جامعة بيروت العربية
BEIRUT ARAB UNIVERSITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS







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Beirut Arab University
SDG 15 Life on Land

University and Community Alignment Report | Lebanon

Evidence review updated 19 October 2026

Understanding the goal

SDG 15 seeks to protect terrestrial ecosystems, conserve biodiversity, restore degraded land and support sustainable use of natural resources. It includes forests, mountain ecosystems and the knowledge needed for conservation. Universities contribute through campus stewardship, ecological research, professional education and cooperation with communities whose livelihoods and traditions are connected with land.

Evidence: United Nations SDG 15 targets

BAU's contribution

BAU's Research Center for Environment and Development, herbal garden, plant research and community activities provide relevant evidence. Recent publications connect biodiversity with traditional knowledge and examine practical afforestation methods. Students gain field and analytical experience, researchers develop conservation knowledge, and technical and grounds staff support the living resources used for education and research.

Relevant UN targets	Focus of this report
15.1 and 15.4	Terrestrial and mountain ecosystems
15.2 and 15.5	Restoration and biodiversity conservation
15.9	Ecological knowledge in planning and decisions

Students staff and community

Students learn field methods and contribute to supervised environmental activity. Researchers connect ecology with community knowledge and restoration questions. Technical and grounds employees care for living resources and sites. Conservation organisations and local contributors help define needs, interpret findings and maintain continuity beyond a single activity.

Evidence approach: dated activities and research from 2021–2026 are prioritised. Standing services are identified as such; policies and agreements have no date cutoff. Original links accompany the evidence. The final page proposes improvements and does not claim they are already implemented.

Institutional resources for terrestrial ecology

An environment and development research centre

BAU's Research Center for Environment and Development describes an interdisciplinary mission connecting environmental research with development and community engagement. It provides an institutional setting for studying the relationship between natural resources and human activity. Its value should be demonstrated through specific projects, publications and partnerships.

Evidence: BAU RCED mission and research areas

The herbal garden as a living resource

RCED's project directory describes an 11,000-square-metre herbal garden for Lebanese medicinal and aromatic plants. This is a standing resource for conservation, research and learning. The same directory includes future-tense objectives for other agricultural activities, so those objectives should not be counted as completed production or installed capacity.

Evidence: BAU RCED project and herbal garden directory

A living collection needs identification, records, suitable growing conditions and continuing care. Academic staff can connect plants with teaching and research questions, technicians can support documentation and students can learn observation and responsible handling. Grounds and administrative employees help maintain continuity beyond the timetable of a particular class.

Conservation includes responsible use of knowledge

Medicinal and aromatic plants have ecological, cultural and potential economic value. Teaching should distinguish knowledge of traditional use from established evidence of clinical safety or effectiveness. Conservation also requires attention to how plants are collected and whether increased interest could place pressure on wild populations.

The centre and garden provide a basis for locally relevant education. Community contributors can help explain practices and changes they observe, while researchers can help test ecological questions. Clear permissions, appropriate credit and accessible findings support a respectful relationship between scientific work and community knowledge.

Biodiversity and community knowledge in recent research

Mount Hermon and biocultural conservation

A BAU-affiliated study published in April 2024 examined community values, rules and traditional ecological knowledge around Mount Hermon. It used interviews with 126 local informants during 2022–2023. The findings support attention to social and ecological relationships in conservation planning, rather than treating the mountain only as a physical inventory of species.

Evidence: BAU Mount Hermon biodiversity assessment published 2024

Conservation decisions affect how people use land and understand their place within it. Community values can influence whether a measure is accepted and maintained. Research can make these relationships visible while recognising that participants may hold different views and that a consultation is not the same as an agreed management plan.

Recording medicinal plant knowledge

The December 2022 ethnobotanical survey of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, with BAU participation, documented medicinal plants and associated knowledge through interviews and field engagement. It recorded 184 species across 22 villages. The authors call for conservation and further safety and efficacy research, so traditional use should not be presented as proof of medical effectiveness.

Evidence: BAU medicinal plant knowledge survey published 2022

Wild food plants and living traditions

BAU-led research published online in January 2023 examined wild leafy vegetables and traditional food knowledge. It links local plant diversity with food practices and the continuity of community knowledge. Its relevance includes conservation and cultural understanding, not simply the promotion of harvesting.

Evidence: BAU led wild leafy vegetables and traditional food study

Students can learn from these studies how to combine careful documentation with respect for contributors. Academic staff can help explain sampling and interpretation, while community partners can identify which outputs are useful. Maintaining records in an appropriate form can support future research without detaching knowledge from the people and places that give it meaning.

Restoration research and community participation

Experimental evidence for afforestation

BAU researchers and AFDC published Chmistar afforestation trials in June 2026, drawing on fieldwork from 2022–2024. They compared planting and vegetation-control methods for three native broadleaf species. Mulching gave stronger establishment in the studied conditions, while species and site differences affected outcomes. The work supports site-adapted restoration rather than a universal planting prescription.

Evidence: BAU and AFDC afforestation trials published June 2026

Restoration requires survival and ecological function over time, not only the number planted on one day. Water availability, competing vegetation and maintenance can determine whether seedlings establish. These findings offer practical questions for student field learning and cooperation with organisations responsible for land management.

Student work in an urban green space

On 27 April 2024, BAU ASCE students participated with SWIM and Lebanon Reforestation Initiative partners in work at Horsh Beirut. The event connects volunteering with care for a shared green space. Its documented contribution is the activity undertaken, rather than a verified long-term restoration area or biodiversity increase.

Evidence: BAU ASCE community park restoration April 2024

A symbolic planting and environmental heritage

BAU's Mass Communication Department organised a cedar-tree planting in April 2025 involving university leadership and the Minister of Agriculture. It is a documented educational and symbolic activity. A single ceremonial tree should not be presented as a quantified forest-restoration or carbon-offset programme.

Evidence: BAU cedar planting April 2025

Agricultural research and ecological caution

BAU and LARI research published in 2025 tested plant extracts against root-knot nematodes in laboratory and greenhouse settings. It explores a possible agricultural alternative. Field effectiveness, non-target effects and safe use require further evaluation before broader environmental benefits can be claimed.

Evidence: BAU affiliated plant based agricultural research published 2025

The combination of research and participation gives BAU several ways to support terrestrial ecosystems. The next step is to follow activities over time and connect them with the conditions and management needs of each site.

Priorities for strengthening the contribution to SDG 15

BAU has a substantial knowledge base in plants, community ecology and restoration. The following recommendations would strengthen campus stewardship and make the practical conservation value of research and engagement easier to assess.

Document living resources and follow restoration outcomes

A campus biodiversity and planting record could identify important habitats, native species, maintenance needs and potential threats. Planting projects should include a plan for establishment and follow-up, with survival and condition recorded at suitable intervals. Grounds staff and external partners should help design measures that can be maintained with available resources.

Priority	Suggested evidence of progress
Campus stewardship	Habitat records and maintained living collections
Restoration	Survival, condition and site-specific learning
Community knowledge	Consent, credit and accessible records
Research use	Partner decisions informed by findings

Connect research with practical management questions

Research briefs could explain which findings apply to which species, sites and conditions. Conservation partners could help identify the next questions to test. Students could participate through supervised field projects that combine ecological methods with reflection on land use and community priorities.

Where traditional knowledge is documented, BAU could agree how records will be used and how contributors will be acknowledged. Educational activity should explain sustainable collection and avoid implying that every plant-based use is safe. The value of a living collection includes careful interpretation as well as the plants themselves.

BAU’s contribution to Life on Land combines ecological science with an understanding of people’s relationships with natural resources. Continuing site records, responsible knowledge sharing and evidence of research use would strengthen the contribution to conservation within the university and the surrounding community.