

## Sustainability from Ecocity to Ecocampus: An Exploratory Study on Spanish Universities' Water Management

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**Abstract :** Sustainability has been integrated into the cities' agenda due to the impact that they generate. The dimensions of greater proliferation of sustainability, which are taken as a reference, are economic, social and environmental. Thus, the decisions of management of the sustainable cities search a balance between these dimensions in order to provide environment-friendly alternatives. In this context, urban models (where water consumption, energy consumption, waste production, among others) that have emerged in harmony with the environment, are known as Ecocity. A similar model, but on a smaller scale, is 'Ecocampus' that is developed in universities (considered 'small cities' due to its complex structure). So, sustainable practices are being implemented in the management of university campus activities, following different relevant lines of work. The universities have a strategic role in society, and their activities can strengthen policies, strategies, and measures of sustainability, both internal and external to the organization. Because of their mission in knowledge creation and transfer, these institutions can promote and disseminate more advanced activities in sustainability. This model replica also implies challenges in the sustainable management of water, energy, waste, transportation, among others, inside the campus. The challenge that this paper focuses on is the water management, taking into account that the universities consume big amounts of this resource. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the sustainability experience, with emphasis on water management, of two different campuses belonging to two different Spanish universities - one urban campus in a historic city and the other a suburban campus in the outskirts of a large city. Both universities are in the top hundred of international rankings of sustainable universities. The methodology adopts a qualitative method based on the technique of in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions with administrative and academic staff of the 'Ecocampus' offices, the organizational units for sustainability management, from the two Spanish universities. The hypotheses indicate that sustainable policies in terms of water management are best in campuses without big green spaces and where the buildings are built or rebuilt with modern style. The sustainability efforts of the university are independent of the kind of (urban - suburban) campus but an important aspect to improve is the degree of awareness of the university community about water scarcity. In general, the paper suggests that higher institutions adapt their sustainability policies depending on the location and features of the campus and their engagement with the water conservation. Many Spanish universities have proposed policies, good practices, and measures of sustainability. In fact, some offices or centers of Ecocampus have been founded. The originality of this study is to learn from the different experiences of sustainability policies of universities.

**Keywords :** ecocampus, ecocity, sustainability, water management

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