

**Let's Craft  
a Better  
Tomorrow.  
Together.**



# Sustainability Report 2025

Sustainability and Responsibility Group

*AI-assisted English translation*



# Karelia towards a sustainable future

During 2025, Karelia has strengthened its position as a responsible, transparent, and sustainability-oriented higher education institution. At Karelia, responsibility is not a separate program but a way of operating that runs throughout the entire organization.

During the year, responsibility actions were implemented, for example, in the development of support services for international students, risk management, RDI projects promoting the green transition, and maintaining staff well-being and good governance.

We also strengthened our climate work by joining the Joensuu Climate Partnership Network, supporting our goal of making our operations more climate-friendly.

Karelia University of Applied Sciences' responsibility work is built on systematic strategic work, multidisciplinary cooperation, and an open operating culture. We are committed to continuing development towards an even more sustainable and responsible higher education community.

Jaana Tolkki, Director of HR and Responsibility





# Contents of the Sustainability Report

- General information on reporting
- Governance and management
- Strategy
- Stakeholder cooperation
- Environmental responsibility and carbon footprint
- Social responsibility
- Education
- RDI activities



# General information on reporting

- Reporting period 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2025
- The report has been prepared, where applicable, in accordance with the shared reporting model of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences
- The report covers Karelia's two campuses and includes education, RDI activities, and administration
- Data is based on Karelia's internal data collection systems: annual report, KEVA programme, strategy, carbon footprint calculation
- No materiality assessment has been conducted





# **Governance and management**



# Karelia UAS Community

Karelia UAS Sustainable Development and Responsibility Programme



## Choices of Financial Responsibility

We aim for a balanced and stable economy. We pay attention to economic risk management.

We comply with the principles of good administration. Our operations are open and transparent.

Our operations are of high quality. We act in a resource-wise and sustainable manner.



## Choices of Social and Cultural Responsibility

We are a safe and responsible university community that promotes well-being.

We treat all members of our community equally and equitably.

We encourage our university community to engage in continuous learning and development.

We participate in and influence social debate.



## Choices of Environmental Responsibility

We strive to implement environmental responsibility comprehensively.

Our campus commutes and work or study trips are done responsibly and sustainably.

Our everyday at the campus is sustainable.

# Responsibility in governance

- Karelia operates as a responsible and sustainability-promoting employer and academic community.
- The goal is to increase ecological, economic, and social and cultural responsibility and well-being within our university.
- Karelia aims for a balanced and stable economy, with particular attention paid to financial risk management.
- Governance at Karelia is organized in accordance with guiding legislation and good governance principles.
- Internal control is implemented as an integral part of all operations and is reported annually to the board of the limited company.



# Key governance and management responsibility actions in 2025

- Maintaining and developing good governance
- Strengthening governance structures for responsibility (Sustainability and Responsibility Group coordinated the work)
- Promoting a coaching and participatory leadership culture
- Strategic and systematic HR management
- Considering equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility in governance





# Strategy



# Responsibility in Strategy

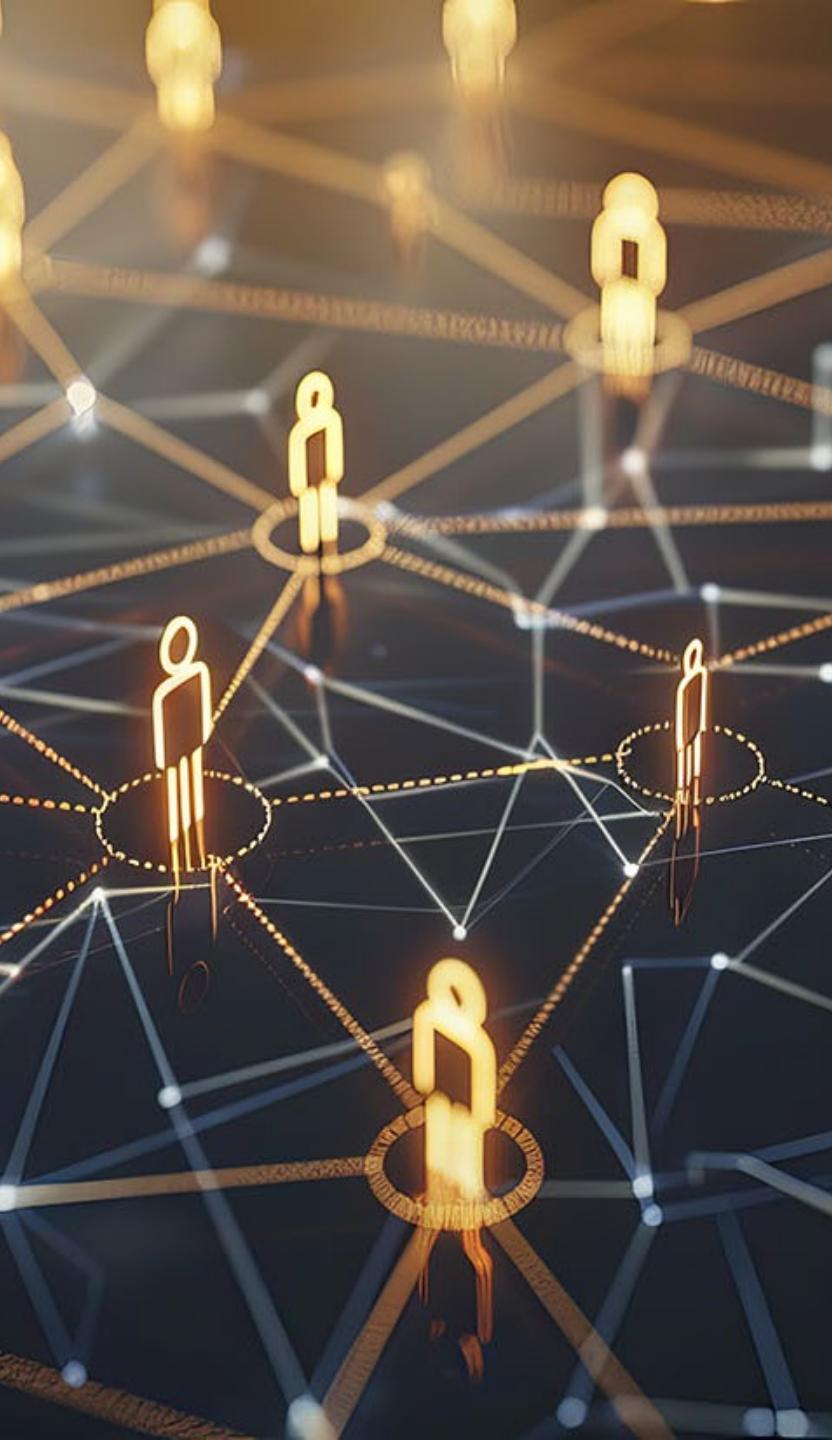
- Karelia's strategy strongly incorporates the three dimensions of responsibility: environmental, social, and governance responsibility.
- Responsibility is one of our three core values.
- Responsibility and sustainable development are part of continuous improvement within the quality management system.
- Karelia participates in cooperation on carbon footprint calculation and management among universities of applied sciences.
- We are committed to the low-carbon targets of the City of Joensuu and the North Karelia region.
- Our strategic goal is to become a carbon-neutral university of applied sciences by 2028.
- We involve students, staff, and partners in developing responsibility. For example, we promote resource-wise circular economy solutions in cooperation.
- Karelia is a partner of the North Karelia Biosphere Reserve and promotes the UN Sustainable Development Goals through this network.



# Key strategic responsibility actions in 2025

- Linking responsibility to the Karelia2030 strategy
- Integrating sustainability and responsibility into all operations
- Strengthening strategic governance structures
- Commitment to national and shared responsibility targets
- Strategic climate and responsibility commitments
- Monitoring and evaluation of strategy implementation





# Stakeholder cooperation



# Stakeholder cooperation

- Karelia's operations are based on developing regional business and working life to meet international competence standards. Cooperation is the key to our success.
- Our activities emphasize customer orientation and interaction.
- We offer several cooperation opportunities for both current and potential partners.
- Partnerships are long-term and structured collaboration.

**70**

Key partners

Strategic partners

**4**

**47**

Key partner  
managers

International  
partners

**200**



# Key stakeholder cooperation responsibility actions in 2025

- Engaging stakeholders in sustainability and climate work (e.g. climate partnership network)
- Regional and network-based cooperation for promoting sustainable development
- Participation in joint sustainability work among universities of applied sciences
- Developing carbon footprint calculation with other universities
- Integrating responsibility into regional cooperation
- Including stakeholder cooperation in responsibility programs and reporting
- Responsible and transparent communication as part of stakeholder relations





# **Environmental responsibility and carbon footprint**



# Environmental responsibility and carbon footprint

- We are committed to the low-carbon targets of the City of Joensuu and the North Karelia region. Our strategic goal is to become carbon neutral by 2028.
- We involve students, staff, and partners in developing sustainability, for example by promoting circular economy solutions.
- Public transport is primarily used for work travel.
- Karelia's cars are hybrid vehicles.
- Staff had the option to acquire a company bicycle as a taxable benefit.



# Key environmental responsibility actions in 2025

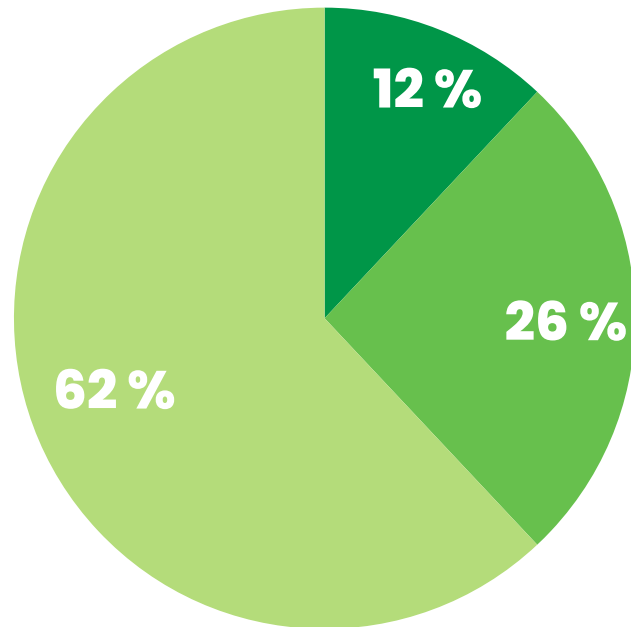
- Buildings are heated with district heating, transitioning from peat to renewable fuels and new electric solutions
- Energy efficiency of buildings is improved gradually during renovations
- Karelia participates in the city's electricity procurement agreement using certified emission-free electricity
- Charging points for electric cars installed on both campuses
- Remote work reduces commuting emissions



# Key environmental impacts

## Carbon footprint distribution

1519,5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e



(Carbon footprint distribution: Travel 12%, Buildings 26%, Procurement 62%)

- Carbon footprint slightly decreased from 2024
  - Electricity consumption: 1807 MWh
  - Heating: 3453.11 MWh
  - Water consumption: 3639.3 m<sup>3</sup>
- Solar panel production: 11.96 MWh





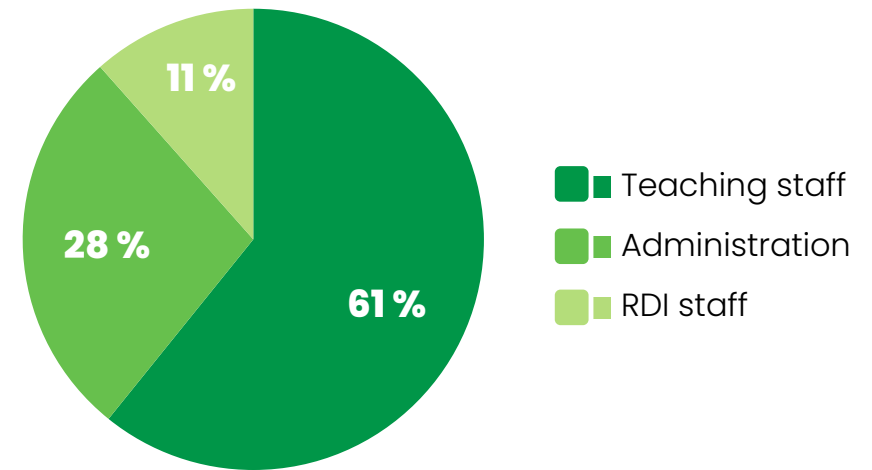
# Social responsibility



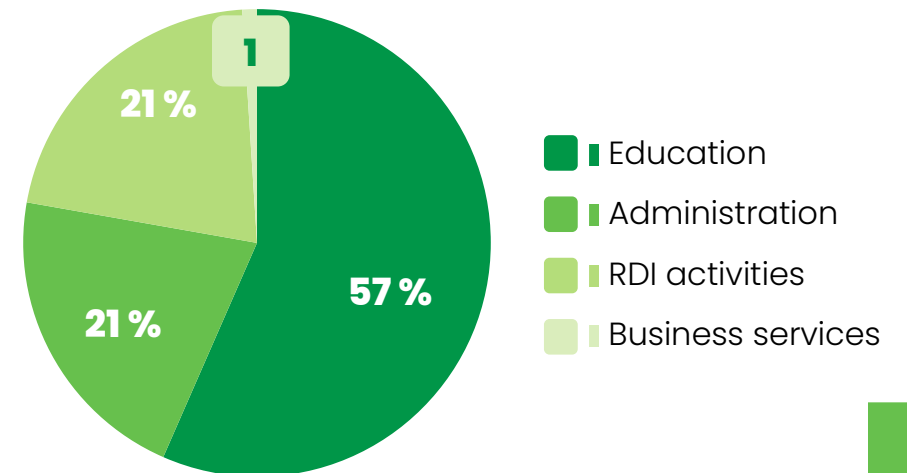
# Social responsibility

- Personnel (FTE) in 2025: 304.6
- 80% permanent staff
- Fixed-term contracts mainly in RDI projects
- Part-time staff: 10%
- Average age: 49.2 years

## Full-time equivalents



## Working time



# Responsibility in HR management

- Karelia operates as an ethical, culturally, and socially responsible employer. Since 2022, Karelia has maintained a dedicated working group for sustainable development and responsibility.
- Key principles:
  - Safe, responsible, and well-being-promoting working environment
  - Equal and non-discriminatory treatment of all
  - Encouraging continuous learning and development



# Key HR responsibility actions in 2025

- Strategic HR plan for 2025–2030
- New staff survey (QWL) and related development actions
- Participation in anti-racism project and diversity webinars
- Development of AI policy and competence
- Work ability management initiatives (e.g. psychotherapy, coaching)
- Leadership development programme for supervisors





# Education



# Education Activities

Karelia UAS Sustainable Development and Responsibility Programme



## Choices of Financial Responsibility

Tuemme yritysten ja organisaatioiden kasvua ja kilpailukykyä koulutustoiminnan kautta.



## Choices of Social and Cultural Responsibility

We strengthen and support the vitality of the region through education and education-based immigration.



## Choices of Environmental Responsibility

We promote sustainable development competence, knowledge and attitudes through education.

# Education

- Students graduating from Karelia in 2025 provided excellent feedback on their studies in the AVOP graduate survey for universities of applied sciences.
- In the question category related to internationalisation, multiculturalism and language studies, Karelia's students provided the best feedback in Finland.
- Competence in sustainable development is integrated into the curricula and implementation of all degree programmes at Karelia.
- Graduates from Karelia are familiar with the principles of sustainable development and are able to promote their implementation in their professional practice.

Students  
**4840**

Degrees  
completed  
2025  
**890**

Student  
satisfaction  
**5,47**

AVOP-score  
**5,55**



# Key education responsibility actions in 2025

- Integration of sustainability competence into all programmes
- Responsible international education and student support
- Finnish language (S2) teaching supports employment and integration
- Risk management model for international student recruitment
- Linking education to climate and responsibility goals
- Strengthening working life connections





# **RDI activities**



# Research, Development and Innovation activities

Karelia UAS Sustainable Development and Responsibility Programme



## Choices of Financial Responsibility

We implement RDI activities economically, to a high-quality standard and in a sustainable manner.

Our research and learning environments are economically sustainable.



## Choices of Social and Cultural Responsibility

We promote the sustainable well-being of the region through RDI activities and research and learning environments.



## Choices of Environmental Responsibility

We increase the number of sustainable development experts in the region and promote environmental innovation.

We implement projects ecologically.

We build research and learning environments in a sustainable manner and operate ecologically in them.

# RDI activities

- Each project contributes to one or more UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- We promote high-quality education, build collaboration and partnerships, and operate in an open and ethical manner. We seek solutions to sustainability challenges, advance sustainable development, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- We carry out RDI activities in an economically, ecologically, and socially responsible way.

RDI portfolio

**16,7**  
milj. €

External funding

**4,7**  
milj. €

Companies and  
partners

**739**

Investments

**0.7** M€

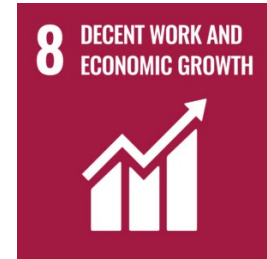
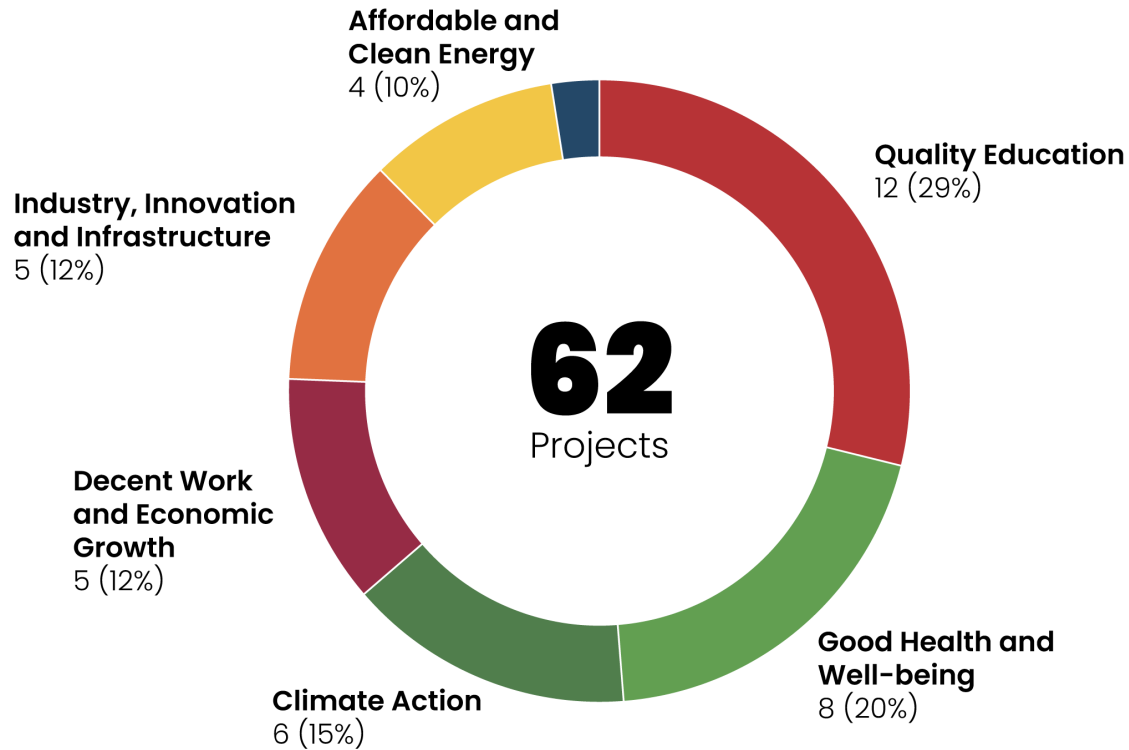
Publications

**262**



# RDI projects in 2025 by SDG goals

## Number of Projects by Sustainable Development Goals



# Key RDI responsibility actions in 2025

- Projects supporting green transition and sustainable energy
- Development of low-carbon construction solutions
- Promoting social and cultural sustainability
- Developing health and well-being solutions
- Examples include PlastLIFE, EVITA, and INVEST alliance cooperation.
  - The circular economy of plastics was promoted through the international PlastLIFE project, in which Karelia conducts research on the recycling and further utilisation of agricultural plastics.
  - The EVITA project develops solutions for utilising waste heat in cooperation with municipalities and companies.
- Within the international INVEST alliance, sustainability and responsibility work has been integrated into the alliance's management and into staff competence development programmes.



**Let's Craft  
a better tomorrow.  
Together.**