

PT-DS03-IN07

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Higher education






The intervention aims to enhance the visibility and impact of sustainability actions at IST by creating a dedicated physical space for community engagement. The space will serve as a hub for sharing sustainability-related information, organizing activities, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. The project includes a participatory design phase, involving architecture students, staff, and researchers. The intervention is currently in the implementation phase, with a final plan developed and awaiting approval for construction.

Relevant difficulties

- ◆ Risk of institutional delay or lack of priority for approving and funding the space.
- ◆ Engagement may remain limited to a small core group, reducing wider impact.
- ◆ Long-term maintenance and programming of the space are still undefined.
- ◆ Sustainability communication efforts risk becoming fragmented without coordination.
- ◆ Need to maintain student involvement over time, considering academic turnover.

Resources

Human	
Time	
Costs	

Individual Competences	Collective Competences	Technical-material Competences
Students, staff, and researchers developed values and motivation toward sustainability. The project fosters critical thinking, systems thinking, and personal responsibility through co-creation and discussion of sustainable campus infrastructure. It also helps participants become more confident in communicating about sustainability and reflecting on their role in shaping institutional practices.	The collaborative design process brought together diverse actors, promoting teamwork, participatory learning, and shared decision-making. This collective approach aimed to create a sense of belonging and co-ownership of the space, strengthening community engagement and enabling long-term sustainability of the intervention.	Participants applied practical skills such as space planning, architectural design, and sustainable material selection. Communication skills were also key—participants worked on strategies for visual and digital engagement (e.g., signage, QR codes, interactive screens). The intervention integrates physical and digital tools to enhance sustainability outreach on campus.

Sustainability competences in place in the intervention



Engagement

Engagement grew progressively throughout the co-creation process. Initially, participation was focused on a small group of highly motivated students and researchers. However, the participatory design sessions broadened interest and visibility within the IST community. Architecture students were especially engaged through coursework directly related to the intervention. A key challenge is maintaining long-term engagement, particularly from leadership and non-academic staff, and expanding awareness to the broader student population.



Connections

The intervention connects communication, sustainability, architecture, and institutional development. It also links curricular learning (especially in architecture and design) with real-world sustainability challenges. Although primarily internal to IST, the project has the potential to connect with external sustainability networks or public outreach in future stages .



Change

The intervention is expected to help shift how sustainability is communicated and perceived at IST. By creating a physical and symbolic space for sustainability it encourages the integration of environmental thinking into the institutional culture. It is anticipated that the space will empower students and staff to take initiative, host activities, and strengthen the visibility of ongoing sustainability efforts .



Action

The action involved the co-design of a physical space for sustainability communication. Architecture students developed project proposals, including technical drawings and sustainability features. A consolidated plan was submitted to the school board for implementation. Although construction has not started, the design phase engaged the academic community and generated a shared vision for the space. The next steps include approval, funding, and execution.