Akademia WSB

WSB University

# SDG 8

## Tracker Report

2025

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



# Decent Work and Economic Growth: WSB University's SDG 8 Report 2025

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

## Executive summary

WSB University contributes to decent work and economic growth in four ways:

- by preparing graduates for employment through practice-oriented education;
- by supporting entrepreneurship and the commercialization of research;
- by developing the skills required by a regional economy in transition;
- as a responsible employer of about 1,100 people.

The University is located in the Silesian and Zagłębie region, one of Europe's coal regions undergoing a just transition. Its partnerships with business and local government play a direct role in the region's economic renewal.

Key results for the reporting year:

- **External assessment:** the THE Impact Rankings 2025 identified SDG 8 as one of WSBU's strongest goals. The THE Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026 placed the University in the 201–300 band worldwide for SDG 8.
- **Job and Internship Fair:** the 16th edition brought together 40 employers with more than 1,000 offers of jobs, traineeships and internships.
- **Study with work:** the "3 days study, 2 days work" model enables students to combine study with paid professional placements.
- **Commercialization:** WSBU became lead of a Science4Business consortium within a PLN 296.7 million national programme for the commercialization of research.
- **Regional recognition:** the Tychy Chamber of Industry and Commerce named WSBU "Integrator Roku 2025" for strengthening the city's economic potential through cooperation with business and local government.
- **Skills for the green and digital economy:** two Just Transition Fund projects worth PLN 14.3 million, and a solar-energy Industry Skills Centre in Żywiec completed in November 2025, develop these skills.
- **Impact certification:** WSBU holds the EFMD BSIS Impact certificate, as the fourth university in Poland, confirming its economic impact on the region.

## Context

SDG 8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. Its targets of particular relevance to universities are:

- higher productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation (8.2);
- policies that support entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (8.3);
- full employment and equal pay for work of equal value (8.5);

- a substantial reduction in the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (8.6);
- safe and secure working environments for all workers (8.8).

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings assess universities' contribution through research on economic growth, employment practice at the university itself (including fair pay, equality and labor rights) and the proportion of students undertaking work placements.

SDG 8 is one of the seven priority goals of WSBU's Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030. The Strategy commits the University:

- to support policies that promote productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
- to work towards full and productive employment and equal pay for work of equal value;
- to protect labor rights and promote safe working environments for all workers, including migrant workers.

## Employability and transition to work

### Study combined with work

WSBU's "3 days study, 2 days work" model allows students to undertake paid internships and career programmes alongside their studies. They gain professional experience and income before graduation. Practical education is reinforced by:

- **EduTrend** (European Funds for Social Development, PLN 18.9 million, 2024–2029), which redesigns six degree programmes around the needs of the labor market and adds classes delivered by practitioners;
- **study visits** to companies and institutions, which acquaint students with modern technologies and real working environments.

### Academic Career Office

The Academic Career Office connects students with employers throughout their studies. The 16th Job and Internship Fair, held from 31 March to 6 April 2025, brought together 40 employers who presented more than 1,000 offers of jobs, traineeships and internships. The programme also included:

- 17 training sessions and workshops;
- individual CV consultations;
- professional CV photo sessions;
- a competition on knowledge of the participating companies.

The EduLider project, financed by the Just Transition Fund, extends the Career Office to WSBU's branch faculties. It funds career counselling and mentoring for students across the region.

### Employer partnerships

In 2025 the University concluded or extended cooperation agreements with employers that offer internships, co-develop curricula and take part in teaching:

| Employer | Sector | Scope of cooperation |
|---|---|---|
| DB Cargo Polska | Rail freight | Joint curricula and postgraduate programmes in rail logistics; training and labor-market events |
| Ficomirrors Polska | Automotive | Joint education and research projects; participation in conferences and programme design |
| Sped Partner (Atlas Group) | Construction chemicals | Professional internships |
| ALBA | Municipal services | Cooperation from July 2025 |
| Noble Cert | Certification | International certification of students' management competences |
| Huawei | Technology | Participation of students in the Huawei Tech Arena |

In the 2025/26 academic year further agreements were signed with Fundusz Górnośląski, the Silesian Logistics Centre, Johnson Matthey Poland, ASTOR and the Olkusz water utility. They cover internships, research and development projects and joint curricula.

### Executive and professional education

WSBU's MBA programmes are delivered with EY Academy of Business and Politecnico di Milano. Perspektywy 2025 included them in its "Golden Fifteen" and ranked them first in the participants category. ACCA recognized WSBU as one of five Polish universities for achievement in ACCA postgraduate education. The University also runs a unique Executive MBA for managers in the water and sewerage sector, and a postgraduate programme in labor and social insurance law taught by labor-court judges, Social Insurance Institution managers and inspectors of the National Labor Inspectorate.

## Entrepreneurship and innovation

### Commercialization of research

Science4Business is a strategic PLN 296.7 million project led by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It brings together 79 research organizations to move research results into the economy. WSBU leads one of its "Inkubator Rozwoju" consortia, together with Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa and the KOMAG Institute of Mining Technology. WSBU's component (European Funds for a Modern Economy, PLN 9.7 million, April 2025 – December 2028) covers:

- mapping the University's research potential;
- identifying the solutions with the greatest commercial potential;
- developing them through industrial research and experimental development;
- selecting projects for implementation.

The aim is to shorten the path between science and business. The work builds on WSBU's Technology Transfer Center and on the applied research carried out in 2025 within EduLider for companies in the Silesian Voivodeship.

### Entrepreneurship education

- **Challenge-based entrepreneurship:** ENTER-CBL (Erasmus+, coordinated by WSBU, completed in February 2025) developed the NextGen Entrepreneurship Course Framework, an open learning platform and an international bootcamp. Student teams designed solutions to real social and environmental challenges. The results were presented at the EURIE Eurasia Higher Education Summit in Istanbul in April 2025.
- **Game-based learning:** Game4Change (Erasmus+, completed in January 2025) developed game-based entrepreneurship curricula in which students designed sustainable business models.
- **Global Entrepreneurship Week:** WSBU takes part in the Week every year with workshops on communication, team building, creative thinking, design thinking and entrepreneurship.

### Support for start-ups and local business

- **Green start-ups:** on 27 March 2025 WSBU was a partner of the Agriverde Start-up conference at the KSSENON business accelerator in Żory. It covered urban agriculture, green innovation, go-to-market strategies and investor pitches for environmental start-ups.
- **Academic start-ups:** in the 2025/26 academic year WSBU signed a letter of intent with the Silesian Development Fund on joint support for entrepreneurship, innovation and academic start-ups, including workshops, training and conferences.
- **Responsible local business:** on 12 June 2025 WSBU was a partner of the 10th edition of the Karol Adamiecki Economic Award in Dąbrowa Górnicza. The award recognizes micro, small and medium-sized enterprises for innovation, ethical business practice, social responsibility, investment in human capital and cooperation with education and local government.

## Skills for the regional economy

The Silesian and Zagłębie region is moving away from coal mining. Sustaining employment in this transition requires new skills in the green and digital economy, and WSBU's education and projects respond to that need directly.

### Just Transition Fund projects

Two WSBU projects financed by the European Funds for Silesia programme from the Just Transition Fund are dedicated to developing higher education in line with the needs of the green economy:

- **Comprehensive support for the development of WSBU in line with the needs of the green and digital economy** (PLN 9.1 million, September 2024 – June 2026) aligns curricula with the skills required by the green economy.
- **EduLider** (PLN 5.1 million, February 2024 – June 2026) supports students, school pupils and companies. It funds:
    - research projects that deliver practical solutions for companies in the Silesian Voivodeship;

- new laboratories for emergency medicine, problem-based learning and gamification, warehouse logistics and traffic management, and cybersecurity;
- the expansion of the Academic Career Office to branch faculties;
- preparatory courses for secondary-school pupils.

### Vocational skills for renewable energy

In partnership with the City of Żywiec, WSBU established an Industry Skills Centre for solar energy at the Mechanical and Electrical School Complex in Żywiec (National Recovery Plan, PLN 11.7 million, July 2023 – November 2025). The project's closing conference brought together more than 250 representatives of science, education, local government and the renewable-energy industry. They discussed the green and digital transformation of the energy sector.

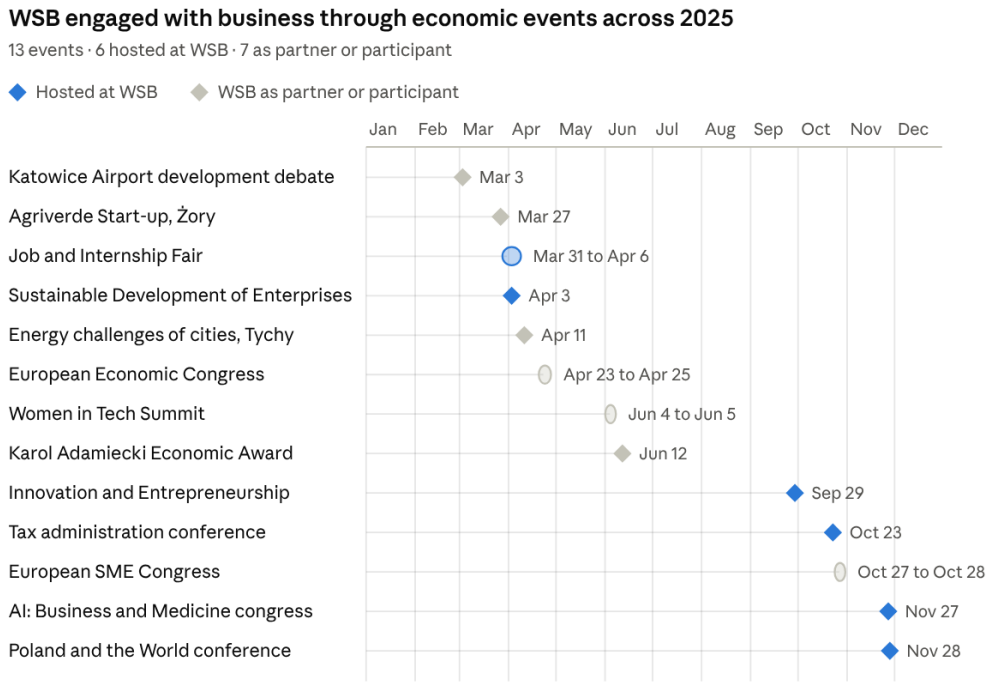
### Energy transition and local economies

The Institute of Energy Transformation, directed by Prof. Krzysztof Zamasz, Commercial Director of the Veolia group in Poland, links research with the practice of the energy sector. On 11 April 2025 WSBU was content partner of the national conference "Energy challenges of cities: building the energy competences of local government" in Tychy. It was organized by the Tychy Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Katowice Special Economic Zone, and addressed the energy self-sufficiency of municipalities, local energy planning, energy communities and energy clusters.

### Skills policy

- **National skills strategy:** Vice-Rector Prof. Marcin Lis was appointed by the Minister of Education to the Interregional Coordination Team for the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030, which coordinates national policy on lifelong learning.
- **Mining research:** in 2025 Prof. Lis was appointed to the Scientific Council of the Central Mining Institute (GIG-PIB) for 2025–2029.
- **Digital skills:** SkillsUP (European Funds for Social Development, December 2025 – November 2029) develops open online courses in digital and transversal skills.
- **Teachers' digital competences:** a GZM-funded study assessed teachers' digital competences in post-industrial cities of the Metropolis.

## Economic dialogue with business and government




Nauka i Biznes 2025 and 2026 · 13 dated economic events, 2025

Throughout 2025 WSBU acted as a meeting place for business, academia and public administration:

- **Hosted at WSBU:**
  - the 4th national conference "Sustainable Development of Enterprises" (3 April);
  - the 10th international conference "Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice" (29 September), with partners including the Regional Chamber of Commerce, Fundusz Górnośląski, Pro Silesia and the Silesian Employers' Association Lewiatan;
  - a conference on the role of tax administration in a modern state (23 October);
  - the congress "AI: Business and Medicine of the Future" (27 November).
- **As content partner:** the European SME Congress in Katowice (27–28 October), on developing small and medium-sized enterprises in an economy shaped by new technologies.
- **At the European Economic Congress** in Katowice (23–25 April 2025): WSBU was represented by the Rector and the Vice-Rector for Student Affairs and External Relations. The congress gathered more than 18,000 participants and 1,300 speakers.

In recognition of this engagement, the Tychy Chamber of Industry and Commerce awarded WSBU the title "Integrator Roku 2025". The award goes to institutions that genuinely strengthen the potential of the city and its community. Receiving it, the Rector emphasized that the University's strength lies in cooperation with entrepreneurs, local government and social partners, and in shared responsibility for the development of the region.

## WSBU as a responsible employer

With about 1,100 employees, WSBU is a significant employer in Dąbrowa Górnicza and the region. Its employment practice rests on several commitments.

### Fair and equal treatment

- **HR Excellence in Research:** awarded by the European Commission, it commits WSBU to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment. These include open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, fair working conditions and career development.
- **Anti-bullying and anti-discrimination:** the policy introduced by Rector's Order No. 61/2017/2018 is overseen by a standing Anti-Mobbing and Anti-Discrimination Committee.
- **Ethics and complaints:** codes of ethics for employees and students, and a register-based complaints procedure supervised by the Rector, ensure that concerns are addressed.
- **Gender balance:** women make up about 64% of employees and almost 64% of vice-deans and unit coordinators.

### Work-life balance

WSBU supports staff in combining work and family life through:

- parental leave;
- care support for staff with dependents;
- flexible working hours;
- structured onboarding for employees returning after long absences.

### Professional development

- **Teaching Excellence** (European Funds for Social Development, PLN 3.4 million, 2024–2027) offers every participating academic teacher training in learning design and in green and digital competences. It also funds conferences, study visits to Nottingham Trent University, Politecnico di Milano and CERN, and courses in innovative teaching methods.
- **Simulation instructor course:** on 28–29 April 2025 the Medical Simulation Centre trained staff as high-fidelity simulation instructors.
- **Recognition of staff:** on 30 October 2025 WSBU staff received Medals of the Commission of National Education at the Silesian Philharmonic in Katowice.

### Safe workplaces

The postgraduate programme Occupational Health and Safety Management – Green Competences trains specialists who create safe workplaces in the region. In the 2025/26 academic year WSBU concluded a cooperation agreement with the Katowice branch of the National Association of Occupational Health and Safety Workers, covering education, research and the development of OHS specialists.

### Economic impact certified

WSBU holds the EFMD BSIS Impact certificate, as the fourth university in Poland. The assessment examined more than 120 indicators of the University's impact, including its financial contribution to the regional economy and the employment of its graduates.

## Continuing activities in 2026

- **Science4Business:** the consortium moves from mapping research potential to selecting and developing the WSBU projects with the highest commercialization potential.
- **Academic start-ups:** cooperation with the Silesian Development Fund on support for academic start-ups begins under the letter of intent signed in the 2025/26 academic year.
- **Just Transition Fund projects:** the two projects for the green and digital economy conclude in June 2026, delivering new laboratories, curricula and career services.
- **New employer partnerships:** agreements with Johnson Matthey, ASTOR, the Silesian Logistics Centre, Fundusz Górnośląski and the Olkusz water utility open new internship and research opportunities.
- **Digital and transversal skills:** SkillsUP develops open online courses until 2029.
- **Retention and employability:** EduConnect supports students who combine study with work, through flexible Hy-Flex learning and digital services.