Integration of SDGs in

☐ Institutional governance/strategic level
☒ SDGs in research
☒ SDGs in campus operations
☐ SDGs in curriculum development
☒ SDGs in student engagement activities
☐ SDGs into community activities
☐ SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

☐ Goal 1 - No poverty
☐ Goal 2 - Zero hunger
☐ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
☐ Goal 4 - Quality education
☐ Goal 5 - Gender equality
☐ Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
☐ Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
☐ Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
☐ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
☐ Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
☐ Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
☒ Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
☒ Goal 13 - Climate action
☐ Goal 14 - Life below water
☐ Goal 15 - Life on land
☐ Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
☐ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

Outline the benefits of integrating this theme:

1. There are observable benefits of introducing uniform standards in the workplace. They ensure consistency, promote best practice, help streamline tasks, and enable identification of improvements.

2. Because of the LEAF implementation we reduced utility costs and the environmental footprint of our scientific laboratories. This is in alignment with the university strategy and is key for the University to meets its ambitious net zero target.

3. Enables a bottom-up sustainability movement; integrates different labs and departments, improves student experience via volunteering

LEAF is also supported by the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), in recognition that high-quality research is sustainable research.

Outline the barriers or challenges encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these:

1. Challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic such as requirements for additional PPE and increased ventilation in the workplace. Also, difficult to fully quantify the benefits of the LEAF implementation because of the lack of a representative baseline since LEAF was launched during COVID.

Conclusions and recommendations

In the current environmental climate, we must re-evaluate our ways of working to ensure we are limiting our environmental impact. As world-leading research institution, we recognise the inconvenient truth that research labs are some of the worst environmental offenders. Laboratories represent an area where we can see real improvements if we implement the right sustainability initiatives.
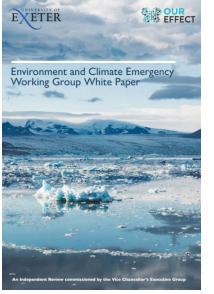
Our experience shows that LEAF is a useful framework that enables lab users to reduce the negative impact of their research whilst not compromising on research quality and output.

The LEAF project brought to light the invaluable strength of the technical workforce, which made it possible for the University of Exeter to become among the first institutions in the world to gain 100% green lab certification. Testimonials are available on the Exeter [Sustainable Labs website](#)

"Exeter's rapid progress on LEAF status is a testament to the hard work of our lab managers and technicians in particular" said Professor Neil Gow, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact). "It also reflects teamwork and collaboration among both staff and students who use our labs. "Sustainability is vitally important in every aspect of our work, and I am looking forward to seeing continued progress in our labs and beyond."

Images showing some of the marketing material we produced to support the LEAF application

In May 2019 the University of Exeter declared a climate emergency. In Nov 2019, the VC appointed working group published its E&CE White Paper which outlines the timeframes, targets and actions required to minimise and mitigate our impacts on the climate (including the LEAF accreditation implementation across all UoE labs).