



ROMBLON STATE UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE

3/F Administration Building, RSU-Main Campus, Liwanag, Odiongan, Romblon 5505
 Email: iro@rsu.edu.ph
 Website: rsu.edu.ph



Management System
 ISO 9001:2015



www.tuv.com
 ID 9000018803

RSU Vision

A research-based academic institution committed to excellence and service in nurturing globally competitive workforce towards sustainable development.

RSU Mission

Romblon State University shall nurture an academic environment that provides advanced education, higher technological and professional instruction and technical expertise in agriculture and fisheries, forestry, engineering and technology, education, humanities, sciences and other relevant fields of study and collaborate with other institutions and communities through responsive, relevant and research-based extension services.

RSU Quality Policy

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RSU Core Values

- Stewardship
- Competence
- Resilience
- Integrity
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- Excellence
- Service

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RSU MILES: MOBILITY-BASED INITIATIVES FOR LOW-CARBON ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

An Institutional Carbon Offsetting and Climate Accountability Program of Romblon State University

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Travel is a critical enabler of higher education functions, including faculty development, student mobility, research collaboration, extension services, and international partnerships. These activities strengthen institutional capacity, promote knowledge exchange, and enhance global engagement by exposing students and faculty to diverse academic, cultural, and professional environments. As universities increasingly pursue internationalization and mobility-based programs, travel has become an essential component of academic excellence and global competitiveness. However, travel, particularly air travel and long-distance transportation, also generates significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute directly to climate change (IATA, 2023).

Aviation emissions are especially impactful because they release not only carbon dioxide (CO₂) but also non-CO₂ pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and water vapor at high altitudes, which further intensify their climate footprint (Terrapass, 2022; D-Carbonize, 2023). Studies show that a single long-haul international flight can produce carbon emissions comparable to an individual's annual ground transportation footprint. As higher education institutions expand international programs, faculty exchanges, conferences, and study abroad opportunities, the cumulative environmental impact of academic mobility becomes an institutional responsibility that can no longer be overlooked (David Suzuki Foundation, 2021).

Carbon offsetting is widely recognized as a complementary climate mitigation strategy for emissions that cannot be immediately reduced. It allows institutions to take responsibility for unavoidable emissions by supporting actions that reduce or remove an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases elsewhere, such as tree planting, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity conservation (MIT Climate Portal, 2022). Importantly, higher education sustainability frameworks emphasize that carbon offsetting is most effective when it is integrated into learning and community engagement rather than treated solely as a financial transaction (AASHE, 2023).

International university practices demonstrate that embedding sustainability into mobility programs transforms travel-related emissions into opportunities for experiential learning, ecoliteracy development, and civic engagement. Case studies from study abroad programs show that involving students and faculty directly in reforestation, rewilding, and environmental stewardship strengthens climate awareness, reinforces environmental ethics, and builds long-term sustainability commitments (Rewilding Europe, 2021). These approaches affirm that sustainability and internationalization are not competing priorities but complementary pillars of responsible higher education.

In response to these global practices and the growing urgency of climate action, Romblon State University proposes the institutionalization of RSU MILES (Mobility-Based Initiatives for Low-Carbon Engagement and Sustainability). RSU MILES embeds climate accountability directly into faculty and student mobility systems by integrating sustainability orientation, action-based carbon offsetting, and community-based environmental initiatives into travel-related academic activities. Through this program, RSU ensures that internationalization, academic exchange, and sustainability



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goals advance together in a measurable, responsible, and socially responsive manner, transforming academic mobility from climate cost into a meaningful contribution to environmental stewardship, community development, and long-term sustainability.

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

RSU MILES is a university-wide initiative that measures, documents, and offsets carbon emissions generated from local and international travel undertaken by faculty, students, staff, and partners.

The program adopts an **action-based offsetting approach**, emphasizing:

- Education and climate literacy
- Digital environmental advocacy
- SDG-aligned campaigns and knowledge sharing
- Ecosystem and community sustainability support

Rather than relying solely on financial carbon credits, RSU's model transforms travel emissions into learning-centered and community-responsive climate actions, consistent with its mandate as a public state university.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program aims to:

1. Measure carbon emissions from local and international faculty and student travel using accepted accounting principles;
2. Embed carbon responsibility in faculty and student mobility processes; and
3. Convert travel emissions into verifiable SDG-aligned sustainability actions.

IV. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

The program applies to:

- Official local travel (region, or country)
- International travel for exchanges, training, conferences, and partnerships
- Faculty mobility programs
- Student mobility, internships, and exchanges

V. CARBON EMISSIONS MEASUREMENT

Participants are required to submit:

- Travel itinerary (origin, destination, round-trip/one-way)
- Mode(s) of transport
- Travel class (for flights)

Carbon emissions are estimated using recognized travel-emissions methodologies consistent with international guidance (IATA; Terrapass; D-Carbonize). Computations are consolidated by the RSU SDG Center.



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Sample Carbon Footprint Calculator

The screenshot displays the footprintr.me website interface. It features a navigation bar with icons for home, car, bus, train, ferry, and other transport modes. The main section is titled 'On the ground - Public transport' and includes a text box: 'Unless you just would like to calculate the footprint of a single trip, please enter your complete annual mileage for each type of transport.' Below this, there are three input rows: 'Bus/Coach' with 'Average local bus' selected and '5' entered; 'Train' with 'National rail' selected and 'Distance (miles)' entered; and 'Ferry' with 'Car passenger' selected and '100' entered. A 'Calculate' button is highlighted with a red box. To the right, a 'Your Carbon Footprint' summary shows: 27 kgCO₂ (£0.68), 898 kgCO₂ (£22.45), and a total of 925 kgCO₂ (£23.13). A 'Contribute Now' button is also present. The footer includes 'About footprintr.me', 'Privacy', 'Terms & Conditions', and '© 2026 Climate Stewards All rights reserved'.

Source: footprintr.me. <https://footprintr.me/>

VI. CARBON EMISSIONS BRACKETING SYSTEM

To ensure fairness, transparency, and proportional responsibility, computed emissions are classified into **carbon brackets**, which determine the required level of sustainability counterpart action.

Carbon Emissions Brackets

Bracket	Estimated Emissions (kg CO ₂ e)	Travel Profile	Offset Responsibility Level
Bracket A – Low	0–150 kg	Short local travel, ground transport	Low
Bracket B – Moderate	151–500 kg	Extended local or short-haul flights	Moderate
Bracket C – High	501–1,200 kg	Long-haul domestic or regional flights	High
Bracket D – Very High	Above 1,200 kg	International long-haul travel	Very High



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VII. CORRESPONDING SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS

Each bracket corresponds to a **minimum level of counterpart action**. Participants may exceed the requirement or combine actions, subject to SDG Center approval.

BRACKET A – LOW EMISSIONS

(Awareness and individual responsibility)

- Create at least one (1) digital environmental advocacy post (poster, infographic, short video)
- Submit a personal climate pledge and short action plan
- Complete one (1) short online SDG or climate micro-course

1. Digital Environmental Advocacy

Example:

Create one infographic or short reel explaining “*How my local/international travel impacts climate change*” and post it on Facebook or LinkedIn with SDG 13 hashtags.

2. Climate Pledge and Action Plan

Example:

Submit a one-page pledge committing to actions such as using public transport, reducing single-use plastics, and choosing virtual meetings when possible.

3. Online SDG or Climate Micro-Course

Example:

Complete a 1–2-hour online course or webinar on climate change or SDGs and submit a screenshot of the certificate with a short reflection.

BRACKET B – MODERATE EMISSIONS

(Engagement and light community participation)

- Attend or assist in one (1) online SDG or climate webinar
- Develop simple sustainability materials (poster, slide deck, or short article)
- Participate in one (1) community clean-and-green or gardening activity

1. Online SDG or Climate Webinar

Example:

Attend a Zoom webinar on climate action, sustainability, or SDGs and submit the attendance certificate or screenshot.

2. Sustainability Material Development

Example:

Create a simple poster or slide deck on waste segregation, energy saving, or SDG awareness and share it with a class, office, or online group.

3. Community Clean-and-Green Or Gardening Activity



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Example:

Join a half-day barangay clean-up or help plant vegetables in a community or campus garden and submit photos as documentation.

BRACKET C – HIGH EMISSIONS

(Direct environmental or academic contribution)

- Join one (1) organized coastal, river, or roadside clean-up
- Conduct or assist in one (1) online climate or SDG orientation session
- Provide documentation or data support for an SDG or sustainability activity

1. Coastal, River, or Roadside Clean-Up

Example:

Participate in a coastal or river clean-up organized by RSU or an LGU and submit photos and a short activity summary.

2. Online Climate or SDG Orientation Session

Example:

Facilitate a 30–60-minute online orientation for students or staff on SDGs, climate action, or sustainable travel practices.

3. SDG Documentation or Data Support

Example:

Assist the SDG Center in encoding activity data, preparing photo documentation, or summarizing sustainability outputs for reports.

BRACKET D – VERY HIGH EMISSIONS

(Leadership and long-term impact)

- Participate in tree planting or tree-growing activities (with basic monitoring)
- Serve as an RSU Climate or SDG Ambassador (semester-based or project-based)
- Lead or coordinate one (1) sustainability or community service initiative

1. Tree Planting or Tree Growing

Example:

Join a tree planting activity and commit to monitoring or caring for planted trees for at least one semester, with photo updates.

2. RSU Climate or SDG Ambassador Role

Example:

Serve as a Climate or SDG Ambassador by leading at least two sustainability-related activities or campaigns during the semester.

3. Sustainability or Community Service Leadership



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Example:

Organize and lead a small sustainability project such as a combined tree planting and clean-up activity in partnership with a barangay or school.

VII. INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ROLES

Effective implementation of RSU MILES relies on coordinated action among university units and external partners. The following offices and stakeholders play defined roles to ensure accountability, sustainability impact, and community relevance.

A. RSU SDG Center

- Leads overall program design, policy alignment, and implementation oversight
- Conducts carbon emissions computation, verification, and offset validation
- Maintains the RSU MILES Carbon Offset Registry

B. Office of the President

- Provides institutional oversight and policy support for the implementation of RSU MILES
- Furnishes the RSU SDG Center with the **official list of approved faculty, staff, and student travels**, including travel authority details and names of travelers, to support systematic monitoring and carbon accounting
- Supports cross-unit coordination to ensure alignment of mobility approvals with sustainability and climate accountability requirement.

C. Faculty Mobility Unit (FMU)

- Integrates RSU MILES requirements into faculty exchange, training, conference, and mobility programs
- Ensures faculty compliance with carbon offsetting requirements as part of re-entry and terminal reporting
- Supports faculty orientation, documentation, and reporting related to carbon accountability

D. Student Mobility Unit (SMU)

- Integrates RSU MILES into student exchanges, internships, international programs, and local mobility activities
- Ensures student compliance with sustainability requirements in re-entry plans and terminal reports
- Supports student orientation, documentation, and reflection activities related to climate and SDG learning

E. Student Development and Services Office (SDSO)

- Oversees and endorses student-related travels, activities, and programs outside Romblon, ensuring alignment with RSU policies and sustainability commitments
- Integrates RSU MILES requirements into student travel approvals, off-campus activities, competitions, and representational engagements
- Coordinates with the Student Mobility Unit (SMU) to ensure carbon accountability, documentation, and compliance for outbound student travel.
- Supports student briefing, welfare monitoring, and post-travel reporting with emphasis on climate responsibility and SDG learning outcomes



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F. Human Resource Management and Development Office

- Integrates RSU MILES sustainability and carbon accountability requirements into faculty scholarship-related travel, training, and mobility approvals
- Ensures scholar compliance with carbon offsetting, documentation, and reporting requirements as part of travel clearance, re-entry, and terminal reporting
- Coordinates with the Faculty Mobility Unit and RSU SDG Center in monitoring emissions and sustainability compliance arising from scholarship-funded mobility

G. Special Projects and Advocacy Office

- Leads digital and on-ground environmental advocacy campaigns aligned with RSU MILES
- Supports the development of SDG-aligned information materials, infographics, and awareness content
- Coordinates university-wide climate action and sustainability advocacy initiatives linked to mobility programs

H. Volunteerism Unit

- Mobilizes faculty, students, and staff for approved sustainability and community-based offset activities
- Coordinates participation in tree planting, coastal clean-ups, community gardening, and environmental drives
- Maintains records of volunteer participation and outputs for reporting and recognition

I. Local Government Units (LGUs)

- Serve as primary local partners for sustainability and environmental offset activities
- Provide coordination, permits, technical support, and site access for community-based initiatives
- Align RSU MILES activities with local development plans, climate action programs, and environmental policies

J. Barangays and Community Partners

- Act as host communities for RSU MILES sustainability and offset activities
- Participate in tree growing, coastal protection, clean-and-green programs, and community gardens
- Support monitoring, maintenance, and long-term stewardship of implemented environmental projects

VIII. INTEGRATION INTO MOBILITY LIFECYCLE

1. Departure Orientation (Mandatory Discussion)

The RSU MILES Carbon Offsetting Program shall be:

- Introduced and explained during Faculty and Student Departure Orientations, coordinated by the Faculty Mobility Unit (FMU), Student Mobility Unit (SMU), Student Development and Services Office (SDSO), and Human Resource Management Office (HRMO)
- Framed as part of RSU's responsibility-based and sustainability-driven internationalization approach
- Linked explicitly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate action commitments, and RSU's institutional values



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During the orientation, participants are informed of:

- Their estimated carbon footprint, computed based on travel type, distance, and destination, with the RSU SDG Center providing the methodology, tools, and technical assistance for computation
- Carbon offset options, approved sustainability activities, and individual responsibilities, as explained and validated by the RSU SDG Center in coordination with concerned mobility units

2. Mobility Phase

During the actual mobility period, participants are encouraged to:

- Document sustainability and SDG-related learnings, observations, and best practices
- Participate in approved carbon offset and environmental activities, either online during mobility or on-ground post-travel, coordinated with the Volunteerism Unit and local partners
- Reflect on the relationship between mobility, climate impact, global citizenship, and institutional responsibility, to be included in terminal and re-entry reports

Role Clarification During Mobility:

- **HRMDO** – Monitors faculty mobility compliance and aligns sustainability requirements with official travel and HR documentation
- **SDSO** – Oversees student welfare, compliance, and sustainability accountability for student travel outside Romblon, in coordination with Student Mobility Unit.
- **RSU SDG Center** – Provides technical guidance, monitoring standards, and validation of sustainability reporting and offset commitments

3. Re-Entry, Quarter-Based Compliance, and Validation

- Faculty and students who undertook official local or international travel outside are required to complete the corresponding sustainability or environmental advocacy actions within the same academic quarter following their return.
- All RSU MILES sustainability actions shall be implemented, documented, and validated within the same quarter following the participant's return
- Participates in faculty and student post-mobility debriefings, in coordination with FMU and SMU, to explain assigned carbon brackets, required sustainability actions, and quarter-based compliance and validation processes
- Non-compliance within the designated quarter shall be addressed through follow-up assistance and guidance from the RSU SDG Center and concerned offices to support timely completion
- Validated outputs shall be recorded in the RSU MILES Carbon Offset Registry and Quarterly Sustainability Summary.

IX. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Institutionalized carbon accountability in mobility programs
- Increased sustainability awareness and active participation among mobile faculty and students
- Documented SDG-aligned outputs from travel
- Stronger internationalization-sustainability integration
- Enhanced RSU reputation as a climate-responsive university



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