Akademia WSB

WSB University

SDG 17
Tracker Report

2025



17 | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Partnership for the Goals: WSBU University's SDG 17 Report 2025

WSB University (Akademia WSB), Dąbrowa Górnicza · Reporting year 2025

Executive summary

In 2025, the thirtieth year since its founding, WSB University delivered its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals predominantly through partnerships. These partnerships operated at four levels (example):

- **Local:** the City of Dąbrowa Górnicza, regional public services and healthcare providers.
- **Business:** regional and international companies.
- **National:** government ministries and national research programmes.
- **International:** consortia spanning Europe, Ukraine, the Western Balkans, the Philippines, Vietnam, Kenya and Namibia.

Key results for the reporting year:

- Four international capacity-building projects were under way during the year, and three further Erasmus+ capacity-building projects started in the autumn.
- The SPARK-COIL project in the Philippines generated a network of 155 faculty members trained in Collaborative Online International Learning.
- WSBU was appointed lead of a commercialization consortium within Science4Business, a PLN 296.7 million national programme coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.
- Six WSBU researchers, most of them active in international research teams, were included among the world's top 2% most-cited scientists.
- Times Higher Education identified SDG 17 as one of WSBU's strongest goals in the Impact Rankings 2025.
- Perspektywy ranked WSBU first in Poland for internationalization.

The report presents these partnerships by level: the city and region, business, national institutions, international consortia and research networks. It concludes with the role of students, staff and volunteers, external recognition and priorities for 2026.

Strategic context

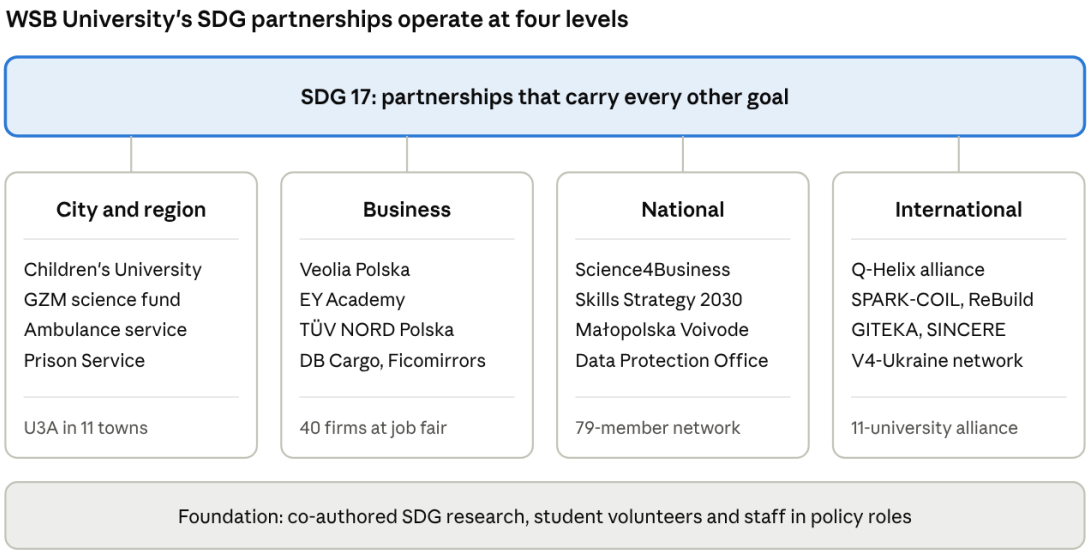
Partnerships are the principal mechanism through which the University implements its other priority goals, in particular reduced inequalities, gender equality, decent work and quality education.

This commitment is set out in the University's Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030, adopted by the Senate on 8 July 2022. The Strategy identifies SDG 17 as one of seven priority goals. It commits the University to strengthening international cooperation in science and innovation, supporting the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and developing public, public-private and civil-society partnerships. The Strategy builds on two earlier commitments made in 2017: WSBUU became a signatory of the UN-supported Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), one of seven Polish universities to do so, and signed the Polish Declaration of Social Responsibility of Universities.

These commitments are reflected in external assessments:

- **THE Impact Rankings 2025:** WSBU was placed in the 801–1000 band among 2,526 institutions, with SDG 17, SDG 5, SDG 8 and SDG 10 identified as its strongest goals.

Partnership structure



WSBUU partnership ecosystem · four circles, 2025

The four levels are mutually reinforcing:

- Contacts established through regional events frequently lead to internship and research agreements.
- International projects bring partner institutions to Dąbrowa Górnicza for joint training.
- Jointly authored research informs subsequent project proposals.

The following sections address each level in turn.

Local and regional partnerships

The University's relationship with its host city was formally recognized at the 30th-anniversary gala on 14 April 2025. The Mayor of Dąbrowa Górnicza, Marcin Bazylak, said that the University had transformed a traditionally industrial town into an academic center and contributed to the city's national profile. He presented the Rector with the Golden Oak Leaf, bearing the city's coat of arms.

Cooperation with the city covers all age groups:

- **Children:** the Dąbrowa Children's University, run jointly with the city, completed its seventeenth edition in 2024/25. Its workshops were attended by more than 1,500 children.
- **Seniors:** the University's Third Age University network, one of the largest in Poland, comprised eleven branches and almost 3,500 learners. Participants also run community projects for

residents. The Mayor and the City Seniors' Council awarded the network the "Senior-Friendly Place" certificate.
- **Accessibility:** the Accessibility Gala, organized with the city at the Zagłębie Palace of Culture, recognized individuals who have advanced accessibility in public life.

At metropolitan and regional level, the GZM Metropolis financed four WSBUU research projects in 2025 through its Metropolitan Science Fund. Each addresses a regional need: AI-based satellite monitoring of flood defenses, detection of widely circulated deep fakes, safety of nerve blocks in regional anesthesia, and the digital competences of teachers in the post-industrial cities of Bytom, Zabrze, Sosnowiec and Świętochłowice. Through the EU Just Transition Fund, the Silesian Voivodeship supports two WSBU projects with a combined value of PLN 14.3 million. They align the University's teaching with the requirements of the green economy.

Further regional cooperation in 2025 included:

- **Tychy:** WSBUU acted as content partner of the conference "Energy challenges of cities" (11 April 2025), organized with the Katowice Special Economic Zone and the Tychy Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The Chamber subsequently awarded WSBU the title "Integrator Roku 2025" for its cooperation with business, local government and social partners.
- **Żywiec:** a partnership with the city established an Industry Skills Centre for solar energy at the local technical school, funded under the National Recovery Plan (PLN 11.7 million). The project's closing conference in November 2025 was attended by more than 250 representatives of science, education, local government and the renewable-energy sector.

Partnerships with public-service institutions include:

- **Emergency medical services:** cooperation with the Provincial Ambulance Service in Katowice, under which paramedic students deliver first-aid training within the campaign "Your Courage – Their Professionalism".
- **Oncology:** an agreement with the Zagłębie Oncology Centre providing clinical placements for students of medicine, nursing, emergency medical services, physiotherapy and clinical psychology.
- **Justice system:** cooperation with the Katowice Detention Center and the Regional Youth Educational Center in Pszczyna-Łąka on internships and research in rehabilitation. On 14 May 2025 WSBU hosted the first Silesian Symposium on Human Rights in Public Service, jointly with the Prison Service, the Silesian Police and the regional office of the Ombudsman.

In the 2025/26 academic year the University concluded further agreements with:

- the District Court and the Court of Appeal in Katowice;
- the regional specialist hospital in Rybnik, where three clinical departments were established, including pediatric surgery with burns treatment;
- the Megrez hospital in Tychy;
- the Silesian Pharmaceutical Chamber;
- the Regional Social Policy Centre;
- the Silesian Chamber of Agriculture.

Business partnerships

At the 30th-anniversary gala, the University recognized two strategic business partners with "Educator" awards for their contribution to practice-oriented education: Luiz Hanania, President of the Veolia Group in Poland, and Krzysztof Witkowski, Managing Partner of EY Academy of Business.

- **Veolia:** the partnership connects the University with the energy transition. The Institute of Energy Transformation is directed by Prof. Krzysztof Zamasz, who also serves as Commercial Director of Veolia in Poland. This arrangement links the Institute's research on low-carbon heating, transport and renewable energy with the practice of a major heat and water utility.
- **EY Academy of Business:** co-delivers the University's MBA, Executive MBA and ACCA programmes. In 2025 ACCA recognized WSBUU as one of five Polish universities for achievement in ACCA postgraduate education. Perspektywy included WSBU's MBA programmes in its "Golden Fifteen" and ranked them first in the participants category.
- **TÜV NORD Polska:** co-delivers the postgraduate programme "Sustainable Development and ESG", bringing sustainability auditors into the teaching of corporate reporting.

Further cooperation agreements in 2025 focused on practice-based learning:

- **DB Cargo Polska:** joint development of programmes in rail logistics.
- **Ficomirrors Polska:** education, research and co-designed conferences in the automotive sector.
- **Noble Cert:** international certification of students' management competences.
- **Sped Partner (Atlas Group):** extended internship cooperation.
- **ALBA:** cooperation with a municipal services company from July 2025.
- **Huawei:** WSBU students take part in the Huawei Tech Arena; in 2025 a Computer Science student took second place nationally.

The 16th Job and Internship Fair (31 March – 6 April 2025) brought together 40 employers offering more than 1,000 positions, traineeships and internships, supported by 17 training sessions. WSBU's "3 days study, 2 days work" model enables students to combine study with paid placements.

The University also engages business in policy dialogue:

- **Sustainable Development of Enterprises:** on 3 April 2025 WSBU hosted the fourth national conference of this name. It covered ESG risk, cross-sector cooperation, BGK green loans for energy efficiency and compliance with the AI Act.
- **European SME Congress:** WSBU was content partner of the congress in Katowice (27–28 October 2025).
- **European Economic Congress (EEC 2025):** the University's leadership represented WSBU at the congress, which had more than 18,000 participants.

In the 2025/26 academic year the business network was extended further:

- a letter of intent with the Silesian Development Fund on support for academic start-ups;
- agreements with Fundusz Górnośląski, the Silesian Logistics Centre, Johnson Matthey and the automation company ASTOR;
- an agreement with the Olkusz water utility, a sector the University already serves through its Executive MBA for water-industry managers, the only such programme in Poland.

National partnerships

The most significant national partnership in 2025 concerns the commercialization of research. Science4Business is a PLN 296.7 million programme coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It brings together 79 research organizations. WSBU leads one of its "Inkubator Rozwoju" consortia, together with Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa and the KOMAG Institute of Mining Technology. The University's component started in April 2025 with a budget of PLN 9.7 million. It covers mapping of research potential, selection of results with the strongest commercial prospects and their further development through industrial research and experimental development.

WSBU staff hold advisory roles in national policy bodies:

- **Skills policy:** Vice-Rector Prof. Marcin Lis was appointed by the Minister of Education to the Interregional Coordination Team for the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030. He also serves on the Ministry of Science advisory team for the "Science for Society" programmes.
- **Mining research:** Prof. Lis was appointed to the Scientific Council of the Central Mining Institute (GIG-PIB) for 2025–2029.
- **Research evaluation:** WSBU experts were appointed to the Science Evaluation Committee for the national assessment of research quality in 2022–2025.

The University also cooperates with state institutions in security and fundamental rights:

- **Data protection:** WSBU hosted the 11th Open Day of the Personal Data Protection Office on 6 February 2025, devoted to artificial intelligence and data protection.
- **Civil protection:** the University co-organized a national training on civil protection and civil defense with the Małopolska Voivode at TAURON Arena Kraków (27 November 2025). It also took the Małopolska Young Uniformed Staff initiative under its patronage.
- **Countering disinformation:** a project funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the "Public Diplomacy 2024–2025" programme contributed to the international conference "Poland and the World. Economy and Security" (28 November 2025).

In health, cooperation with national authorities produced several outcomes:

- **Nursing accreditation:** in August 2025 the Minister of Health accredited the Nursing programme for four years, following an inspection in which all mandatory criteria received the maximum score.
- **Medicine review:** in September 2025 the Polish Accreditation Committee issued a positive assessment of the Medicine programme.
- **Tuition support:** under a Ministry of Health development programme, 30 Nursing and Emergency Medical Services students receive tuition support.
- **Humanization of medicine:** WSBU participated in the conference on the humanization of medicine held at the Ministry of Health on 13 October 2025.

International partnerships

Q-Helix European University alliance

WSBU leads Q-Helix, an alliance of eleven universities from ten European countries founded on the Quintuple Helix model of innovation. This model involves academia, business, government, civil society and the natural environment. The European Commission awarded the alliance's proposal a Seal of Excellence, a distinction granted to high-quality proposals in a highly competitive evaluation. In October 2025 the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) granted PLN 1.5 million for the alliance's further development. This includes an International Centre for Quality of Education and Research, which will prepare the introduction of a joint European degree. The alliance addresses four thematic areas:

- **Security:** migration, including the situation of exiled Belarusian scholars and of the divided city of Mitrovica in Kosovo.
- **Healthcare:** an integrated approach to physical and mental health.
- **Environment:** conservation and restoration.
- **Smart cities:** monitoring and assistive technologies for older residents.

Capacity building in partner countries

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education projects form the core of WSBU's international SDG activity:

- **SPARK-COIL** is the first project of its kind led by a Philippine consortium. Following the kick-off meeting in Manila in February 2025, WSBU hosted a five-day training in Collaborative Online International Learning for the five Ateneo universities and the University of Alicante (28 July – 1 August 2025). The programme concluded with sessions on ethics, inclusion and sustainability. The Philippine partners subsequently replicated the training, building a network of 155 faculty members.
- **ReBuild** has, since January 2025, transferred European expertise in sustainable post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction to vocational education providers in the Eastern Neighborhood. In September 2025 two researchers from the Department of Management took part in a study visit to Bologna, Ravenna, Spoleto and Preci. They examined how earthquake reconstruction combines structural safety, heritage protection and energy efficiency.
- **GITEKA** (green industrial transformation) and **SINCERE** (academic integrity) began in October 2025 with universities in Kosovo and Albania. In SINCERE, WSBU co-leads institutional integrity assessments and the development of an Academic Integrity Framework. The partners intend to establish a Regional Academic Integrity Network. A WSBU delegation visited Aleksandër Xhuvani University in Elbasan from 30 June to 4 July 2025 to prepare this cooperation.
- Three further projects started in November 2025:
    - **AGILE** develops green, digital and business competences at universities in Kenya, Albania and Kosovo.
    - **BIG-U** supports internationalization strategies at three Ukrainian universities.
    - **DUALKO** introduces dual education in ICT in Albania and Kosovo.

Visegrad cooperation and support for Ukraine

WSBUU is a partner in the Visegrad Fund project "CBC in Ukraine and V4: in the search for examples of best practice". The project is led by Uzhhorod National University with the University of Prešov, the Technical University of Liberec and the Hungarian CESCI. It identifies institutional forms of cross-border cooperation that can support Ukrainian border regions in the EU accession process. Key steps in 2025:

- **February 2025:** the partners held an expert workshop with European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation.
- **19 June 2025:** in Uzhhorod, Prof. Joanna Kurowska-Pysz presented WSBU's long-standing cooperation with VŠB-TU Ostrava as a model of cross-border academic partnership.

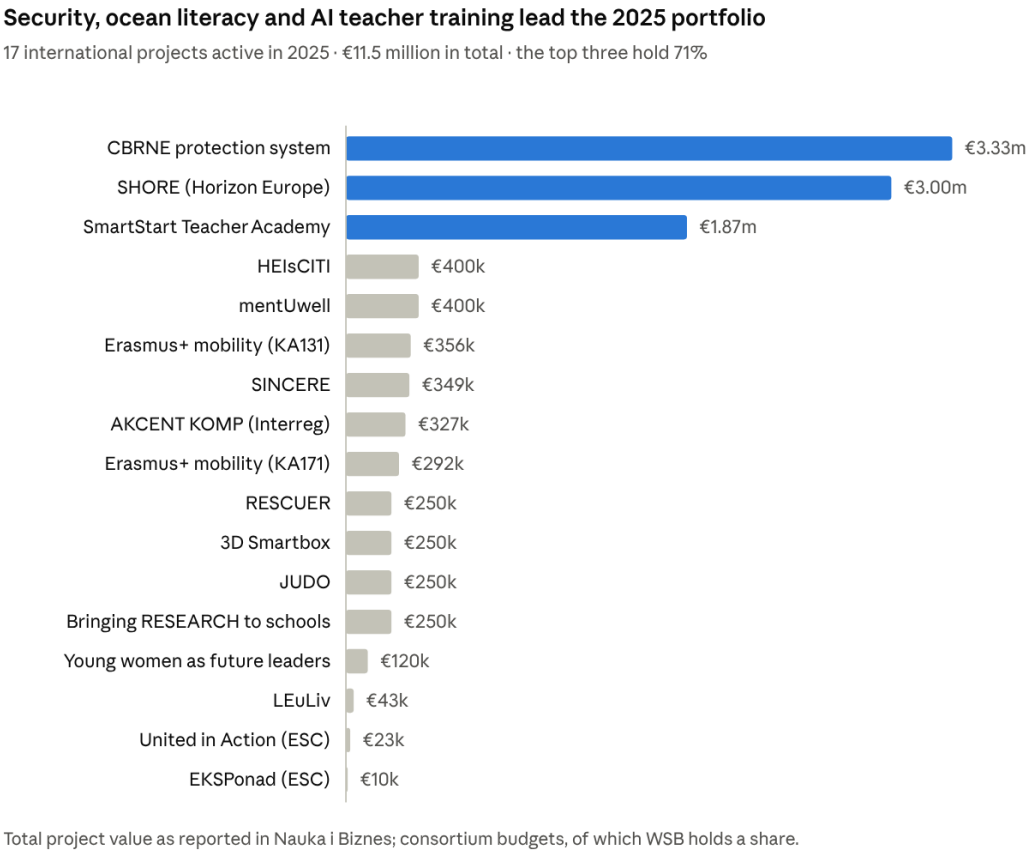
WSBU also led a Visegrad Fund project on forecasting factors influencing climate change within the framework of the SDGs. Its partners were Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, the University of Žilina, VŠB-TU Ostrava, Pan-European University in Prague and Corvinus University of Budapest, and local governments and non-governmental organizations were consulted during the project.

Other international consortia

Consortium	Partners	SDG contribution in 2025
HEIsCITI (Erasmus+, completed November 2025)	Stuttgart Media University, Mykolas Romeris University, University of Danang (Vietnam), LAMA (Italy), CEKOM (Croatia)	Universities as drivers of sustainable urban development, including the inclusion of refugees from Laos in border towns
SHORE (Horizon Europe)	European consortium including the University of Padua	Ocean and water literacy in more than 100 European schools; Mission Ocean & Waters Night (4 June 2025) in Romania, Turkey, Poland, Italy and online; Mission Arena in Sopot with more than 200 stakeholders
EQUATION (Erasmus+)	CEEMAN, IEDC-Bled School of Management, Vistula University, Riga Technical University	Gender Equality Plans and guidelines for accreditation bodies, presented in Bled on 3–4 March 2025
SmartStart Teacher Academy (Erasmus+, from April 2025)	Twelve institutions from seven countries	Teacher training in AI-supported digital media; an AI translation tool for multilingual classrooms
Universal CBRNE Protection System (Internal Security Fund, from March 2025)	Partners and study visits in nine EU countries	Security procedures, VR-based training and the educational game THOR for open university campuses

Consortium	Partners	SDG contribution in 2025
RESCUER (Erasmus+)	ECECE (Austria), City of Čadca (Slovakia), Institut EuroSchola (Czechia)	VR mountain-safety training for older people and people with disabilities, tested in Slovakia in April and July 2025
AKCENT KOMP (Interreg Poland–Czechia)	Technical University of Liberec, Pedagogical Centre for Polish Schools in Czechia	Cross-border teacher network; joint meeting of Polish and Czech teachers in May 2025
mentUwell (Erasmus+, completed December 2025)	Partners from countries with long experience of migration	Methodology and toolkit for the mental wellbeing of young war migrants, published in eight languages

International project portfolio



The three largest projects reflect the thematic breadth of the portfolio: campus security, ocean and water literacy in schools, and the integration of artificial intelligence into teaching. Smaller grants of several tens of thousands of euros complement them. These finance international volunteering, intergenerational cultural activity and biographical learning with people over sixty, and reach groups that large-scale projects rarely engage directly.

Research partnerships and joint publications

A substantial part of WSBU's SDG partnership activity takes the form of international research collaboration. In 2025 six WSBU researchers were included in the global list of the top 2% most-cited scientists:

- Rector Prof. Zdzisława Dacko-Pikiewicz;
- Vice-Rector Prof. Katarzyna Szczepańska-Woszczyna;
- Prof. Aleksy Kwiliński;
- Prof. Tetiana Pimonenko;
- Prof. Oleksii Lyulyov;
- Prof. Rui Alexandre Castanho.

A significant share of their work on green growth, energy and sustainable development results from long-term collaboration between WSBU, Sumy State University in Ukraine and EKA University of Applied Sciences in Riga.

Selected publications from 2025:

- **Environmental security indicators:** Kharazishvili, Kwilinski, Ivaniuta, Sukhodolia and Czart developed a system of indicators for the environmental component of sustainable development in the security dimension. The article was co-authored with the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Kyiv and published in *Sustainable Development*.
- **Green entrepreneurship:** Pimonenko, Lyulyov, Wodz, Ziabina and Solodovnikov conducted a bibliometric analysis of entrepreneurship and green economic development. They proposed a ten-dimensional model linking firm-level activity with macro-level sustainability objectives.
- **Innovation and green finance:** Kwiliński, Dacko-Pikiewicz, Szczepańska-Woszczyna, Lyulyov and Pimonenko published in the *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*. Further 2025 publications by the same team address green finance and ESG performance, and the role of artificial intelligence in green growth in the European Union.
- **Cross-border cooperation for Ukraine:** the collective monograph *In Search of the Best Forms and Practices for Ukraine: Cross-border Cooperation in the Visegrad Four Countries*, with contributions by Prof. Joanna Kurowska-Pysz, was approved for publication by Uzhhorod National University on 29 December 2025. The partnership of Visegrad universities, Uzhhorod National University and CESCI is also discussed in *Borders in Globalization Review*.
- **Climate indicators:** the Visegrad project led by WSBU produced two articles in ranked journals and an online guide to good practice and recommendations, disseminated to local governments and NGOs.

The University's journal *Forum Scientiae Oeconomia* also serves as a publication platform for partner research. In April 2025 it was classified in the first quartile (Q1) of the SJR ranking in multidisciplinary research and the social sciences, and ranked fourth among 38 Polish journals in business, management and accounting. Overall, WSBU published 265 peer-reviewed articles in 2025, of which 178 address responsible management and sustainability.

Students, staff and volunteers

The implementation of institutional partnerships depends on the engagement of students, staff and volunteers.

International volunteering. Under the European Solidarity Corps project "United in Action" (2025), WSBU Uhosted international volunteers aged 18 to 30. The volunteers worked with students, staff, children and older people in several University units:

- the Social Innovation Hub;
- the Academic Career Office;
- the library;
- the Children's and Third Age Universities.

Their activities addressed social inclusion, discrimination, disinformation and environmental awareness. Cultural workshops presented the volunteers' countries of origin, including France, Romania, Egypt, Spain, Colombia and Turkey. In July 2025 a second solidarity project, EKSPonad, began. It extends the activity of AWeSomeBand, an intergenerational band of children, students, older people and people with disabilities, and uses music and non-formal education to support social participation.

Staff mobility. In 2025 University staff conducted partnership activities in Elbasan (Albania), Uzhhorod (Ukraine) and in reconstruction sites in Italy. Erasmus+ mobility grants of EUR 356,120 for programme countries and EUR 291,639 for partner countries outside Europe, both running until 2027, support exchanges in both directions. In the 2025/26 academic year these exchanges included the Namibia University of Science and Technology. A WSBUU lecture there on marketing for social innovation led to plans for joint COIL courses.

Student engagement. The University cooperates with the student organizations AIESEC and the Erasmus Student Network. The Diversity Hub brings Polish and international students together for an eight-month multicultural project concluding with Cultural Diversity Day. In 2025 the WSBUU Running Team took part in the sixth "Tauron Biegnij dla Aniołów" charity run in support of children from the Dom Aniołów Stróżów centre in Katowice. Students also organized gift collections for children in need.

External recognition

Recognition	Date	Relevance to SDG 17
THE Impact Rankings 2025: 801–1000 worldwide; SDG 17 among the University's strongest goals	2025	Partnership activity assessed against 2,526 institutions
THE Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026: 401–600 worldwide; joint 2nd in Poland; 88th worldwide for SDG 10	2026 edition	Partnerships contribute to measurable impact on inequality, gender equality, decent work and institutions
Perspektywy 2025: 1st in Poland for internationalisation; 2nd among non-public universities	2025	Highest level of internationalization among all Polish universities

Recognition	Date	Relevance to SDG 17
"Integrator Roku 2025", Tychy Chamber of Industry and Commerce	2025	Cooperation with business, local government and social partners
Golden Oak Leaf, Mayor of Dąbrowa Górnicza	14 April 2025	Thirty years of cooperation with the host city
ACCA recognition as one of five Polish universities for ACCA postgraduate education	2025	Outcome of the partnership with EY Academy of Business
Six researchers among the world's top 2% most-cited scientists	2025	Impact of international research collaboration
Forum Scientiae Oeconomia classified in SJR Q1	7 April 2025	The University's journal as a platform for partner research
GPM Global Responsible Management Education Partner; second university in Poland and the only one in Silesia with a Green Project Management agreement	SIP 2026	Sustainable project management taught to an international standard
European Commission Seal of Excellence for the Q-Helix alliance	NAWA funding from October 2025	Recognition of the University's capacity to lead a European university alliance

Priorities for 2026

Partnerships initiated in 2025 determine the University's priorities for 2026:

- **Q-Helix:** establishing the International Centre for Quality of Education and Research and preparing the alliance's joint European degree.
- **AGILE, BIG-U and DUALKO:** implementation in their first full year; the BIG-U consortium held its opening meeting in Dąbrowa Górnicza in January 2026.
- **Science4Business:** progression from mapping research potential to selecting WSBU projects with the highest commercialization potential.
- **Visegrad monograph:** publication of the monograph on cross-border cooperation for Ukraine.

WSBU experts are also taking on new international and national roles:

- **OECD:** Prof. Joanna Kurowska-Pysz will advise the OECD IMPACT pilot on community-led local development at the Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Czech borders.
- **COST:** Dr Karol Jędrasiak represents Poland on the management committees of two new COST Actions, on the governance of generative AI in research and on simulation in healthcare education.

- **Oncology research:** Dr Marcin Miszczyk of Collegium Medicum was selected, as one of 40 among 120 applicants, for the EORTC programme for future leaders of European clinical trials in oncology.
- **Cybersecurity:** Vice-Rector Prof. Katarzyna Szczepańska-Woszczyna was appointed to the supervisory board of NASK, Poland's national research institute for cybersecurity.

To strengthen reporting, the University will maintain a consolidated register of SDG partnerships, recording for each agreement the goals it supports and the beneficiaries it reaches. The register will be published annually alongside this report. WSBU's partnerships for the goals extend from the Children's University in Dąbrowa Górnicza to COIL courses with partner universities in the Philippines, and so span local and global levels.