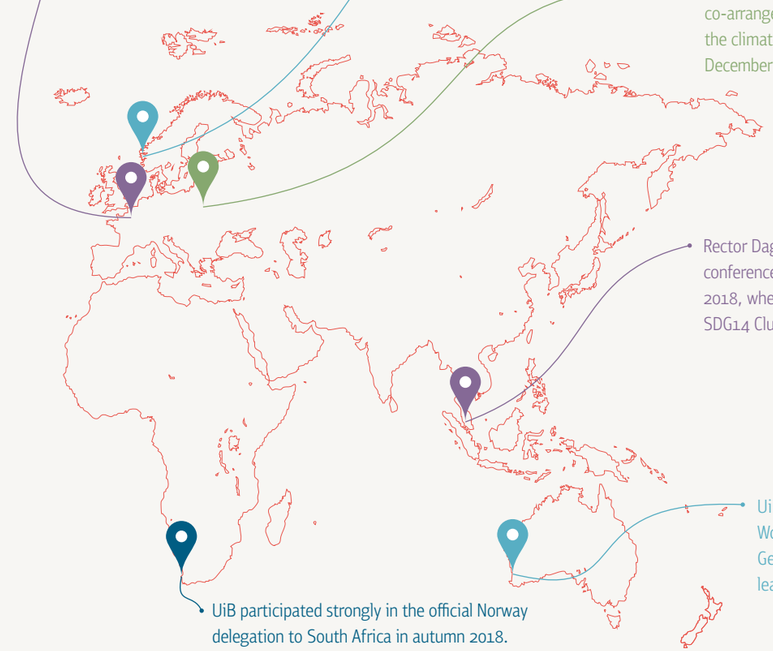
In October 2018, UiB was announced as the official **SDG14** (Life Below Water) Hub for United Nations Academic Impact. **#SaveOurOcean**

In April 2019, **UiB was ranked number 53 in the world** in the inaugural THE University Impact Rankings, recognising universities around the world for their social and economic impact.

In July 2018, UiB represented Norway's university sector in Norway's official delegation at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in **New York**. This included speaking in the General Assembly, co-arranging a workshop and giving science advice as part of the official Norway side event.



The United Nations building in New York City.
PHOTO: CHIP EAST/REUTERS/NTB SCANPIX



UiB and Norway's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO presented the Norwegian higher education model (focused on SDG14) at the first workshop for the International Association of Universities (IAU) SDG Cluster in **Paris**, in January 2019.

The second National **SDG Conference Bergen** took place 7–8 February 2019, with a critical look at the SDGs billed as *re:thinking/re:working – addressing the inequality of knowledge.*

UiB and the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research co-arranged the official Norway side event during the climate talks at COP24 in **Katowice** in December 2018. **#ClimateAction**

Rector Dag Rune Olsen spoke at the IAU annual conference in **Kuala Lumpur** in November 2018, when UiB was officially announced as IAU SDG14 Cluster leader.

UiB was given special mention at the May 2018 Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) Annual General Meeting in **Perth** for the university's leadership role on the SDGs.

UiB participated strongly in the official Norway delegation to South Africa in autumn 2018. The visit concluded in **Cape Town** with a debate on education and sustainability, led by Rector Dag Rune Olsen. **#SDG4**

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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