



ARC9 Report Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs

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Note

This report was produced in the framework of the 9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC9). Any views and opinions expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) or the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

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Foreword

The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation which connects the people of Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. ASEF is the sole permanent institution of the **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**, a political dialogue process between 51 countries, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Education is one of ASEF's key thematic areas. In this field, we connect youth, educators and higher education leaders with policymakers across both regions. We encourage collaboration to find innovative and sustainable solutions for common global challenges in several ways:

- Facilitating **policy dialogues** among young people, academics and policymakers;
- Organising workshops and **capacity building trainings**;
- Providing **input to policymaker's** discussions through research;
- **Partnering** with regional organisations and network to enhance action.

Our flagship project series in education, the **ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC)**, is the **Official Dialogue Partner** of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME). It is a biannual project, that contributes with various outputs – research, policy dialogues and events - to the ASEM Education process, and creates opportunities for key Asian and European stakeholders to connect.

Even though earlier editions of the ARC project series were already discussing several aspects of sustainable development in higher education, **we decided to focus the 9th edition of ARC on the big picture and map the national policies and university practices** contributing to sustainable development in Asia and Europe. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are addressing the SDGs across their core missions in impactful ways, making them a key partner of governments in working towards the SDGs. Despite this, **little is known about the policy-practice interface**, especially how national higher education policies contribute to sustainable development by encouraging, mandating, or providing resources to HEIs to link their core functions to the SDGs. **To address this gap**, we present this report with two key part: Part (1) is mapping the higher education policies and Part (2) is mapping higher education practices advancing sustainable development in ASEM partner countries.

I am **grateful** for the participation of **education policymakers** from 31 ASEM partner countries and **university representatives** from 42 countries in this work, whose knowledge and wisdom is captured in this report. My sincere gratitude goes to the accomplished **researchers** who worked tirelessly to present this first of its kind study, and to the **members of the Advisory Group** for their invaluable insights. I would like to thank my colleagues in ASEF's Education Department for their strong commitment to realise this project.

I hope that the ARC9 Report will be an inspiration for policymakers and practitioners, and serve as a good basis for policy discussions and exchanges at the regional, national, and institutional level.



Ambassador Toru Morikawa
ASEF Executive Director

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This Report was made possible thanks to the support and advice of many individuals and organisations. ASEF would like to thank everyone who contributed to this endeavour.

First and foremost, ASEF is immensely grateful to the dedication and commitment of the **ARC9 Report authors and researchers**, who were tirelessly working on this report, and showcased preliminary findings at multiple international forums and incorporated invaluable feedback. They made a perfect team, bringing a range of diverse knowledge and experience from across Asia and Europe to the table:

- Dr Miguel Antonio LIM, University of Manchester, UK
- Dr Icy Fresno ANABO, University of Desuto, Spain
- Dr Anumoni JOSHI, RMIT University, Australia
- Dr Doria ABDULLAH, University Teknologi Malaysia

We would like to sincerely thank every single member of the ARC9 Advisory Group for their support, providing valuable insights and asking critical questions, thereby collectively shaping & developing the content of this Report. The **ARC9 Advisory Group members** are, in alphabetical order by first name:

- Dr Azirah HASHIM, Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya
- Dr Bruce WILSON, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
- Dr Hilligje VAN'T LAND, International Association of Universities (IAU)
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- Dr Wesley TETER, UNESCO Bangkok

We are truly thankful to the **International Association of Universities (IAU)**, for partnering ASEF on the 3rd Higher Education for Sustainable Development (HESD) survey and sharing data with us on the university practices, that form the second part of this report.

Special thanks go to **each policymaker** who found the time in their busy schedule to contributed to the survey and made themselves available for a discussion on the topic. Our sincere thanks go to **each university representative**, who filled up the HESD survey and thereby also contribute to our report.

Last but not the least, special thanks to the **ASEF Education Team** who conceptualised the ARC9 Report and coordinated the overall data collection and drafting process: Ms Reka TOZSA, Director of the Education Department; Mr Miguel PANGALANGAN, Project Executive; Ms Freya CHOW-PAUL for proofreading, and Ms Angie TOH for the layout of this report.

List of Acronyms

AEP	ASEM Education Process
ARC9	The 9 th edition of the ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEMME	Asia-Europe Meeting Education Ministers' Meeting
EfS	Education for Sustainability
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education institutions
HESD	Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development
IAU	International Association of Universities
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NGOs	Non-profit Organisations
QAC	Quality Assurance Cell
SD	Sustainable development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics
UN	United Nations
VNR	Voluntary National Reports
WIA	Whole of Institution Approach
WHEC	World Higher Education Conference

Introduction to the ARC9 Project

The **ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC)**, is the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME), and the only bi-regional multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for university and student leaders, policy makers and ministers to discuss higher education issues and shape the education landscape in Asia and Europe.

For the past 10 years, ARC has continuously evolved and contributed with various outputs (policy recommendations, research, and events) to the **ASEM Education Process (AEP)** and created opportunities for key Asian and European stakeholders to connect. ARC's role as a valuable dialogue partner has been reiterated at all ASEMMEs, and its outcomes and outputs helped to sustain a dynamic ASEM Education Process. Take a look at the past editions [here](#).

In December 2021 the ASEM Education Ministers “underlined the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on SDG4 and agreed that the ASEM Education Process can contribute to realising the SDGs”¹ and adopted “sustainable development” as a horizontal priority of the ASEM Education Process.

In May 2022 at the World Higher Education Conference (WHEC) UNESCO presented a Roadmap titled “Beyond Limits – New Ways to Reinvent Higher Education”², which encourages higher education systems to build bridges and promote partnerships that put sustainability at the core.

It was in accordance with this international context, that the **9th edition of ARC** was initiated with the objective of better understanding the current state, policies and practices of promoting sustainable development in higher education and identifying areas where stakeholders could work better together.

Even though Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are not directly addressed by the SDGs - as they are directed towards governments -, universities all over the world engage with the SDGs and contribute to their achievement, making them a key partner of governments in this effort.

Despite this, little is known about the policy-practice interface, especially how national higher education policies contribute to sustainable development by encouraging, mandating, or providing resources to HEIs to link their core functions to the SDGs.

To address this gap, ASEF decided to focus the ARC9 project on the topic of ‘Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs’. ARC9 is a biennial project:

- The first year the project (2022) was focused on **drafting a report**, gathering evidence and mapping out higher education policies and practices advancing sustainable development in ASEM partner countries; while
- In the second year (2023) ASEF will engage a diverse group of stakeholders through a **series of policy dialogues**, leading to a better understanding of how higher education policy and practice may be aligned across various levels and geographies to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

¹ 8th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME8). Conclusions by the Chair. https://asem-education.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Conclusions-by-the-Chair_ASEMME8_Final_Version.pdf

² UNESCO, May 2022. <https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2022/05/20/whec2022-set-a-roadmap-for-higher-education-for-the-next-decade/>

This report is the result of the first year of the ARC9 project, and consists of two major parts:

Mapping Higher Education Policymaker Perspectives

This study maps higher education policies advancing sustainable development across Asia and Europe. Covering 31 national contexts in Asia and Europe, the study combines data from a survey, focus group discussions, and a review of secondary sources to glean patterns in how governments are encouraging HEIs to contribute to the SDGs, provide concrete examples of enabling measures, and identify opportunities that may be leveraged to strengthen the HE policy-practice interface towards the SDGs.

Mapping Higher Education Institution Perspectives

This study showcases developments regarding sustainable development in the higher education sector from the perspective of higher education institutions. The study was conducted in partnership with the International Association of Universities (IAU). Data from the third iteration of IAU's Global Survey on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD) specifically for the purview of ASEF was analysed to investigate the scope, depth and breadth of engagement of HEIs with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study maps 240 institutional responses from 42 countries in Asia and Europe.

This Report is dedicated to education policymakers, higher education experts and students, to discuss the findings and engage in dialogue with each other, exchange ideas and good practices, and thrive to find potential areas for collaboration on sustainable development between Asia and Europe.

Executive Summary

The 9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education ([ARC9](#)) is a biennial project that runs from 2022 to 2023 and aims to showcase developments regarding sustainable development in the higher education sector.

The first year of ARC9 (2022) focused on gathering evidence and mapping out higher education policies in the [ASEM Partner Countries](#), with the objective of developing insights and recommendations that would inform policy discourses and high-level meetings, to be conducted throughout the second year of ARC9 (2023).

Towards this aim, two research projects were carried out. **The first research study** looked at sustainable development policies at the national level, where representatives from government and government agencies in charge of higher education shared approaches on sustainable development action in their countries. **The second research study** looked at sustainable development practices at the institutional level, where representatives from higher education institutions reported their institutional approaches to sustainable development action.

This publication reports findings for the two research studies in a combined form.

Part 1 | Higher Education Policymaker Perspectives

This study combines data from a survey, focus group discussions, and a review of secondary sources to glean patterns in how governments are encouraging HEIs to contribute to the SDGs, provide concrete examples of enabling measures, and identify opportunities that may be leveraged to strengthen the HE policy-practice interface towards the SDGs. A total of 31 ASEM partner countries were involved in this study.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- To what extent are ASEM national higher education policies oriented towards the SDGs?
- How do ASEM higher education policies translate the global goals into local goals?
- Which mission of the universities are the most often targeted?
- What kind of policy tools are most often used to promote sustainable development in higher education?

It was found that ASEM countries have drafted **national strategies and implementation plans** that either directly respond to the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs or touch upon some features of sustainable development. They employ a **variety of policy tools** to strengthen and promote the contribution of higher education towards sustainable development. Respondents believed that **governments should be leading the implementation of SDGs** in higher education through strategy development, enforcement of regulations, and the provision of funding for sustainable development initiatives conducted at higher education institutions.

Policymakers **engaged stakeholders** in sustainable development policymaking through multi-stakeholder consultations, review of national plans, mainstreaming of the SDGs into new or existing strategies, reporting and follow-up. Financial incentives are the most commonly used **policy tool**, followed by authority tools such as accreditation requirements and symbolic tools such as the existence of national plans and strategies related to the SDGs. Other types of **policy measures** also emerged, including sustainability-focused national awards, increased spending targets for research, tuition fund coverage, accreditation requirements, performance agreements between

governments and HEIs, quality assurance frameworks, network building, and informational support through online resources on sustainable development.

A **gap was identified** in terms of assessment of **interlinkages, synergies, tradeoffs, monitoring arrangements** and follow-up between sustainable development action at the national level, and what is currently happening at the institutional level. Even though higher education institutions are seen as playing a fundamental role in contributing to the SDGs through education and teaching, research, campus operations and governance, as well as partnerships and societal engagement, they were less involved in the later steps of the policy process, particularly in terms of monitoring and follow-up of the sustainable development policies.

Education and training are the **most often targeted mission** across all the policy tools, followed by research and campus operations and governance. The top SDGs prioritised by the sampled ASEM partner countries are SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Meanwhile, partnerships and societal engagement turned out to be the least targeted, which may be explained by either a high level of organic network building among the higher education institutions themselves or a lower policy priority ascribed to this mission in relation to others. It is argued that partnerships and societal engagement are key to the successful implementation of the SDGs, and it remains to be seen how policy makers are able to incentivise and support this mission through policy interventions.

The study provides **five policy recommendations for national policymakers:**



Recommendation #1

Develop **closer collaborations between policy makers and higher education institutions** for evidence-based policy making.



Recommendation #2

Extend vision statements and **strategic plans to include concrete implementation steps**, indicators of progress, and clear responsibilities.



Recommendation #3

Enhance **the participation of local stakeholder groups**, including local government bodies, NGOs, and industry players, in SDG-relevant policy making in higher education.



Recommendation #4

Provide **more targeted policy support to encourage partnerships** and societal engagement among higher education institutions.



Recommendation #5

Fund and **support further studies** examining the achievements of policy interventions in supporting SDG implementation in HE as well as their challenges.

Part 2 | Higher Education Institution Perspectives

This study was conducted in partnership with the International Association of Universities (IAU). Data from the third iteration of IAU Global Survey on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD) specific for ASEM partner countries was analysed to investigate the scope,

depth and breadth of engagement of higher education institutions with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This study addressed the following research questions:

- Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015, how do higher education institutions (HEIs) across ASEM member states engage with the global agenda?
- What are the differences in sustainable development (SD) practices conducted by the higher education institutions in Asia and Europe?
- Are there challenges about SD implementation that are unique to HEIs from ASEM member states?
- What are the interventions required by HEIs from ASEM member states in accelerating their pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs?

A total of 240 respondents from 42 ASEM partner countries are featured in the study. Out of this figure, 119 (49.6%) respondents are from Asia, representing 17 countries, and 121 (50.4%) respondents are from Europe, representing 25 countries.

Respondents from both regions believed that **sustainable development encompasses an integrated understanding** of economic, environmental, and social/cultural based perspectives. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs increased interest in sustainable development to a great extent, and the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted institutional activities for sustainable development. At the institutional level, **sustainable development is managed** at leadership level, by a sustainability office or sustainable development department, and faculty or department level. There is a specific institutional **budget for sustainability**, and the budget has increased over the past 5 years. **Academic staff and students are most involved** in sustainable development action. Institutions use external rankings, reporting to leadership, and working groups to **monitor and evaluate** sustainable development action. They also **partner** with other stakeholders (public, private, other HEIs, schools, NGOs, and community organisations) across all local, national, regional, global levels.

There are **regional differences** observed among the sample obtained.

- Respondents from Asia reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on the UN 2030 Agenda, SDGs, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and climate change education, whereas respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on the topics.
- Respondents from Asia cited lack of funding, lack of training opportunities, and lack of cooperation with other stakeholders as the top challenges in sustainable development action, while respondents from Europe cited lack of funding, lack of staff, and lack of institutional recognition as top challenges at their institutions.
- Respondents from Asia look forward to more training opportunities, better leadership support, and new engaging initiatives, while respondents from Europe are keen to see new engaging initiatives, better leadership support, more dedicated staff and new or existing cooperation with stakeholders in accelerating sustainable development action.
- Higher proportion of respondents from Asia are currently developing a strategic plan on sustainable development, or do not have a strategic plan for sustainable development, whereas respondents from Europe indicated that their institutions already have a strategic plan for sustainable development.

The study provides **five critical spotlight areas and 14 recommendations for policymakers and higher education leaders** to consider as they intensify sustainable development action at their respective institutions:



Spotlight #1: Mind the knowledge gaps

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge sustainable development as a core competency for academics, administrative staff, and students in higher education
- Increase inclusion of content related to sustainable development as part of curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels
- Provide training on sustainable development in higher education institutions
- Encourage students and staff to leverage on repositories and resources that are available via open access in bridging their knowledge gap related to sustainable development
- Collaborate with stakeholders at local, national, regional, and global levels



Spotlight #2: Empower students and staff

Recommendations:

- Recognise that student and staff participation is important in communicating institutional leadership commitment towards sustainable development
- Provide incentives to students and staff to drive sustainable development projects on behalf of the institution, with stakeholders within and beyond HEIs
- Outline guidelines and best practices for students and staff in conducting sustainable development projects, and ensure that advisory and support services are accessible to those in need
- Recognise successful projects and initiatives that are conducted by students and staff



Spotlight #3: Don't forget the local context

Recommendations:

- Reinvigorate the UN Secretary-General's call to mobilise action on the 2030 Agenda through the following:
 - Global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the SDGs;
 - Local action embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and
 - People action, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations



Spotlight #4: Practise evidence-informed sustainable development action

Recommendations:

- Implement good practices in documenting and reporting projects and programmes on sustainable development at respective institutions

- Use insights generated from the documents and reports in better allocation of resources (funds, manpower); Giving institutional recognition to students and staff; Conducting public advocacy on sustainable development in local and international communities; Conducting teaching, research, and service activities related to sustainable development; Identifying collaborators at different levels, either within or beyond higher education contexts
- Advocate, as a collective of higher education institutions, the need for greater allocation of resources for sustainable development action at the national level



Spotlight #5: Engage in continuous dialogues on sustainable development

Recommendations:

- Organise and / or participate in dialogues, forums, conferences, networking events and publications, both online and offline on sustainable development which would enable students and staff to Develop comparative insights across borders; Share best practices; Explore collaboration opportunities.

Links Between the Two Studies and Perspectives

While each of the studies provides distinctive insights and perspectives on how ASEM higher education conceptualise, strategise, and implement sustainable development action, there are **seven unifying themes that tie both studies together** for ARC9. These themes are described as follows:

1 | Research design

Theoretical/conceptual frameworks of both studies under ARC9 draw from established studies. The first study drew upon the five-dimensional policy framework proposed by Schneider & Ingram (1990) as employed by the European Commission-funded large-scale study on Embedding Sustainability in Academia: Deans as Change Makers (DECODE) project in 2021. The second study drew upon IAU's conceptualisation of the Whole Institution Approach (WIA) in sustainable development.

2 | Knowledge of SDGs

Both studies uncovered the knowledge gap that persisted with regard to sustainable development, which point to opportunities for capacity development and multilevel collaborations/partnerships that enable sharing of expertise and best practices.

3 | Higher education mission

Both studies reported that sustainable development is a cross-cutting theme across education and teaching, research, campus operations, and community engagement. The first study underscored national policymakers' emphasis on education and training as the most often targeted higher education mission in policy tools for sustainable development action.

4 | Mediating local priorities and the global goals

Both studies uncovered specific SDGs in focus for national governments and higher education institutions. From the policymakers' perspective, the SDGs in focus include SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Respondents from the survey concentrated on SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

5 | Stakeholder engagement

Both studies point to a range of stakeholders engaged, including public/private stakeholders; the policymakers highlight the centrality of national governments in driving sustainable

development action, with potentially increasing involvement from state government, NGOs, and industry players, whereas the perspective from HEIs highlight the importance of international networks on sustainable development among higher education institutions.

6 | Policy instruments

Both studies underscored the importance of national policy instruments in sustainable development action. The policymakers identified financial incentives as the most commonly used policy tool, followed by authority tools such as accreditation requirements and symbolic tools such as the existence of national plans and strategies related to the SDGs. Policymakers also highlight the importance in engaging higher education institutions for assessment and monitoring of sustainable development action at the national level. Whereas the perspective from HEIs indicate that national tools, in particular regulations, incentives, and capacity development tools impact sustainable development action at their institution.

7 | Challenges

Both studies highlighted areas for further improvement to enhance the contribution of higher education to the SDGs. Financial and manpower constraints were cited as common challenges in both studies. With financial support continuing to be a highly demanded and crucial support mechanism for the SDGs in higher education, future studies are encouraged to explore the ways monetary incentives are being employed to steer SDG action in higher education, the extent to which they respond to institutional and local needs, and the impact that they have on the wider community.

Overall, the two perspectives in the study offer important contributions regarding what national governments and universities are doing regarding the achievement of SDGs in and through their higher education sectors. It also provides an important understanding about how SDGs are perceived, prioritised, and understood by a range of stakeholders but by primarily higher education leaders and policymakers. Through these contributions, the overall study aims to deepen dialogues and action regarding the SDGs and the translation of these global goals into local action to contribute to the goals' achievement by the 2030 target.

Structure of this Report

After this executive summary, the Report will introduce both of the above mentioned studies in detail, and provide an overview of the methodological approaches, the data collections instruments, and the demography of participants. It will include a brief discussion of relevant literature and concepts, followed by the empirical findings that aim to answer the research questions. Both parts will conclude with a set of recommendations for policymakers and HEI leaders.



Part 1 | Mapping Policymaker Perspectives

Written by: Dr Icy FRESNO ANABO, Dr Anumoni JOSHI, Dr Miguel Antonio LIM

Part 1 | Mapping Policymaker Perspectives

1. Summary

Background

This report maps higher education policies³ advancing sustainable development in [ASEM partner countries](#). Covering 31 national contexts in Europe and Asia, the study combines data from a survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), and a review of secondary sources to glean patterns in how governments are encouraging HEIs to contribute to the SDGs, provide concrete examples of enabling measures, and identify opportunities that may be leveraged to strengthen the HE policy-practice interface towards the SDGs.

Policy tools are interventions that shape behavioural change. Drawing on Schneider & Ingram's (1990) policy theory framework and the DECODE⁴ project, this report focuses on five types of policy tools – authority, incentive, capacity, symbolic, and learning tools – as an analytical framework to map the current higher education policy efforts in ASEM partner countries. Symbolic policy tools aim to influence people's perceptions and values through strategies and goal-setting. Incentive tools, on the other hand, include tangible benefits (such as funding and reputational incentives including rankings, labels, and awards) to encourage actors towards desirable behaviours. Authority tools come in the form of obligations, binding agreements, and accreditation requirements, while capacity-building tools refer to access to facilities, resources, information, or networks for implementation and evaluation of SDG progress. Lastly, learning tools include evaluation reports and other monitoring mechanisms such as indicators and targets.

This report is commissioned by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) as part of the ARC9 project titled 'Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs'. The survey and the FGDs were implemented between September to December 2022, and the report was written by Dr Icy Fresno Anabo, Dr Anumoni Joshi, and Dr Miguel Antonio Lim.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1. To what extent are ASEM national higher education policies oriented towards the SDGs?
- RQ2. How do ASEM higher education policies translate the global goals into local goals?
- RQ3. Which mission of the universities are the most often targeted?
- RQ4. What kind of policy tools are most often used to promote sustainable development in higher education?

To answer the aforementioned questions, a mixed-methods study on HE policies' role in contributing to the SDGs was conducted. It was implemented in four phases. The first phase involved a mapping exercise of existing evidence and approaches to investigating public policy's role in tackling the SDGs through a rapid review. The findings from the first phase were used for the second phase, which involved the design of the survey and FGD instruments. Empirical data

³ The term 'policy' here refers to public texts and documents that describe governmental efforts to enable higher education institutions and stakeholders to contribute to the SDGs. These texts may come in the form of national strategies, plans, laws, regulations, incentives, and programmes.

⁴ The European Deans Council for Sustainable Development - DECODE project draws on policy theory, (Schneider & Ingram, 1990) and identifies a five-dimensional framework of policy instruments through which university leaders encourage sustainability initiatives in their academic units.

was collected in the third phase, followed by data analysis and triangulation in the fourth phase. A series of policy dialogues and presentations are also planned in the second year of the ARC9 project to engage policy makers, ASEM leaders, HE ministers to share good practices and enhance HE policy orientation towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Limitations of the Study

This report aims to fill the gap in the available literature on higher education policies towards the SDGs. While extensive efforts have been made to include all ASEM partner countries, there was a higher response rate from European countries, which should be considered when reading this report. This limits the availability of comparable data between these two regions and should be addressed in future studies. Furthermore, some sections reflect fewer examples from Asia due to the limited number of reference documents provided by respondents from the region. A few countries also did not respond to all the survey items but were included in the analysis, hence the total responses for each survey question and its respective chart may vary across the items. Furthermore, country-level unit of analysis may not be applicable in all countries, as there are specific country contexts that mean different institutionalised relations and ways of setting HE policies (e.g. in **Germany**). Lastly, not all policy documents are available in English (especially national indicators), and were thus not included in the current scope due to temporal and linguistic constraints. Regardless, this report aims to enhance our understanding of policy efforts in higher education to contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, paving the way for dialogues, collaborations, and in-depth studies to take place on the policy-practice interface of sustainable development.

Given these limitations, future studies are encouraged to cover more, if not all, ASEM countries and analyse the diversity of approaches in how the SDGs are being addressed in higher education between Europe in Asia. Furthermore, given that not all available documents are available in English, future research should consider including translated documents in the analysis in order to capture a broader picture of ASEM countries' initiatives towards the SDGs. Additionally, it will be interesting to look into sub-national efforts, especially at the regional level, in those countries with decentralised higher education systems.

Key findings

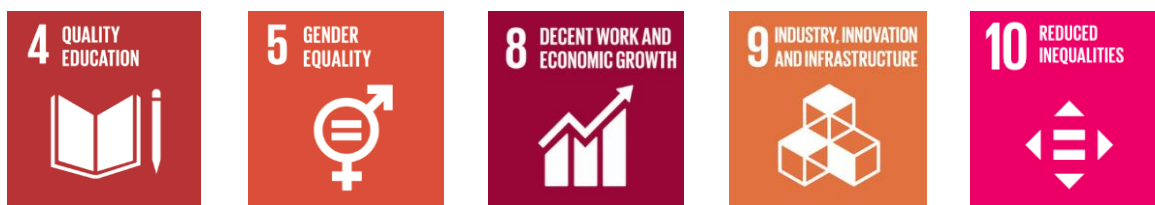
This part of the report presents the empirical findings aimed at answering the following research questions:

RQ1. To what extent are ASEM national higher education policies oriented towards the SDGs?

Several ASEM countries have drafted national strategies and implementation plans that either directly respond to the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs or touch upon some feature of sustainable development. They were also found to either form part of the broader national agenda or a standalone higher education strategy. Many of these documents cite guidelines and statements on the SDGs from intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and UNESCO, while several European countries also alluded to the influence of European-level SDG policy in their national strategies.

SDG 4 (Quality Education) is a higher education policy priority in most of the ASEM partner countries surveyed. Other SDG priorities cited include SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Figure 1 • Top 5 SDG Priorities in Higher Education Policies



Higher education institutions are seen as playing a fundamental role in contributing to the SDGs, especially around their core missions including (1) Education and Teaching, (2) Research, (3) Campus Operations and Governance, and (4) Partnerships and Societal Engagement. Several ASEM partner countries also identified the importance of bridging the gap between teaching and research, where systematically incorporating research findings into teaching approaches, as well as greater involvement of HE teachers in research, are viewed to boost HE's contribution to the SDGs overall.

RQ2. How do ASEM higher education policies translate the global goals into local goals?

Existing literature alludes to the importance of interpreting the global SDGs in light of national and local goals and aspirations in the success of the SDGs, ensuring buy-in and meaningful participation among relevant stakeholders. This exercise of translating the SDGs usually involve various steps of the policy process, from the initial stages of multi-stakeholder consultations and strategy development throughout reporting and follow-up.

The survey results suggest that the most commonly conducted steps among the respondents are related to strategy development, most especially the review of national plans, as well as mainstreaming of the SDGs into new or existing strategies. Out of all the steps, the least undertaken coincide with the later steps of the policy process, such as the assessment of interlinkages, synergies, and trade-offs and monitoring arrangements and follow-up. This study's findings coincide with previous studies on the implementation gaps relating to these steps. The same is true for HEIs. Although they have a relatively higher engagement than local governments, NGOs, and industry players – they nevertheless are less involved in the monitoring and follow-up of the SDGs compared to strategy setting and the other initial steps of the policy process.

RQ3. Which mission of the universities are the most often targeted?

HEIs are viewed to have an important role to play in tackling sustainable development in the SDG reference documents among ASEM countries. Their role aligns with the various HE missions identified in existing literature, including Education and Teaching, Research, Partnerships, and Campus Operations and Governance.

The survey results revealed that Education and Training is the most often targeted HE mission across all the policy tools, including financial incentives, accreditation requirements, and audit, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. This is followed by Research and Campus Operations and Governance. Meanwhile, Partnerships and Societal Engagement turned out to be the least targeted, which may be explained by either a high level of organic network building among the HEIs themselves or a lower policy priority ascribed to this mission in relation to others. Regardless, partnerships and societal engagement are key to the successful implementation of the SDGs, and it remains to be seen how policy makers are able to incentivise and support this mission through policy interventions.

RQ4. What kind of policy tools are most often used to promote sustainable development in higher education?

ASEM partner countries employ a variety of policy tools to strengthen and promote higher education's contribution to the SDGs. Findings from the survey and FGDs suggest a prevailing view that governments should be leading the implementation of SDGs in higher education, implying a sense of ownership among ASEM countries' policy leaders when tackling the complex issue of sustainable development in and through higher education. This also reaffirms governments' fundamental responsibility for successfully implementing the Agenda as identified in UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action. Their perceived scope of responsibility relates to strategy development, enforcement of regulations, and funding provision, which the survey results confirmed to be the same areas wherein policy instruments are currently being employed.

Among the surveyed ASEM countries, financial incentives are the most commonly used policy tool, followed by authority tools such as accreditation requirements and symbolic tools such as the existence of national plans and strategies related to the SDGs. Other types of policy measures also emerged, including sustainability-focused national awards, increased spending targets for research, tuition fund coverage, accreditation requirements, performance agreements between governments and HEIs, quality assurance frameworks, network building, and informational support through online resources on sustainable development.

Policy Recommendations

- 1** | Develop closer collaborations between policy makers and HEIs for evidence-based policy making
- 2** | Extend vision statements and strategic plans to include concrete implementation steps, indicators of progress, and clear responsibilities
- 3** | Enhance the participation of local stakeholder groups, including local government bodies, NGOs, and industry players, in SDG-relevant policy making in HE
- 4** | Provide more targeted policy support to encourage partnerships and societal engagement among Higher Education Institutions
- 5** | Fund and support further studies examining the achievements of policy interventions in supporting SDG implementation in HE as well as their challenges

2. Methodology

2.1. Participant Demography

The study participants are from 31 ASEM countries, 20 from Europe and 11 from Asia. A total of 29 countries are represented in the survey, while respondents for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) hail from 14 countries. Twelve countries participated both in the survey and the FGDs⁵.

Figure 2 • List of Participating Countries in the Policy Mapping Study

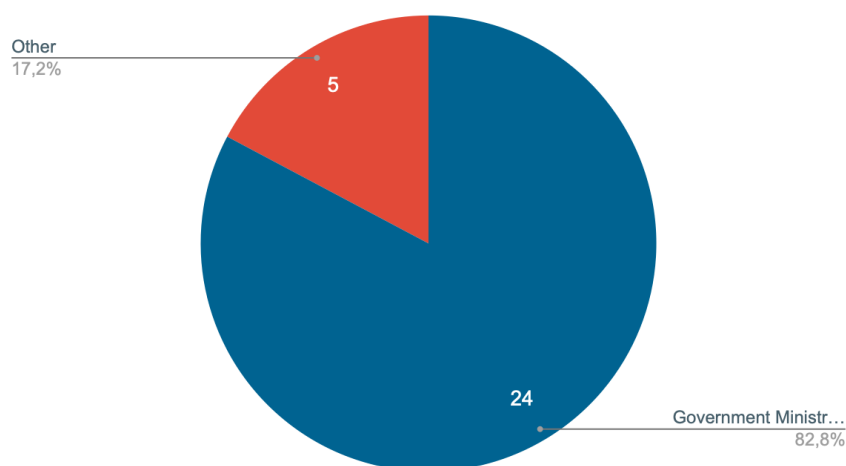
ASEM Country	Survey	Focus Group Discussion
Austria	X	
Bangladesh		X
Belgium	X	
Brunei Darussalam	X	
Bulgaria	X	X
Cambodia	X	X
China	X	
Croatia	X	
Cyprus	X	
Estonia	X	
Finland	X	
Germany	X	
Greece	X	X
Hungary	X	X
India	X	X
Ireland	X	X
Japan	X	
Lao PDR	X	X
Latvia	X	
Lithuania	X	
Luxembourg	X	
Malaysia	X	X
Malta	X	X
Mongolia	X	

⁵ While some respondents were unable to participate in both data collection methods, the themes that emerged from the FGDs were found to mostly confirm and align with the findings from the survey.

ASEM Country	Survey	Focus Group Discussion
Myanmar	X	X
Philippines	X	X
Slovakia	X	
Slovenia	X	X
Spain		X
Switzerland	X	
United Kingdom	X	
Total	29	14

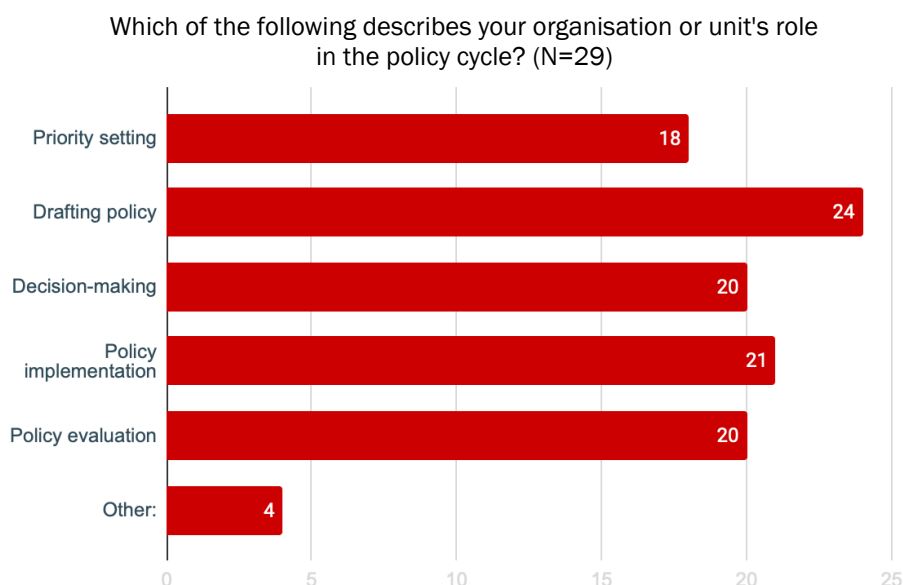
Most survey respondents (n=24) are representatives of governmental ministries or departments in ASEM countries, while some (5) are from independent official bodies that work with the government (see Figure 3). Meanwhile, FGD participants who are not represented in the survey were comprised of policy makers, think tank experts, university representatives, civil society leaders, and non-profit organisations (NGOs). Survey and FGD responses are viewed as official and representative of ASEM countries, while two FGD participants from India and Cambodia chose to provide their views in their individual capacity.

Figure 3 • Respondents’ Organisational Affiliation



The survey respondents are involved in aspects of policymaking in ASEM countries, with the highest share being involved in drafting policy (see Figure 4). Four respondents indicated other types of roles not included in the survey options, including legislation (n=1), funding of HEIs (n=2), and involvement in the ASEM Education process (n=1).

Figure 4 • Respondents' Role in the Policy Cycle



2.2. Data Collection Methods

To answer the research questions, a mixed method study on higher education policies' role in contributing to the SDGs was employed. The study was conducted in four phases. The first phase involved a mapping exercise of existing evidence and approaches to investigating public policy's role in tackling the SDGs through a literature review. The findings from the first phase are used for the second phase, which involved the design of the survey and FGD instruments. Empirical data was collected in the third phase, followed by data analysis and triangulation in the fourth phase.

Literature review

A rapid review (Ganann et al., 2010) was conducted in order to (1) scope the existing knowledge and evidence on the topic of higher education policy and the SDGs; (2) identify relevant surveys and FGDs to inform the design of the study instruments; and (3) provide an additional source of data to triangulate the findings from the primary data gleaned from the survey and the FGDs. A systematic search was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow (Page et al., 2020).

Firstly, an exploratory search was conducted on the Scopus database by using two search routes, which gleaned a total of 638 records:

- Search route 1: "Sustainable Development Goals" AND "higher education policy"
- Search route 2: "Sustainable Development Goals" AND "higher education policy" AND "survey"

Duplicate records were then removed, yielding a total of 413 documents that were subjected to screening based on the relevance of the title and abstract to Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education policy. A total of 26 entries were deemed relevant and select entries⁶ were included in the background material for the development of the data collection instruments, as well as the literature review. Figure 5 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria that have been applied.

⁶ These entries were chosen on the basis of geographical (i.e. covering ASEM partner countries) and methodological relevance (i.e. the entry employed surveys or FGDs as part of the research design).

Figure 5 • Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Used to Screen Publications

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Direct link to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and Education for Sustainability (EfS) initiatives.	Looser links to sustainable development not necessarily tied to the UN 2015 Agenda
National-level governance and policy on higher education, including quality assurance frameworks	Institutional-level policy and practice (e.g. university governance, pedagogical approaches, competence development related to SDGs)
Direct link to higher education at the university level	Related to SDGs more broadly, or early childhood, primary, secondary, or other forms of tertiary level education (e.g. vocational education and training)

Given the limited scope yielded by the review of academic literature, the search was extended on search engines Google and Google Scholar to scope relevant grey literature (see under References 'Policy Survey Design Literature' category). As a result, existing survey-based studies were gleaned, which were then used to design the study's survey instrument.

2.3. Survey

The pilot phase of the survey instrument was conducted between August and September 2022 among the ASEF team, external experts, and a panel of ASEF Advisory Board members. After two rounds of feedback and revisions, the survey was administered between September and October 2022. The survey was open to ASEM Ministries responsible for higher education policy for their country to be represented. The survey aimed to gather evidence and map higher education policies that work toward the SDGs in the ASEM countries. A total of 21 countries responded to the initial survey close date. Eight countries submitted their response after the end date. The structure of the survey is as follows:

- Section 1 - Personal Particulars
- Section 2 - Awareness of the SDGs
- Section 3 - Understanding the National Context
- Section 4 - Specific to Policy Tools
- Section 5 - Contextualising the Higher Education Policies towards the SDGs

The survey yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included multiple choice and ranking questions, which were analysed using descriptive methods such as frequency counts, percentages, and summarisation of the findings. The descriptive statistical methods helped to organise, visualise and understand the data in a manageable way and were presented using tabular and graphical representation of frequencies (Randolph and Myers 2013). Meanwhile, qualitative data included respondents' answers to text boxes giving more details to closed-ended survey questions, as well as the contents of reference documents cited. They were analysed using deductive and inductive content analysis, employing the main categories from the analytical framework and survey (deductive) and incorporating additional sub-codes that emerged (inductive).

2.4. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs are informal discussions about a particular research topic for in-depth answers. FGDs as a research method aim to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population. In this study participants representing 14 ASEM member countries participated through 5 FGDs. Some of the key elements examined while designing and conducting the FGDs in this study are following:

- a. FGDs have clearly defined aims and objectives
- b. The design involved a single FGD that engaged interactive discussions of a topic by a collection of all participants and a team of facilitators as one group in one place (O. Nyumba et al., 2018)
- c. All FGDs were conducted online, using the Zoom platform and were recorded (Krueger & Casey, 2002)
- d. The participants were a homogeneous group (De Negri & Thomas, 2003)
- e. Each FGD was 90 minutes long with a 3-5 minute introductory presentation (UNESCO, 2020)

A number of broad and open-ended questions relating to each of the research questions were covered during the FGDs in order to collect reactions and thoughts from the participants, evoke conversation, and generate a range of answers and thoughts (Cyr, 2019) that could be triangulated with the survey findings. Prompt questions were also asked depending on the participants' responses. A list of sample FGD questions is provided in Annex 2.

Data from the FGDs was transcribed and thematically coded based on the literature review and survey themes. More specifically, provisional coding and sub-coding of manifest content were conducted. Provisional coding refers to the use of a set of tentative and pre-existing codes lifted from previous knowledge or research on the topic, and sub-coding to generate more specific details relevant to the main codes (Saldaña, 2011). These coding notes were used to verify the FGD findings, which were then merged with the data from the literature review and survey to answer the research questions.

3. Policies as Levers to Drive the SDGs

Governments are widely viewed as important partners in driving the achievement of the SDGs (El Jardali et al., 2018). According to UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action, governments' responsibility involves "establish(ing) legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency as well as participatory governance and coordinated partnerships at all levels and across sectors, and to uphold the right to participation of all stakeholders" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 9). Indeed, governments have the responsibility to lead and provide guidance on how to contextualise and implement SDG goals and targets in a transparent and inclusive way while taking into account national experiences and priorities (ibid.). Despite the important synergies between governments and universities, little is known about how national governments develop and implement policies to encourage, mandate, or provide resources to boost universities' contributions to the SDGs.

Policy theory suggests that policy interventions are pursued to shape behavioural change (Olejniczak, Sliwowski, & Leeuw, 2020), of which five types have been alluded to in literature (Schneider & Ingram, 1990; Olejniczak et al., 2020): authority, incentive, capacity, symbolic, and learning tools. The assumptions on the mechanisms through which they enforce desired behaviours and a number of examples are outlined in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 • Policy Types

Policy Type	Assumption	Description	Examples
Symbolic and hortatory tools	People are motivated to take action based on their beliefs and values grounded in culture and social context	Symbols and influencing values	Strategies Declarations Recommendations
Incentive tools	Citizens are utility maximisers	Positive or negative tangible payoffs	Funding Rankings Awards
Authority tools	Citizens are expected to do what they are told	Involves a sense of duty and an inherent commitment to obey laws	Accreditation requirements Legislation Binding statements
Capacity tools	Once deficits in information or resources are addressed, subjects will behave as expected	Provision of information, education, and resources	Facilities and infrastructure Special units advising
Learning tools	Policy addressees do not know what needs to be done or what is possible to do	Promotion of learning and consensus building	Monitoring Evaluation Indicators

Source: Olejniczak et al., 2020; Schneider & Ingram, 1990

One of the few attempts to understand how policy can influence higher education action towards the SDGs was made by Jongbloed, Veidemann, & Hu (2021) through the European Deans Council for Sustainable Development (DECODE) project. Drawing on policy theory, (Schneider & Ingram's, (1990) seminal work on policy theory and design, they identified a five-dimensional framework of policy instruments through which university leaders can encourage sustainability initiatives in their academic units. Given DECODE's relevance to and similarities in scope with the current study, its framework was employed to analyse HE policy makers' perspectives on the SDGs along the following dimensions:

1. Strategy and awareness building, by using symbolic and encouragement signals to influence perceptions or values;
2. Monitoring and organisational learning, to increase understanding of an issue or reduce uncertainty about how to address it;
3. Capacity building, to provide information, training, skills and resources to enable individuals, or groups to make decisions or carry out activities;
4. Using incentives, i.e. tangible payoffs, positive or negative, to induce compliance or encourage people to do things that they might not have done otherwise;
5. Providing authority, ranging from voluntary actions and permissions, to regulation that prohibits or prescribes conduct under designated circumstances.

Three of these categories are reflected broadly in the second part of this report (Part 2: Mapping Higher Education Institution Perspectives) and in the survey conducted by IAU on Higher Education and Sustainable Development (HESD), more specifically:

1. Capacity development tools (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)

2. Incentives (funding incentives, reputational tools e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)
3. Regulations (legal obligations, accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)

In the literature reviewed, one of the ways through which national governments have supported SDGs in higher education is through the development of **strategies, declarations, or charters** (Stafford-Smith, Griggs, Gaffney, et al., 2017; Lozano et al., 2013). This is viewed as a symbolic policy tool that can prompt universities to pursue sustainability (Jongbloed, Veidemane, & Hu, 2021). In **Japan**, a set of SDG implementation guiding principles were published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA, 2017), highlighting higher education's role in empowering people through the provision of scholarships and economic support measures to both domestic and international students (MOFA, 2017; Edwards & Ashida, 2021). Since 2016, a total of 187 UN Member States have also submitted government-led Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) on SDG achievements (Sachs et al., 2022).

In certain contexts, authority tools have been implemented successfully to encourage sustainability in universities. For instance, in **Austria**, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research incorporated sustainable development into the **performance agreement** template with universities in 2015. This allowed for the sustainability agenda to gain more momentum in university settings, demonstrating how regulatory frameworks can spark organisational change (Bohunovsky et al., 2020). Meanwhile, **indicators** have also been an instrument through which SDG policies and implementation have been managed. Indicators may be viewed as a way to generate feedback for improved performance, yet it is also shown to exert a normative control that legitimise certain ways of acting (Hansson et al., 2019) that shape action. In Andorra, a proposal of indicators to embed SDGs into institutional **quality assessments** (QA) has been developed collaboratively by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education of Andorra (AQUA) and the Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategic Foresight in Higher Education (ACPUA) (Stukalo & Lytvyn, 2021). As such, they recommend that standards on teaching and learning of the SDGs, including the integration of knowledge, in-depth understanding, and the ability to implement SDGs in everyday life and in the workplace, be integrated into the accreditation criteria of higher education institutions in the country.

Additionally, **funding** as a policy intervention has been implemented in a number of contexts. For instance, Tanasie & Margusson's (2017) analysis of higher education policies in **Romania** and Iceland shows that financing mechanisms were used by national governments in order to promote the SDGs in conjunction with quality assessments. In the **UK**, the UK Research Excellence Framework (UK-REF) uses economic and societal impact as a criterion for allocating competitive research funds (Beynaghi et al., 2019). However, much remains to be done on this front, and funding remains to be one of the top barriers for universities to contribute to the SDGs (Jongbloed, Veidemane, & Bayezid, 2021). Thus, several scholars have recommended increasing public funds for research (Owens, 2017) and engagement (Beynaghi et al., 2019) to encourage sustainability-oriented activities in universities. Meanwhile, other forms of resources such as the provision of **infrastructure** could be a way to target the SDGs. For example, the National University of Singapore (NUS) Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE) in **Singapore** provides a physical space for university and industry stakeholders to collaborate on developing green technology and contribute to a shift towards a low-carbon economy (Beynaghi, et al., 2019). Lastly, various forms of **appraisal systems** such as the use of **sustainability rankings** could be an effective way to incentivise higher education institutions towards the SDGs (Yarime & Tanaka, 2012; Beynaghi et al., 2019).

Following this discussion of policy tools alluded to in the literature, the next section will discuss the empirical findings of the study based on the survey, the FGDs, and a content analysis of policy documents provided by the respondents.

4. Policy's Perceived Role in Achieving the SDGs

Higher education institutions are widely viewed to hold a unique position within society, serving as central players in national and regional innovation systems as they attract and nurture talent and creativity. In general, the role of universities rests along four main areas: education and teaching, research, operations and governance, and external leadership/societal engagement (SDSN, 2020; Mallow et al., 2020; Chankseliani et al., 2021; Radinger-Peer & Pflitsch, 2017). Our preliminary reading of relevant literature at this stage tends to show that universities are engaged in the aforementioned activities (Alcántara-Rubio et al., 2022), both in keeping with their traditional core functions (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021) and in response to the SDGs.

Equally importantly, universities are increasingly seen as important players in shaping public policy. In terms of research and knowledge production, universities are increasingly becoming knowledge actors in global governance, elucidating their complementary role with governmental agencies, research institutes, and international NGOs in developing and promoting policies and solutions for SDGs (Zappa, 2021). Lozano et al. (2015) also contend that universities have a role in “governance for strategic development, by providing policy makers with access to high-quality education and research, and advocating participative, multi-scale, polycentric approaches to policy making” (p. 16). For Cheeseman et al. (2019), it is crucial for universities to fulfil their societal engagement activities as a way to strengthen the connection between SDG-friendly policies and the university context.

Despite the potential for university-policy synergies, a study by Vargas et al. (2019) shows that there is a gap in the multi-level integration of university activities in policy frameworks. For instance, they found that the issue of teaching is the only consistent policy issue expressed across the international, national, and institutional levels, while those related to partnerships and outreach, research, and campus operations seem to figure more prominently in national rather than organisational policies. Indeed, important gaps exist between policy and practice when it comes to the SDGs (Cheeseman et al., 2019; Tandon, 2018). Overall, the literature review demonstrates the need to support the integration between these two domains, whereby policies are able to support universities' work and, in turn, universities are able to engage and shape evidence-informed policy discourse and implementation

4.1. Policymakers' Awareness of Policies

As depicted in Figure 7, most of the respondents of the study reported having intermediate to expert knowledge on SDG-related topics such as the UN 2030 Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and Education for Sustainable Development. Meanwhile, more than half declared a limited understanding of themes such as Global Citizenship Education and Climate Change Education.

Part 2 of this Report, conducted among HEIs in ASEM countries, included similar survey items (see Part 2 Figures 36-41). Comparing HEIs' responses from the aforementioned study and policy makers' perceptions in this report, it can be gleaned that broadly speaking, a higher share of HEIs have intermediate to expert knowledge on SDG-related topics compared to policy makers.

Meanwhile, most of the policy makers responding to the survey reported a high level of knowledge of HE policies in their respective countries (see Figure 8). These findings point to **an opportunity** for these two groups of stakeholders to work together to complement knowledge gaps and work towards bridging policy and practice on SDGs in HE.

Figure 7 • Policy Survey Respondents’ Perceived Knowledge of Sustainability-related Terms

How much knowledge do you have of each of the following? (N=29)

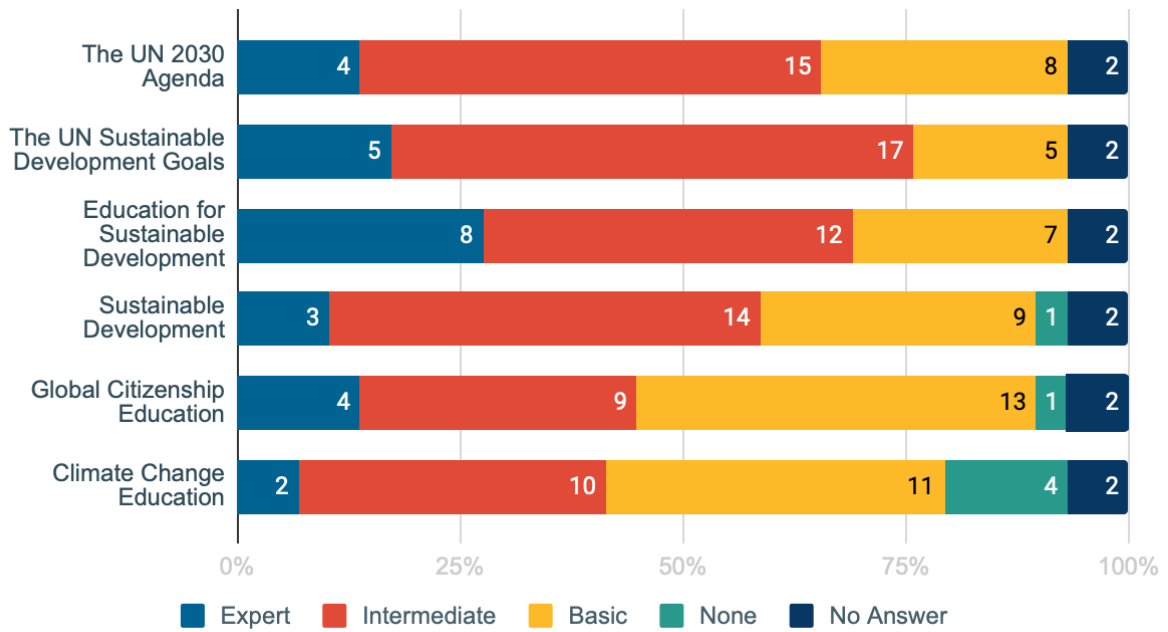
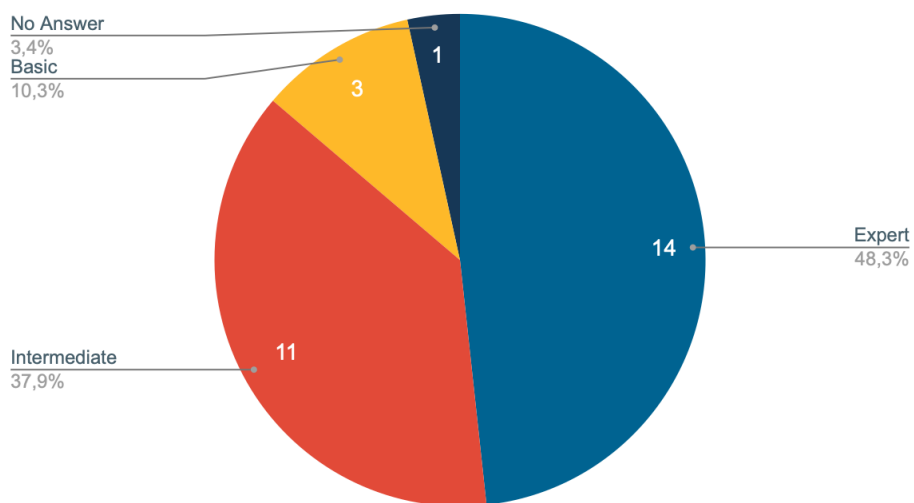


Figure 8 • Policy Survey Respondents’ Perceived Knowledge of Existing HE Policies in Their Countries

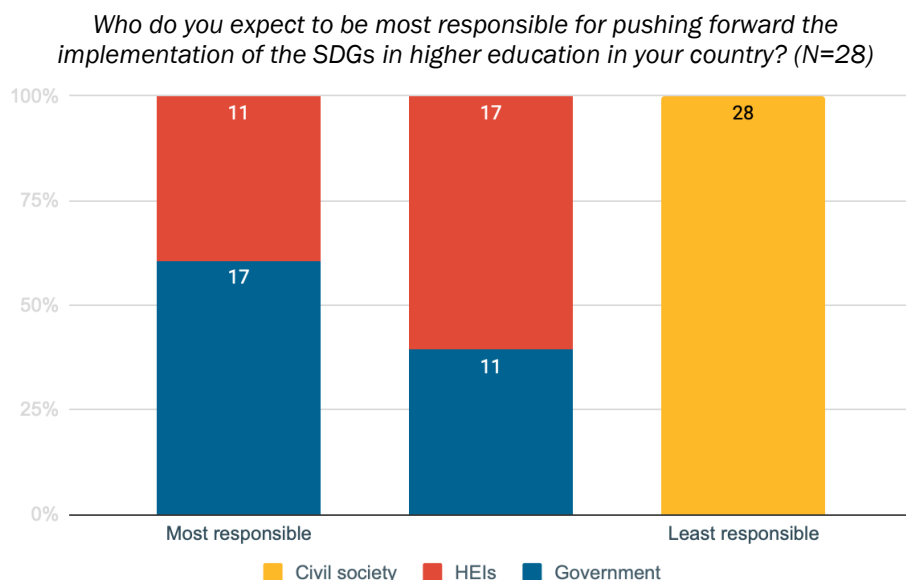
How much knowledge do you have about existing higher education policies in your country (i.e. official documents, negotiation processes) aimed at contributing to the SDGs? (N=29)



4.2. Perceived Role of Policy in Tackling the SDGs

Governments are perceived by most respondents to have the lead responsibility for implementing the SDGs in HE (n=17) followed by HEIs (n=11), while civil society was unanimously identified to be the least responsible (n=28) (see Figure 9).

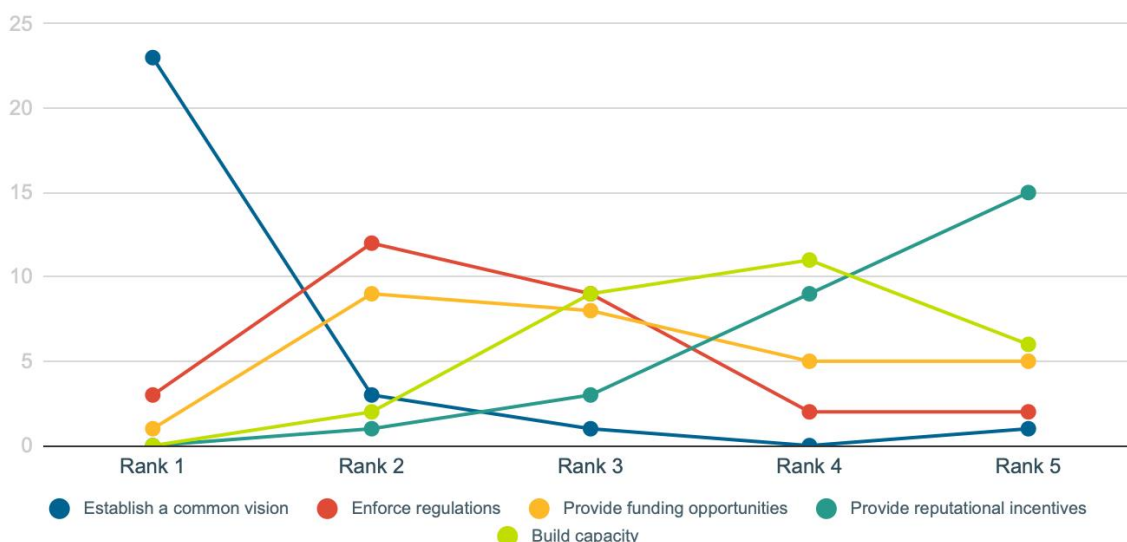
Figure 9 • Policymakers Views on Level of Responsibility Ascribed to Stakeholder Groups for SDG Implementation



When asked about the specific role of governments (Figure 10), establishing a common vision or strategy was ranked 1st by most of the respondents (n=24), while enforcing regulations and providing funding opportunities are ranked 2nd by others (n=12 and n=9, respectively). The need for government funding also figures prominently in the second part of this report (Part 2: Mapping Higher Education Institution Perspectives), whereby HEIs expect governments to support them through policy instruments and financial support. Meanwhile, capacity building and providing reputational incentives are among the lower ranked in governments’ perceived sphere of responsibility. In addition to these survey options, a respondent added informational guidance and communication between actors as a fundamental role of governments in SDG implementation in HE.

Figure 10 • Respondents’ Perceived Role of Governments in SDG Implementation in HE

What do you think is the government’s role in the implementation of the SDGs in higher education in your country? (N=28)



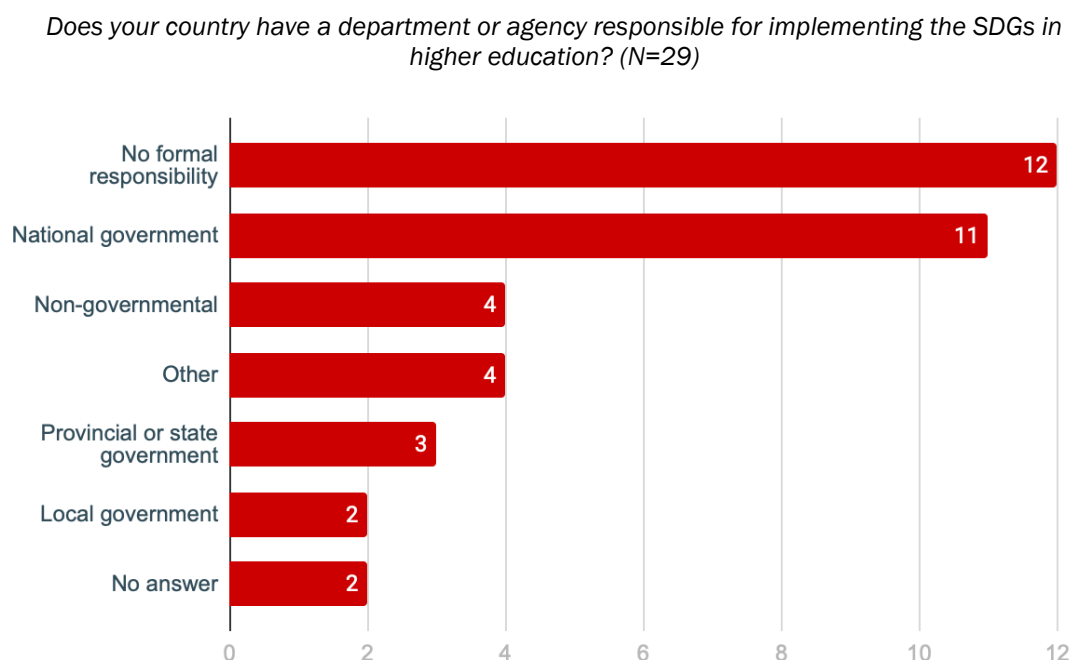
Overall, the government's role is clearly seen to be the establishment of a common vision and strategy around how the SDGs are to be understood and to coordinate action among the different stakeholders around them.

5. National Higher Education Policies Towards the SDGs

5.1. National Agencies for the SDGs

Most of the ASEM countries surveyed either do not have any formally appointed body for SDG implementation in HE (n=12) or have a national government department or agency responsible for this task (n=11). Examples of national governmental bodies include the Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Higher Education. Another respondent (**Estonia**) also mentioned that although there is no formal responsibility for the SDGs in their country, specific goals such as Quality Education and Gender Equality are tackled by different ministries such as the Ministry of Education and Research, the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. In some contexts, university networks (**Greece**), independent bodies (**Malta**), or the HEIs themselves (**Latvia**) are in charge of SDG implementation.

Figure 11 • Department or Agency Responsible for Implementing the SDGs in HE in Respondents' Countries



5.2. SDGs in Government Policies

A total of 27 of the 29 ASEM countries surveyed answered the item on their countries' top SDG priorities for HE. Findings reveal that SDG 4 as a priority area in the national government policies is clearly established in the ASEM partner countries (n=26). Overall, the five most cited SDG priorities are:

Figure 12 • Top 5 SDG Priorities in Higher Education Policies



The discussions that emerged from the FGDs further confirm that economic growth, reducing inequality, and gender gaps in higher education are priority areas (e.g. **Malaysia, Myanmar**). There was also a strong alignment of educational outcome and lifelong learning with skills, labour markets, economic growth, and real impact within the communities (e.g. **Philippines, Malta, Cambodia**).



“Philippines [will] improve capacities of human resources development, especially on lifelong learning and to enhance partnerships with other higher education systems” - Philippines

“The vision towards a dynamic and more resilient knowledge ecosystem by 2030 is based on an innovative inclusive quality driven federal education sector, inspiring individuals throughout the educational and life experience to develop relevant skills” - Malta

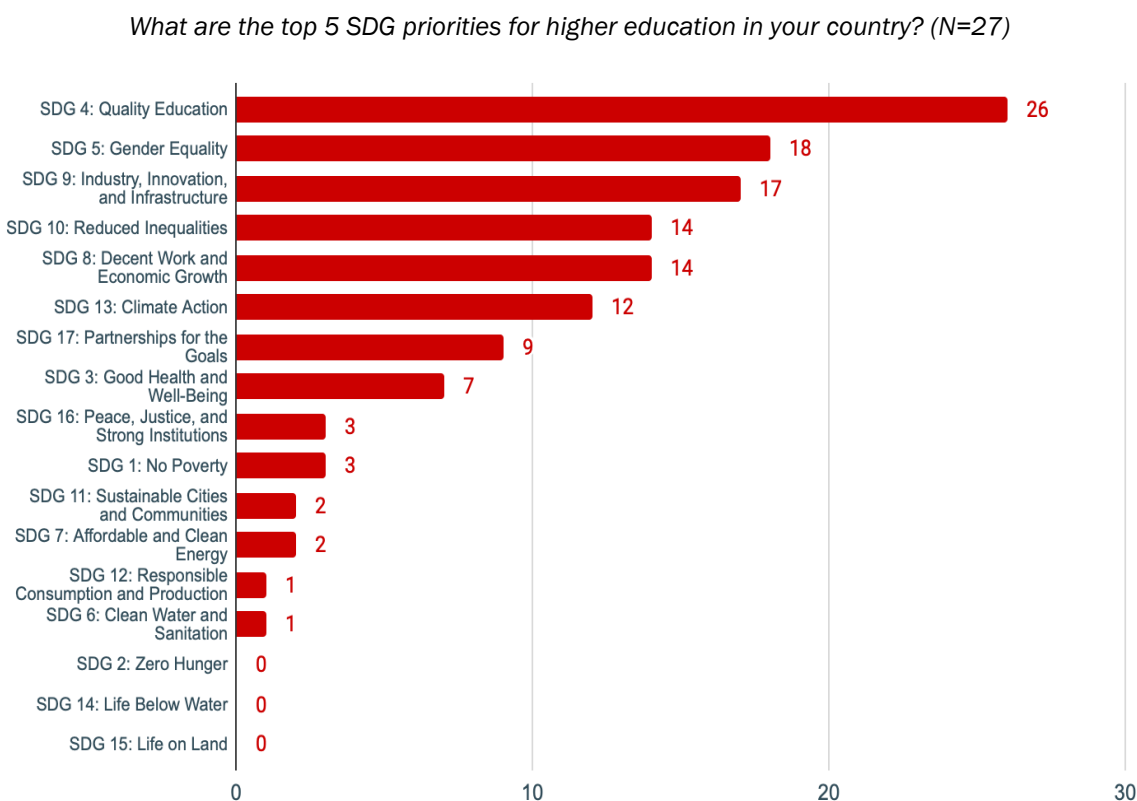
“Our policy making function also comes with programmes’ metric performance, not just to measure how many have graduated, but how many have successfully graduated is important. How are they gainfully employed and their contribution [...] a real impact in the communities” - Philippines

“Target 4.4 to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who've developed skills including tactical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship, and we are also working towards by 2030 that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainability and sustainable development, including among others through education for a sustainable development.” - Ireland

“Equity, equality, lifelong learning and opportunity for all; [...] this policy is drawn from the SDG framework and the other thing we have, [is] the national development vision of Cambodia, [describing] that Cambodia wishes to become a prosperous middle-income country by 2030s [...] [with] increased regional and international competitiveness in line with the SDGs” - Cambodia



Figure 13 • Top SDG Priorities in Respondents' Countries



In some ASEM countries, the SDGs are also addressed in clusters reflecting national priorities. For instance, in **Switzerland**, the three areas for priority action are (1) sustainable consumption and sustainable production, (2) climate, energy, and biodiversity, and (3) equal opportunities and social cohesion. The strategy also views education, research and innovation as key drivers for responding to these priorities.

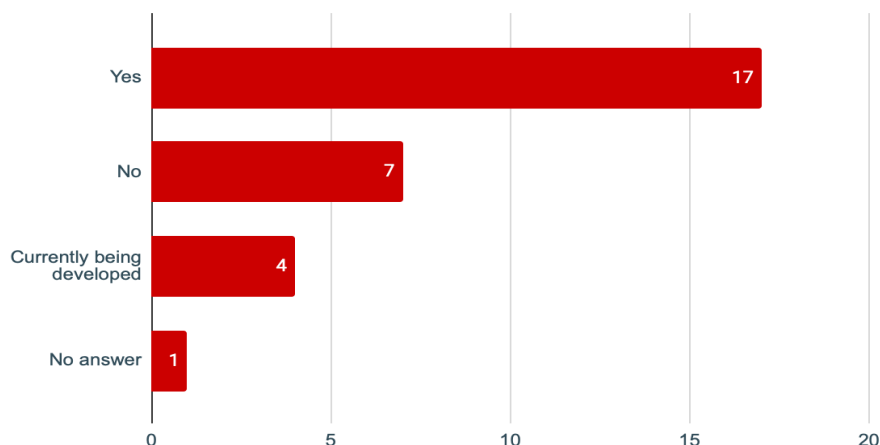
Meanwhile, in the **Philippines**, HEI research on SDGs are grouped as follows: (1) food production and security, (2) environment, disaster risk reduction climate change and energy, (3) terrestrial and marine resources, (4) smart analytics and engineering, (5) health systems, and (6) education for STEAM. In this scenario, the government encourages HEIs to conduct research and knowledge transfer activities along these dimensions.

Another example is **Malaysia**, whose national strategy is tied to three key themes: (1) resetting the economy, (2) strengthening security, well-being, and inclusivity, and (3) advancing sustainability.

A total of 17 of the 29 ASEM countries surveyed reported having an existing government document (see Figure 14) they refer to with regard to their country's higher education response to the SDGs, while 2 countries did not answer 'yes' to this item but cited reference documents as a commentary. On the other hand, four countries reported that SDG-related reference documents are currently under development. For a list of all cited documents and resources, see Annex 4.

Figure 14 • Existence of a Reference Document for HE’s Response to the SDGs in ASEM Countries

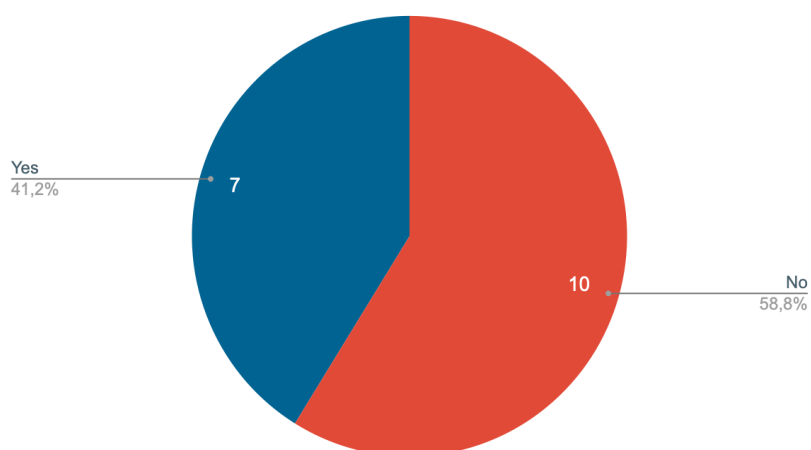
Is there a government document (policy, declaration, framework, strategy, roadmap, guidelines, etc.) that you refer to for the higher education’s response to the SDGs in your country? (N=29)



The types of reference documents cited by the respondents (see Annex 3) include national strategies or implementation plans (n=15); pan-European level documents (n=1) in the form of conclusions and recommendations; statements of policy initiatives (n=3); and reports (n=2). Most of the strategy documents identified explicitly mention their alignment or relevance to the UN 2030 Agenda or the SDGs in the policy text. Of the 17 countries who answered yes to Figure 15, 7 indicated that they have a document that focuses on SDG response specific to higher education (**Finland, Hungary, India, Malta, Philippines, Slovakia, Slovenia**). FGD participants also mentioned other documents: *Education and Sport Sector Development Plan 2021 - 2025 (Lao PDR)*, the *National Programme on Higher Education 2030*; and the *Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education and Science 2030 (Myanmar)*.

Figure 15 • Existence of a HE-specific Reference Document for the SDGs in ASEM Countries

Does any of the government document(s) you indicated focus ONLY on higher education? (N=17)



International guiding documents on the SDGs from intergovernmental and European entities were also found to have influenced national strategies in ASEM partner countries such as **Ireland, Estonia, and Spain**, including the following:

- the UNESCO Roadmap: ESD for 2030 as a framework for priority action areas in alignment with the SDGs (**Ireland**)
- The European Pillar of Social Rights and the right to quality and inclusive lifelong learning to develop skills necessary for full participation in society and the labour market (**Estonia**);
- The European Green Deal and the importance of skills development for the green transition as well as investment in school infrastructure(**Ireland and Estonia**);
- Horizon Europe 2021-2027 (**Ireland**);
- Council Recommendations on a number of policy priorities, including key competences for lifelong learning, skills agenda, and mutual recognition of qualifications (**Estonia**)
- EU programmes as such as ERASMUS (**Spain**)

The analysis of the FGDs confirmed these observations, whereby participants from **Hungary, Malta and Spain** highlighted the influence of European programmes and funding in shaping their country's strategies to tackle the SDGs in HE, as was reflected in the participants' responses:



“European Union funded projects but it is not directly linked to SDGs [...] European special fund, for example the provision fund where they get the performance funding contracts, they work [...] on inclusion, and they work on sustainability and [...] quality of higher education” - Hungary

“European commission obviously, [...] Council of Europe, and the other obviously branches which come out of it, so we were watching [...] what was happening in the other European countries so we could kind of live up and join in and see the initiatives which were being taken so we could follow on those lines” - Malta

“The European Union has considered the SDGs as an important part, [...] and we receive funds from the European Union in order to try to reach the SDGs” - Spain



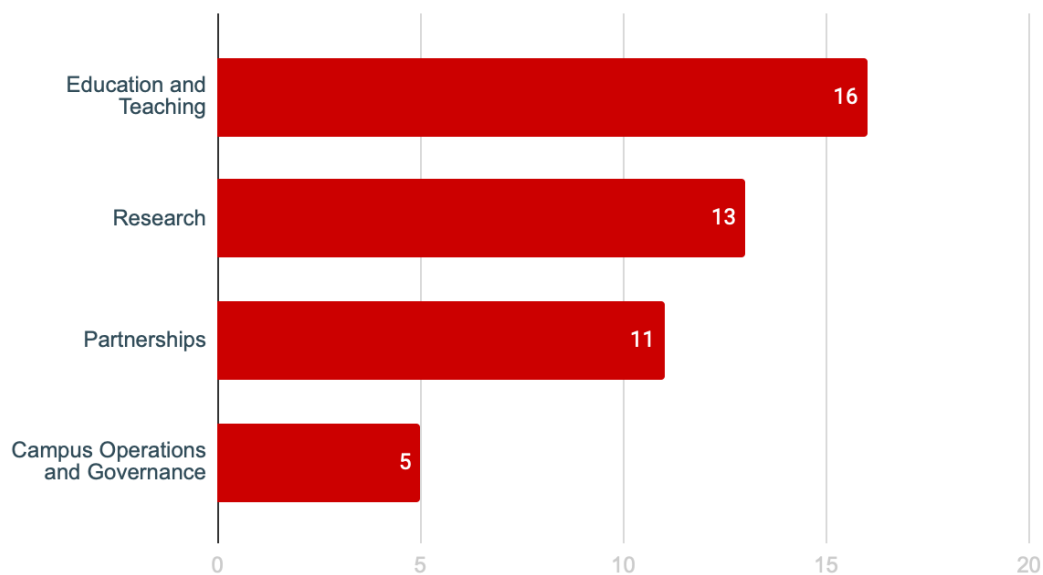
In contrast to the European context, respondents from Asia mostly provided national but not regional documents despite the existence of such texts (for instance, at the ASEAN level). This points to an **opportunity** to further strengthen intra-regional collaborations and awareness raising on SDG implementation in higher education.

The survey responses (Figure 16) show that education and teaching is the most commonly targeted higher education area linked to sustainable development (n=16) followed by research (n=13), while campus operations and governance (n=5) is the least cited.

ASEM countries identified HEIs' education and teaching activities as paramount to the achievement of the SDGs, especially with regard to teaching relevant skills in the curricula towards sustainable development such as thinking responsibly about the future (**Switzerland**) and maintaining ecologically and socially sustainable lifestyles (**Finland**). **India's National Education Policy 2020** envisages that curricula of all HEIs will include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of environmental education covering topics such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, and sustainable development and living, among others.

Figure 16 • Sustainability Dimensions Addressed by ASEM Countries' Reference Documents

In the government document(s) you identified, where is sustainability addressed exactly? (N=17)



HE is also viewed to play a role in training future scientists and decision-makers by laying the scientific groundwork for sustainability innovations (**Switzerland**), incorporating entrepreneurship (**Malaysia**), or providing internships and practical education to enable a smoother transition to the labour market for graduates (**Slovenia**). As for research, the importance of interdisciplinary studies (**Germany** and **Luxembourg**), knowledge transfer (**Slovenia**), cooperation with developing and transition countries (**Switzerland**), and adopting open science principles (**Luxembourg** and **Slovenia**) were highlighted. For Slovenia, this includes the accessibility of infrastructures and databases to enhance the country's social development and higher education system. **Estonia**, **Luxembourg**, the **Philippines**, and **Switzerland** also refer to equal opportunities and gender equality in research staff as a crucial dimension of sustainability in research.

A number of the documents cited alluded to the goal of bridging the gap between teaching and research. In **Finland**, improved teaching is linked to research. Similarly, in **Germany**, the *National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development* highlights the need for national and international research on educational science and educational psychology to be incorporated into teaching, thereby systematically linking research and ESD. This link is also exemplified in **Slovenia**, whose national strategy proposes to establish mechanisms “to better connect public research institutes and higher education institutions in order to make better use of research equipment, create better research teams, and ensure greater involvement of researchers from public research institutes in the teaching process and greater involvement of higher education teachers in research” (p. 26). These findings are confirmed in the FGDs, where the respondent from **Bulgaria** alluded to the importance of linking these two missions, which is now being actively implemented in the country:



It's very important to support the universities in their research activities, but not only in terms of the research activities but also in terms of implementation of the results in the curricula and the teaching and learning process [...] to encourage the implementation of the results of what we further train our students and not only to support research itself. It already happens we have a number of projects both nationally and funded at European level within different programmes - Bulgaria

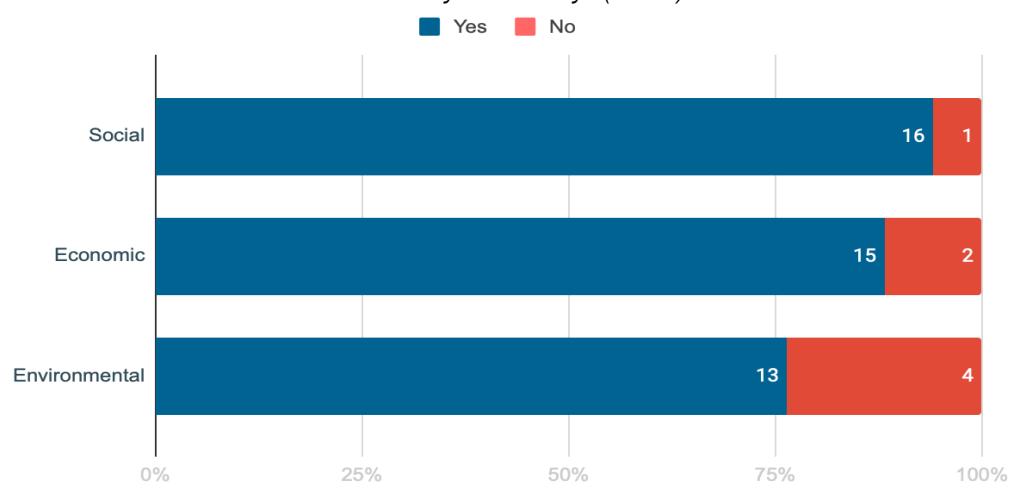


Beyond teaching and research, ASEM countries' strategy documents also refer to the importance for HEIs to establish partnerships across different geographies, disciplines, and sectors for sustainable development. In **Finland**, for instance, partnerships with industry and the private sector are viewed to have a fundamental role in identifying industry needs and facilitating workplace learning alongside research cooperation. Strengthening domestic and foreign partnerships are also policy priorities, including collaborations with entities in the EU, Nordic countries, the UN, and other multilateral organisations and international development finance institutions.

As for HEI governance, **Germany** sets recommendations on the need for funding sustainable construction and property management, including energy and resource conservation, mobility, and campus design. Establishing attractive work conditions for HE researchers alongside the teaching staff is also one of **Slovenia's** policy targets, as does **Latvia** for teacher salaries. In **Finland**, the government planned to generate the objectives and guidelines for accessibility plans in HE to promote equality in education HEIs' accessibility plans by 2021. These plans would then be used by HEIs to generate their own accessibility plans in 2022 with the aim of increasing underrepresented groups' HE participation and completion (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d.).

Figure 17 • Sustainability Dimensions Addressed in ASEM countries' Reference Documents

In the government document(s) you identified, which sustainability dimensions are addressed by higher education in your country? (N=17)



According to the survey responses, 12 of the 17 ASEM countries with available reference documents address the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability at the same time, with the social dimension being the most commonly tackled. Two countries have indicated addressing only one of these three dimensions in their strategies. Although there is evidence of targeted strategies in HE to address the multi-dimensional and complex nature of sustainable development, several challenges continue to impede the progress on SDGs.

When asked about the key obstacles that HEIs face in their country contexts with regard to their work on the SDGs, structural issues such as lack of time, funding, human resources, and infrastructure were the most commonly cited barriers (n=18), followed by strategic issues (such as lack of or unclear strategy on the SDGs) (n=15). These findings align with the findings of Part 2 of this report focusing on HEIs' perspectives, where structural issues such as lack of funding and lack of staff also emerged as the most common challenges among HEIs in ASEM countries (see Figure 51). These findings coincide with responses from the FGDs discussion, where some of the challenges identified include the lack of human resources, funding for research, quality gaps in education and research, institutional capacity development, and design of the curriculum.



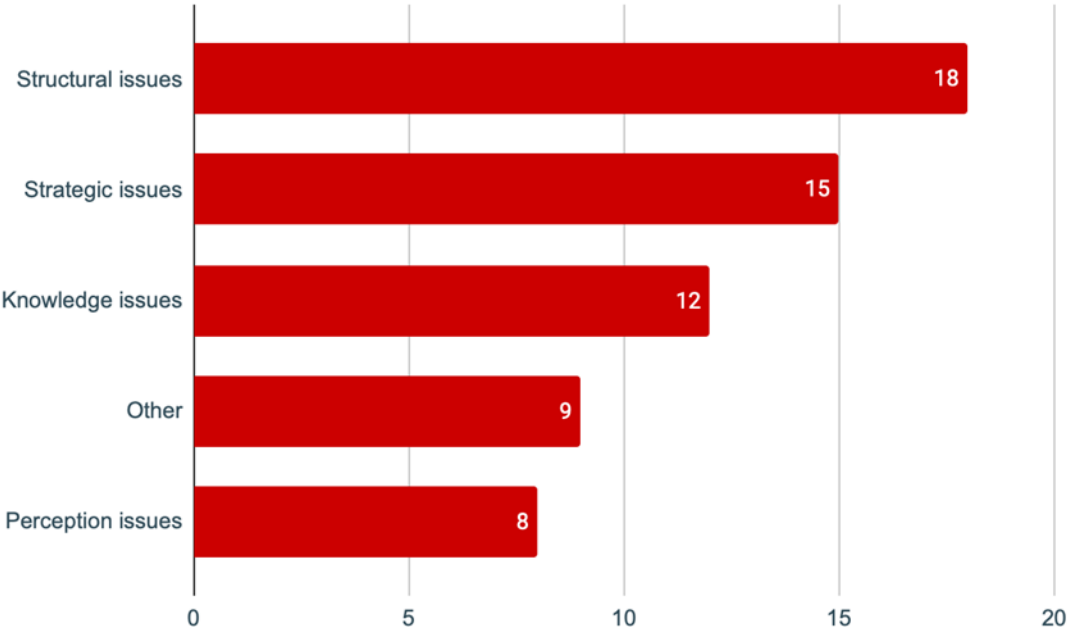
Right now, we are designing the soft skill [development] based on the market needs, because if we talk about the sustainable development it means that the teaching & learning process in Lao PDR should be changed; should be teacher and student centred; based on community and market needs; so the curriculum must be dynamic and address the quality assurance - Lao PDR

We emphasise the research for our education especially in the overseas countries to develop the memorandum of understanding especially with the USA, UK, Canada, Australia. It is the blended mode and transfer of the whole education or internalisation for the institutional capacity development [...] as a product of SDG Framework - Bangladesh



Figure 18 • Policymaker Perspective on Key Obstacles for Universities to Contribute to the SDGs

In your opinion, what are the key obstacles for universities in your country to contribute to the SDGs? (N=28)



Meanwhile, knowledge issues (e.g. lack of information, awareness, or knowledge of the SDGs and the UN 2030 Agenda) (n=12) and perception issues (e.g. lack of interest, SDGs viewed as just a buzzword) (n=8) were also cited as challenges. Nine respondents marked ‘Other’ to add other challenges (e.g. coordination issues where HEIs have their own strategies, capacity building) or to give additional information. As for the latter, some respondents opined that structural issues are confounded by the low priority ascribed to the SDGs in comparison to other challenges, that there are limited opportunities for cooperation between HEIs, that they need more time and a step-by-step process to realise the SDGs, and that the COVID-19 crisis impeded progress on the SDGs. This last point runs parallel with data in Part 2 of this report, HEI’s perspectives showing that ASEM HEIs from both Europe and Asia report their institutional strategies and activities for sustainable development being impacted by the pandemic (see Figure 54).

Despite these challenges, several policy interventions have been employed in ASEM countries to boost HE's contributions to the SDGs. These tools will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, as well as concrete examples of how they are implemented in different national contexts.

6. Policy Tools and Implementation for Tackling SDGs in Higher Education

Overall, ASEM countries employ a variety of policy tools to support and encourage HEIs to contribute to the SDGs. As discussed in the literature review section, these tools may be broadly categorised into symbolic, incentive, authority, capacity, and learning tools (see Annex 2 for an overview of policy tools and their examples).

Symbolic policy tools aim to influence people's perceptions and values through strategies and goal-setting. Incentive tools, on the other hand, include tangible benefits (such as funding and reputational incentives including rankings, labels, and awards) to encourage actors towards desirable behaviours. Authority tools come in the form of obligations, binding agreements, and accreditation requirements, while capacity building tools refer to access to facilities, resources, information, or networks for implementation and evaluation of SDG progress. Lastly, learning tools include evaluation reports and other monitoring mechanisms such as indicators and targets.

Figure 19 • Categories of Policy Tools Included in the Survey

Category	Examples
Incentive	Financial support National rankings, labels, and awards
Authority	Legal obligations Accreditation requirements
Symbolic	Government document referenced for the SDGs
Capacity building	Access to facilities and infrastructure Special units advising and guidelines
Learning	Tools for self-assessment Optional institutional reviews Audit, monitoring, and evaluation

Based on the survey, incentives are the most commonly employed policy tool among the ASEM countries surveyed in the form of financial support (n=26), followed by authority tools (n=19) such as accreditation requirements and capacity building tools including providing access to facilities and guidelines. Interestingly, while providing a common vision or strategy (as a symbolic policy tool) was perceived by the respondents to be the main responsibility of governments (see Figure 10), formal strategy setting in the form of documented national plans and declarations on HE and the SDGs are only currently available for slightly more than half of the ASEM countries surveyed.

Figure 20 • Policy Tools Employed by Survey Respondents, by Type

Which of the following policy tools are used to encourage higher education institutions to address the SDGs in your country? (N=28)

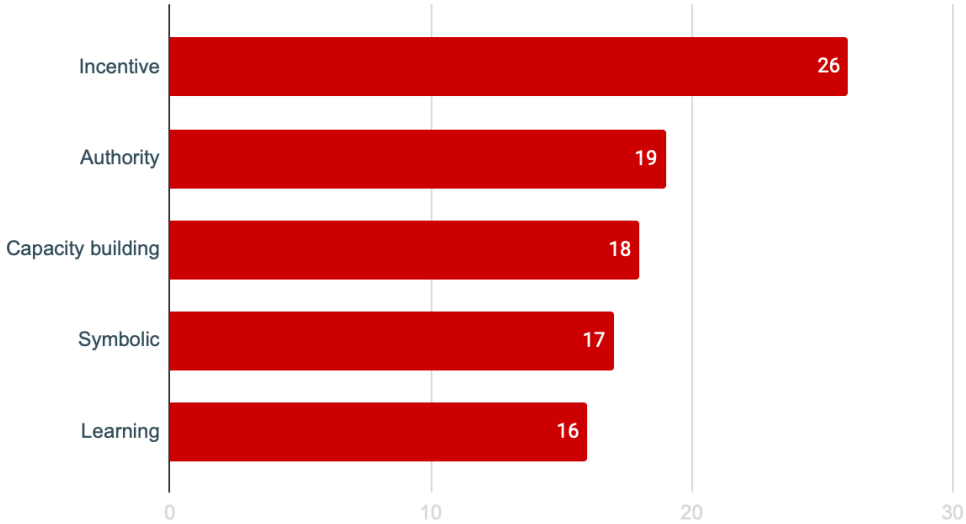
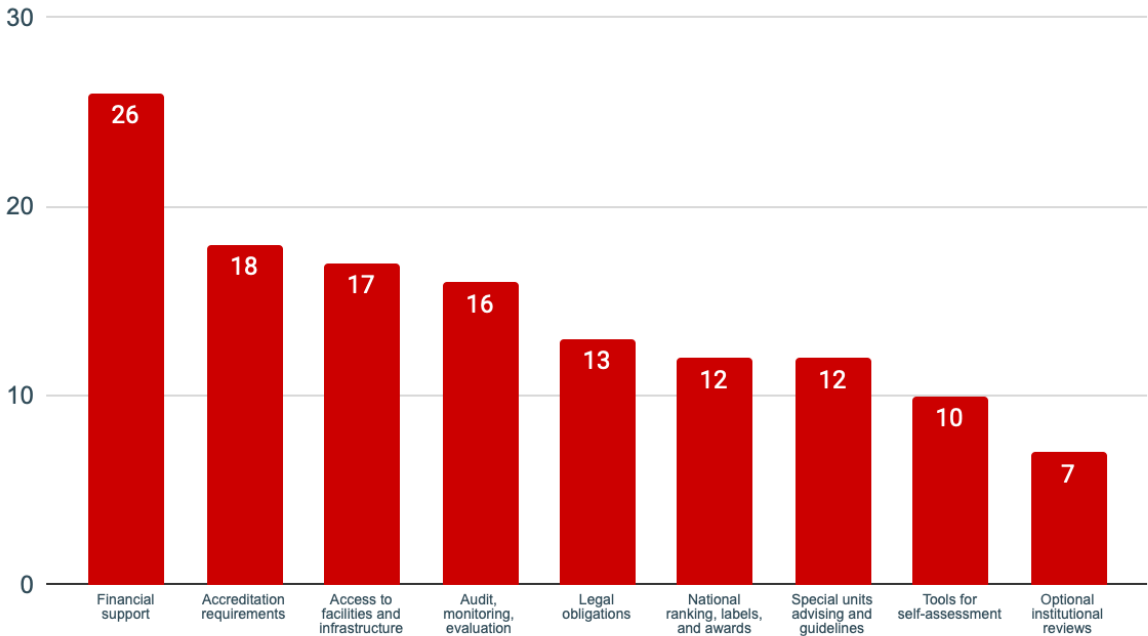


Figure 21 • Examples of Policy Tools Employed by Survey Respondents

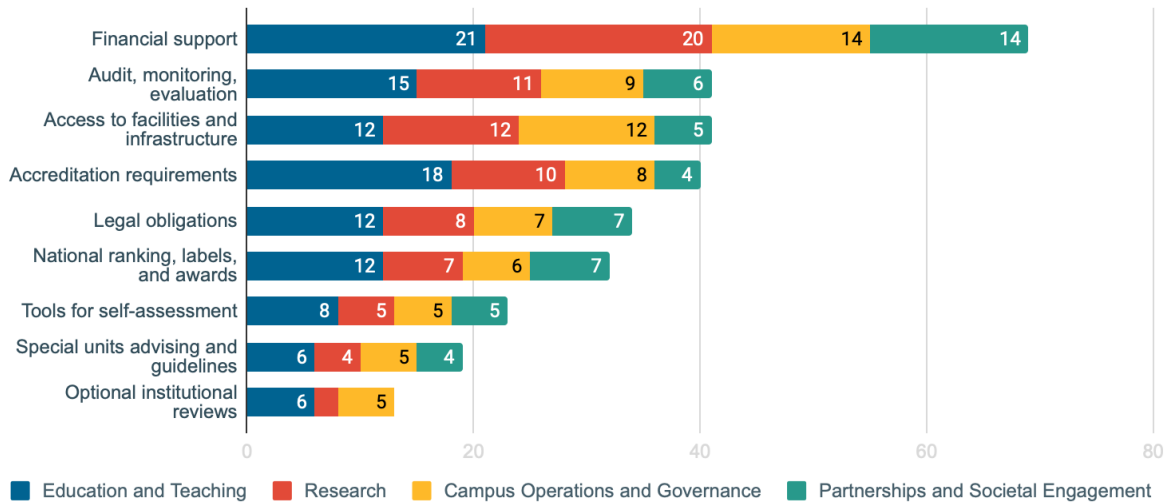


It was also found that the most commonly targeted HE mission of these policy tools is Education and Teaching, followed by Research. Meanwhile, the survey results also revealed that Partnerships and Societal Engagement is the least targeted, which may be explained by either a high level of organic network building among the HEIs themselves, or the lower policy priority ascribed to this mission in relation to others. Regardless, partnerships and societal engagement are key to the successful implementation of the SDGs, and it remains to be seen how policy makers are able to incentivise and support this mission through policy interventions. This is especially important given this mission’s central role in achieving the SDGs. As the FGD respondent from **Greece** pointed out:

“ Interconnection is one of the key aspects in sustainability and I think that our universities are very much interested in working closely with everybody whether it is another University, the local community, or a broader community in Europe or Asia – Greece ”

Figure 22 • Higher Education Missions Targeted by Policy Tools

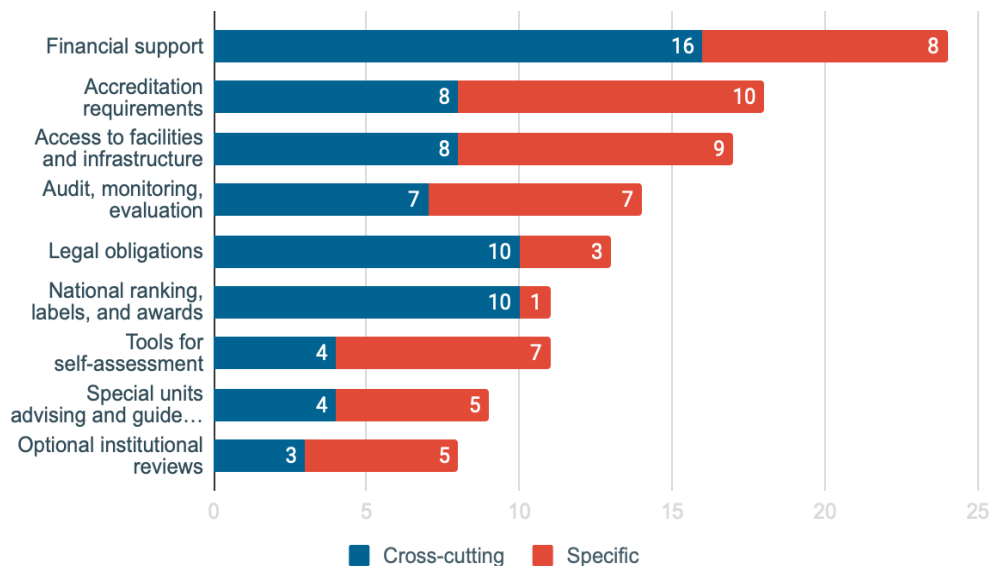
Which of the following policy tools are used to encourage higher education institutions to address the SDGs in your country?



Meanwhile, the survey findings suggest that incentive and authority tools tend to be used in a holistic and cross-cutting way, although some respondents identified specific targets such as SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 8, and SDG 9. Meanwhile, capacity building and learning tools are most often employed by targeting specific SDGs, most commonly SDG 4, but also SDG 5, SDG 8, and SDG 9.

Figure 23 • Cross-cutting vs Specific Approach to Policy Tools for the SDGs

Please indicate whether the policy tools you identified are cut across the SDGs or are oriented towards specific SDGs. If these policy tools are oriented towards specific SDGs, please identify which SDGs.

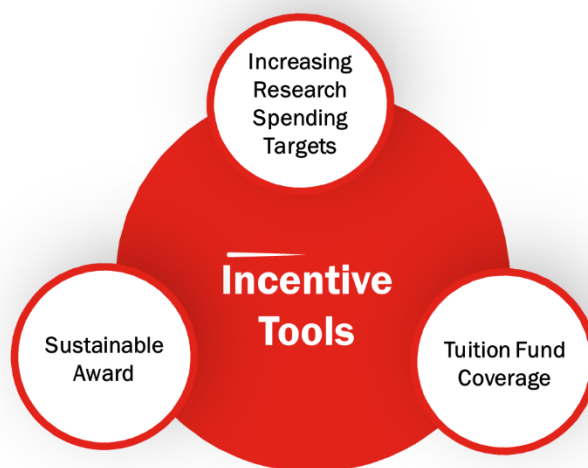


6.1. Incentive Tools

Financial support as a form of incentive tool has been found to be the most common policy tool employed by ASEM countries (n=26). Meanwhile, more than half (n=18) reported using reputational incentives in the form of national rankings, labels, and awards.

In the **Philippines**, targeted funding for research has been made available through the Grants-in-Aid Programme, which is aimed at supporting HEIs to innovatively work on SDG-relevant research areas and development issues. When evaluating applications for such grants, collaboration, multidisciplinary, and gender sensitivity and balance are considered. Meanwhile, target goals for funding are reflected in **Slovenia**'s national strategy, such as (1) increasing the total funds available to higher education and scientific and research work, (2) improving the facilities and equipments of institutions through lump sum funding and systemic regulation of investments in green and intelligent infrastructure, and (3) providing tax incentives for investments in the higher education and research system by the private sector, among others. Targets for research funding's share in the total GDP have also been identified in some ASEM countries' strategies, including **Finland** (4%), **Luxembourg** (1% for public research), and **Latvia** (1.5% by 2027). Meanwhile, in **Ireland**, a total of 2.1 million euros were provided to HEIs in 2018 to promote sustainable development (Government of Ireland, 2021). In the **United Kingdom**, the 16 to 19 tuition fund aims to enhance the opportunities for adults and young people to access HE and further education, especially as a result of the pandemic. In **Belgium**, some incentives are available through the 'Next Generation EU Fund', encouraging renovation of buildings and infrastructure.

Figure 24 • Incentive Policy Tools



In addition to funding, awards and rankings have also been cited by two ASEM countries as policy tools of choice for encouraging HEIs to work towards the SDGs. For instance, the **Austrian Sustainability Award** is a nationwide competition aimed at providing an incentive for Austrian HEIs to work towards sustainability covering the main missions of HEIs (*Sustainability Award für herausragende nachhaltige Projekte an Hochschulen*, n.d.). Conducted bi-annually, its goal is to foster university-wide sustainability geared towards long-term, participatory, and reflective learning. Similarly, the **Japan SDGs Award** was launched in 2017 to boost actions for sustainable development from a wide variety of stakeholders (*Japan SDGs Award / JAPAN SDGs Action Platform*, n.d.).

6.2. Authority Tools

Data from the survey revealed that accreditation requirements are used by more than half of the country participants (n=15) as a way to boost HEIs' contribution to the SDGs, thus being the second most employed policy tool by ASEM national governments next to funding. Additionally, legal obligations are used by slightly less than half of the ASEM countries surveyed (n=10).

In **Switzerland**, the *Higher Education Act, HEdA* of 30 September 2011 contains stipulations as to HEIs' quality control and accreditation and funding. According to Article 30 of the said Act, institutional accreditation will be based on having a quality control mechanism to ensure that 'tasks are carried out in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and true gender equality' and that "tasks further the aims of economic, social and environmental sustainability" (p. 12), among other requirements. These dimensions are also reflected in the *Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the Higher Education Sector* of 28 May 2015.

In **Bangladesh**, the *Bangladesh Accreditation Council* promotes institutional quality in HEIs focusing on teaching and learning, content development, academic practice, and outcome. All public and private universities in the country have Quality Assurance Cells (QAC), which are viewed to be a product of the SDG framework. Meanwhile, according to a HE expert from **India**, the *National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)* serves as an autonomous body for quality assessment of HEIs in the country and was established with the recommendation of the National Education Policy, which embeds SDGs. NAAC framework seeks compliance from HEIs. In **Myanmar**, the quality of education is a prime concern and is enforced through an accreditation mechanism for universities.

Figure 25 • Authority Policy Tools



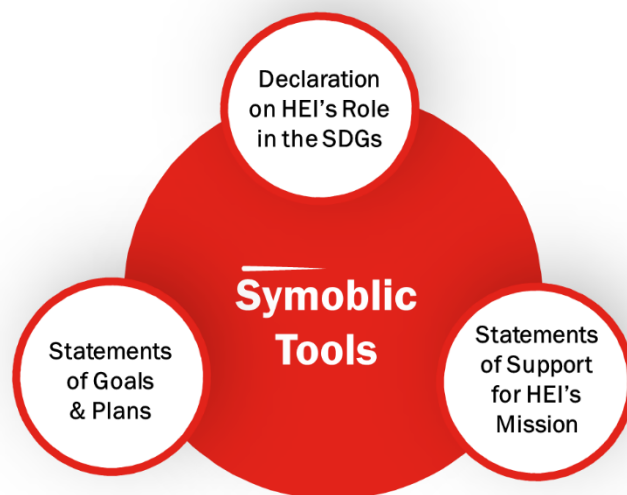
Meanwhile, performance agreements between the government and higher education institutions are being employed in **Luxembourg** and **Austria** (as contracts between the Ministry and each University for a four- and three-year time period, respectively). For Luxembourg, these contracts – called *Leistungsvereinbarungen* – encourage the achievement of “a number of objectives concretized by indicators and output results in return for the state allocation, thus linking the expenditure of higher education, research and innovation with the expected results on the scientific, economic and social levels” (The Luxembourg Government, 2022). FDG data revealed that similar performance agreement arrangements are found in **Hungary**.

While regulatory mechanisms figure prominently in many national approaches to the SDGs, the **German** Rectors' recommendations allude to the importance of developing a culture of sustainability that goes beyond obligations such as quotas, additional reporting, and guidelines, thereby avoiding unnecessary interference with HEIs' autonomy and adopting a reasonable approach to measuring SDG progress.

6.3. Symbolic Tools

As indicated in *Point 5.2. SDGs in Government Policies* (Figure 14), 17 of the 29 ASEM countries surveyed identified government strategies and implementation plans as reference documents in their response to the SDGs in HE. In a number of these strategies, HE has been specifically referenced as a key player in sustainable development, with education being “a key enabler of all other SDGs” (**Ireland**⁷) (p.8). HEIs are also seen as “workshops of the future for society” (**Germany**⁸) (p. 3), as a key source in devising solutions for sustainable development and green and digital transition (**Slovenia**), and as an important source for “training future scientists and decision-makers and by laying the scientific groundwork for sustainability innovations” (**Switzerland**⁹) (p. 49). Similarly, in **Hungary**, HEIs are seen as drivers of social innovation to respond to social challenges.

Figure 26 • Symbolic Policy Tools



Considering the central role of HEIs for the SDGs, the reference documents outlined also embody statements of support and targeted goals for HE's various missions, including education and teaching, research, partnerships, and campus operations and governance. Strategies from **Germany**, **Switzerland**, **Ireland**, and **Hungary** assert the importance of addressing sustainable development in the curricula and learning materials, while pedagogical innovations also feature in several of the national strategies cited. For instance, student-centred teaching through hybrid delivery modes is proposed in **Slovenia**, stipulating the need to incorporate entrepreneurship, cross-sectoral initiatives, and practical education in the curricula to enable a smoother transition to the labour market for graduates. In **India**, the curricula of all HEIs are envisaged to include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of environmental education. The country's policy also asserts the importance of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as “a response to contemporary global challenges” and “to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies”

⁷ ESD to 2030: Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development

⁸ Recommendation by the 25th General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) on 6 November 2018

⁹ 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy

(Ministry of Human Resource Development of India, 2020). Meanwhile, part of **Malaysia's** strategy involves equipping its talents with the knowledge and skills for sustainable development and green growth.

Increased national spending for research (**Luxembourg, Latvia, Switzerland**), targeted research support (**Philippines, Hungary**), gender equality in research staff (**Switzerland, Philippines**), and promoting interdisciplinarity (**Germany, Hungary, Philippines**), are some examples of ASEM countries' policy priorities for research. Multi-level partnerships across geographies, disciplines, and sectors when developing study programmes, research projects, and publications are also viewed as an important step towards the SDGs in the strategies cited. For instance, **Malaysia's** national strategy commits to enhancing collaborations between HEIs and the industry to tackle skills shortages. Meanwhile, examples of goals for campus operations and governance would involve the launch of model projects to tackle environmental and energy efficiency in public buildings (**Hungary**), encouraging HEIs to reflect sustainable development in institutional goals and mission statements (**Germany**), and encouraging HEIs to develop Institutional Development Plans that contain action plans to increase participation among socioeconomically disadvantaged students (**India**).

6.4. Capacity Building Tools

Slightly more than half (n=17) of the ASEM countries surveyed reported that they employ capacity building tools to encourage HEIs to contribute to the SDGs. An example includes providing targeted support through network building, as demonstrated by the **Swiss** Universities Development and Cooperation Network (SUDAC) programme. It aims to enable collaboration between HEIs in **Switzerland** and their partners from the Global South, thereby promoting not only excellence in education but also research and innovation that respond to global challenges. In **Malaysia**, establishing closer industry-academia ties through the Industry Centres of Excellence program (ICoE) has been identified in the document The Twelfth Malaysia Plan. ICoE enables industry stakeholders to set up laboratories and teaching facilities in HEIs, thus providing students with exposure to the latest technologies around specific clusters. More examples of policy support for collaborations were gleaned from the FGDs, whereby participants from **Greece** and **Lao PDR** identified the importance of building networks as part of their country's response to the SDGs. Specifically for the latter:



The government of Lao PDR supports the public universities in two [aspects], first, capacity building in the human resources, with training, workshop etc., and the second, building the network. [by doing so] the central government supports the higher education [institutions] to improve the quality of teaching and learning process and, also the quality of the graduate students
- Lao PDR



Meanwhile, informational support is being employed in **Ireland**, where an online directory¹⁰ of resources has been compiled to support the teaching and learning of ESD. In **Finland**, the government uses 'information-based steering' in their education policies, including sharing research and register data, preparing guides, recommendations and other publications, providing information on the application of legislation, providing training and consultation services, and interaction and exchanges of information in various working groups, networks, negotiation systems, and RDI activities (Finnish Government, 2021). More specifically in the field of Education and

¹⁰ <https://www.scoilnet.ie/esd/>

Training, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Academy of Finland will continue to assist in the profiling of HEIs' areas of competence in order to more adequately respond to the competence needs of the business community and society (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Meanwhile, FGD responses also point to capacity building as an integral part of Lao PDR's central government's support through trainings and workshops about the SDGs.

Figure 27 • Capacity Building Policy Tools



6.5. Learning Tools

As with capacity building, learning tools such as audit, monitoring, and evaluation instruments are reported to be employed by a little more than half (n=16) of the survey respondents. In the **Finnish** context, continuous evaluations and data collection efforts are identified in their strategy documents as a way to improve the quality of education and learning, with the Ministry of Education and Culture periodically generating an overview of the state of HE.

Similar efforts to engage in monitoring and evaluation have been reported in **Luxembourg**, where external evaluations of the only public university in the country - the University of Luxembourg - are conducted every two years in light of continuous quality improvement and generating added value to the University. In the **United Kingdom**, its 5th annual report was launched in 2021, which discussed the progress made towards measuring the global SDG indicators in the country, including steps to make data and evidence gathering more inclusive by generating new tools to search for disaggregated data as well as efforts to enhance SDG reporting at a sub-national level together with local actors.

In addition to reports, the creation of HE indicators and targets have also been implemented to support the SDGs. **Mongolia** has developed a national-level set of targets and indicators related to quality education (SDG 4), one of which involves the existence of parity indices in all levels of education (including HE) along demographic factors such as gender, disability, and minority status.

Malaysia has committed to continuing to expand and strengthen the country's data for SDG indicators at the national, state, and local levels. **Switzerland** employs the enhanced MONET 2030 indicator system for monitoring sustainable development and the progress made on the 2030 UN Agenda objectives adapted to the Swiss context.

Figure 28 • Learning Policy Tools



More specifically, it embodies one indicator specific to higher education - the equality of opportunities for women teaching staff at HEIs. Meanwhile, **Finland** and **Slovenia** have set out to achieve a 50% higher education completion rate, while **Lithuania** lists the proportion of HEI graduates as one of its indicators. With regard to HE as it relates to employment, in the **United Kingdom**, the percentage of recent HE graduates in high-skilled work is included as an indicator of success in delivering national education targets aligned with the SDGs. In the realm of partnerships, **Hungary** has included the number of consultative forums and collaborations between HE and government bodies as a performance indicator.

Overall, it can be gleaned from the study data that there is a wide variety of national approaches to HE policy setting, employing a range of authority, incentive, symbolic, capacity building, and learning tools to encourage SDG contributions in and through higher education. The examples discussed in this section also show that such policy tools aim to respond to HEIs' core missions of Education and Teaching, Research, Campus Operations and Governance, and Partnerships and Societal Engagement - albeit in varying degrees.

7. Applying the SDGs in the National Higher Education Context

According to Biermann et al. (2017), globally defined goals such as the SDGs can serve as governance tools that can influence the behaviours of governments, organisations, and various actors. While their non-binding nature allows for freedom and flexibility, adapting them to the national and local contexts is crucial to foster ownership and public support (GUNi, 2019). Indeed, the success of the SDGs rests on the actions of national and local stakeholders (Ansell Sorensen, & Torfing, 2022; Messias et al., 2018; Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, n.d.) as well as the “effective translation between global aspirations and national contextual policies and/or aspirations” (Biermann & Kanie, 2017, p. 304). This exercise of interpreting the global SDGs in light of national and local goals - or the “SDG cascade” (Ansell, et al., 2022) - is “essential for ensuring that the SDGs reflect local needs, norms, and values, thus ensuring that local actors find them relevant and meaningful” (ibid., p. 41).

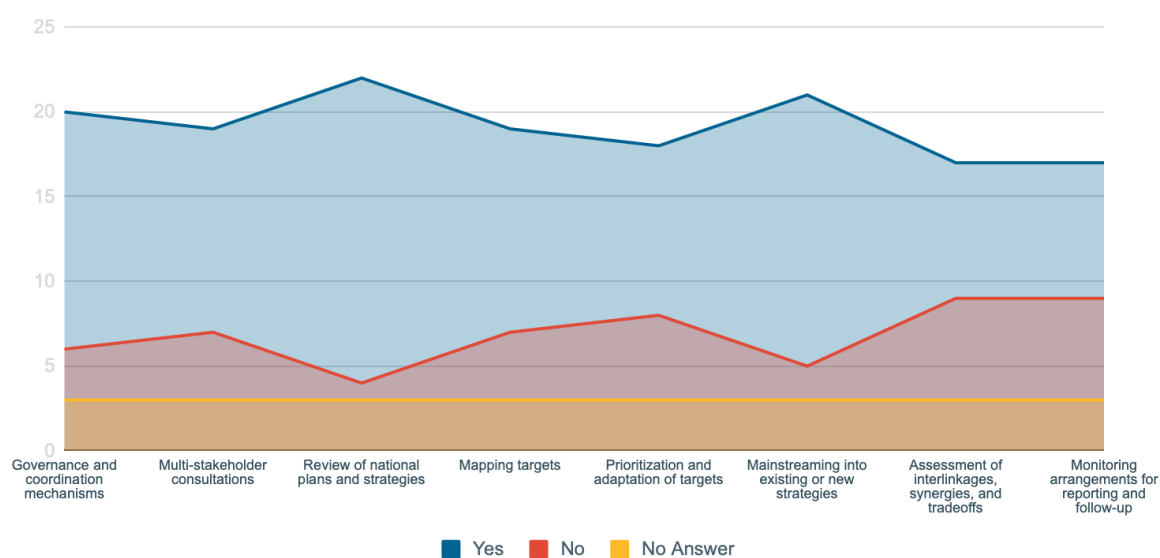
The SDG cascade starts with formulating national agendas in relation to the SDGs, including mapping existing initiatives, identifying synergies and tradeoffs, and developing indicators and benchmarks (Ansell et al., 2022). Allen, Metternicht, & Wiedmann's (2018) review of SDG

guidelines and toolkits identified a number of key steps across the policy cycle that are recommended for such a process, including stakeholder consultation, prioritisation, assessing interlinkages, policy evaluation, and establishing monitoring and review mechanisms. Some of these steps have been included in the survey to map the policy efforts of ASEM respondents on this front and to identify the stakeholders that are involved.

As shown in Figure 29 below, the most commonly conducted steps among the respondents are related to strategy development, most especially the review of national plans (n=22) as well as mainstreaming of the SDGs into new or existing strategies (n=21). Out of all the steps, slightly fewer respondents reported undertaking the latter steps of the policy process, such as the assessment of interlinkages, synergies, and trade-offs (n=17) and monitoring arrangements and follow-up (n=17). Although working with a smaller sample, this study's findings coincide with Allen et al.'s (2018) results on the implementation gaps relating to these steps. Several authors have particularly highlighted the importance of assessing interlinkages across the SDGs to identify which goals and targets have synergistic relationships and can have a multiplier effect on SDG efforts. For instance, Weitz and colleagues (2015) argues that focusing on climate change and sustainable consumption and production could more easily achieve other targets involving health, food security, better access to water, and inclusive economic growth.

Figure 29 • Key Steps Undertaken in Policy Process to Implement the SDGs

Below we listed key steps to contextualise the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in a country's higher education context (rows). Please share if you have done these steps in your country and identify which partners were involved in these steps (Column). (N=29)



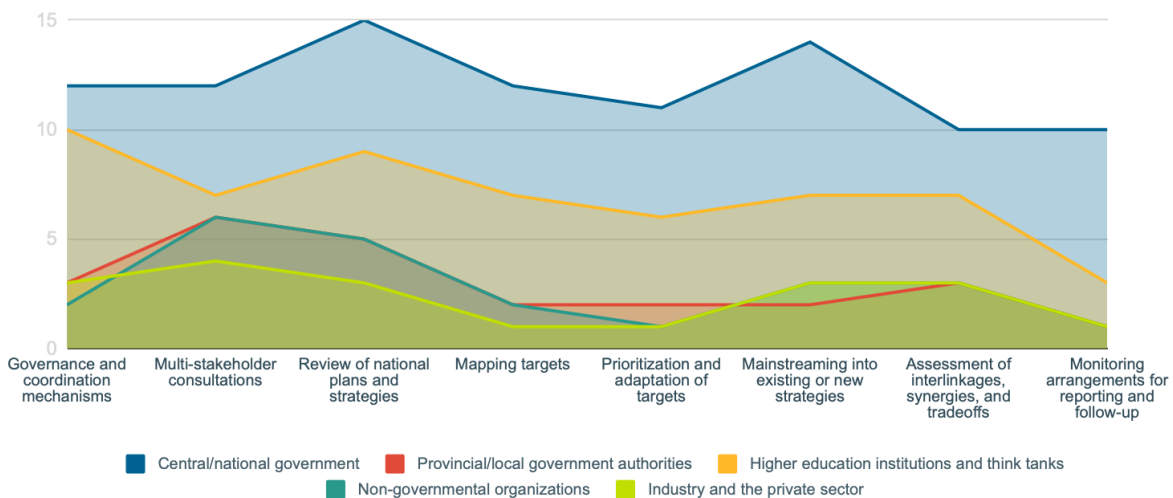
Some ASEM countries have indicated the implementation of key steps in their own national strategies. In **Switzerland**, a baseline assessment was conducted in 2015 analysing the 2030 Agenda goals and targets against Switzerland's degree of attainment, thereby providing the basis for the prioritisation of targets. Meanwhile, **Ireland** details its consultative process in the development of their national strategy, which included a public survey, targeted focus groups and meetings with key stakeholders, rolling analysis of data and identification of key themes, an online National Forum Event held in February 2022, and a detailed consultation report (Government of Ireland, n.d.).

Malaysia aims to promote evidence-based policy making by creating a dedicated network of experts from governments, research institutions, and HEIs and using available research to improve the effectiveness of policies and programmes especially on boosting the country’s economic growth and competitiveness. FGD responses reveal that in **Spain**, consultative groups with students, university rectors, and federal authorities are being conducted towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Analysing the stakeholders involved in each of these key steps, survey results suggest that central or national governments are most engaged, followed by HEIs and think tanks. There is also a relatively limited involvement among provincial or state government, NGOs, and industry players especially when mapping, prioritising, and adapting SDG targets. Across the stakeholder groups, higher involvement is noted in the initial stages of the policy process, especially multi-stakeholder consultations and strategy development, and a more limited engagement in monitoring arrangements for reporting and follow-up.

Figure 30 • Stakeholders Involved in Key Policy Steps to Implement the SDGs

Below we listed key steps to contextualize the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in a country's higher education context (rows). Please share if you have done these steps in your country and identify which partners were involved in these steps (Column). (N=29)



Survey results also suggest that aside from central/national governments, HEIs comprise the stakeholder group with greater involvement in key policy steps. Despite this, they nevertheless are less involved in the monitoring and follow-up of the SDGs compared to strategy setting and the other initial steps of the policy process. This shows an important gap that limits HEIs’ contributions to the SDGs, presenting an opportunity for further action in order to establish stronger links between policy, science, and practice in HE.

8. Conclusions

Research Question 1. To what extent are ASEM national higher education policies oriented towards the SDGs?

Several ASEM countries have drafted national strategies and implementation plans that either directly respond to the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs or tackle a sustainability-related dimension. Sustainability dimensions are incorporated in many countries’ higher education policies, either as part of the broader national agenda or a standalone higher education strategy. Many of these

documents cite guidelines and statements on the SDGs from intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and UNESCO, while several European countries also alluded to the influence of European-level policy on the SDGs in their national strategies.

SDG 4 (Quality Education) is a higher education policy priority in most of the ASEM partner countries surveyed. Other SDG priorities cited include SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).



Higher education institutions are seen as playing a fundamental role in contributing to the SDGs, especially around their core missions including (1) Education and Teaching, (2) Research, (3) Campus Operations and Governance, and (4) Partnerships and Societal Engagement. Several ASEM partner countries also identified the importance of bridging the gap between teaching and research, where systematically incorporating research findings into teaching approaches as well as greater involvement of HE teachers in research are viewed to boost HE's contribution to the SDGs overall.

Research Question 2. How do ASEM higher education policies translate the global goals into local goals?

Existing literature alludes to the importance of interpreting the global SDGs in light of national and local goals and aspirations in the success of the SDGs, ensuring buy-in and meaningful participation among relevant stakeholders. This exercise of translating the SDGs usually involves various steps of the policy process, from the initial stages of multi-stakeholder consultations and strategy development throughout reporting and follow-up.

The survey results suggest that the most commonly conducted steps among the respondents are related to strategy development, most especially the review of national plans as well as mainstreaming of the SDGs into new or existing strategies. Out of all the steps, those least undertaken coincide with the later steps of the policy process, such as the assessment of interlinkages, synergies, and tradeoffs and monitoring arrangements and follow-up. This study's findings coincide with previous studies on the implementation gaps relating to these steps. The same is true for HEIs. Although they have a relatively higher engagement than local governments, NGOs, and industry players – they nevertheless are less involved in the monitoring and follow-up of the SDGs compared to strategy setting and the other initial steps of the policy process.

Research question 3. Which mission of the universities are the most often targeted?

HEIs are viewed to have an important role to play in tackling sustainable development in the SDG reference documents among ASEM countries. Their role aligns with the various HE missions identified in existing literature, including Education and Teaching, Research, Partnerships, and Campus Operations and Governance.

The survey results revealed that Education and Training are the most often targeted HE missions across all the policy tools, including financial incentives, accreditation requirements, and audit, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. This is followed by Research and Campus Operations and Governance. Meanwhile, Partnerships and Societal Engagement turned out to be the least

targeted, which may be explained by either a high level of organic network building among the HEIs themselves or a lower policy priority ascribed to this mission in relation to others. Regardless, partnerships and societal engagement are key to the successful implementation of the SDGs, and it remains to be seen how policy makers are able to incentivise and support this mission through policy interventions.

Research question 4. What kind of policy tools are most often used to promote sustainable development in higher education?

ASEM partner countries employ a variety of policy tools to strengthen and promote higher education's contribution to the SDGs. Findings from the survey and FGDs suggest a prevailing view that governments should be leading the implementation of SDGs in higher education, implying a sense of ownership among ASEM countries' policy leaders when tackling the complex issue of sustainable development in and through higher education. This also reaffirms governments' fundamental responsibility for successfully implementing the Agenda as identified in UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action. Their perceived scope of responsibility relates to strategy development, enforcement of regulations, and funding provision, which the survey results confirmed to be the same areas in which policy instruments are currently being employed.

Among the surveyed ASEM countries, financial incentives are the most commonly used policy tool, followed by authority tools such as accreditation requirements and capacity building tools such as access to facilities and infrastructure and guidelines provision. Other types of policy measures also emerged, including sustainability-focused national awards, increased spending targets for research, tuition fund coverage, accreditation requirements, performance agreements between governments and HEIs, quality assurance frameworks, network building, and informational support through online resources on sustainable development.

Recommendations

- 1** | Develop closer collaborations between policy makers and HEIs for evidence-based policy making
- 2** | Extend vision statements and strategic plans to include concrete implementation steps, indicators of progress, and clear responsibilities
- 3** | Enhance the participation of local stakeholder groups, including local government bodies, NGOs, and industry players, in SDG-relevant policy making in HE
- 4** | Provide more targeted policy support to encourage partnerships and societal engagement among Higher Education Institutions
- 5** | Fund and support further studies examining the achievements of policy interventions in supporting SDG implementation in HE as well as their challenges



Part 2 |

Mapping Higher Education Institution Perspectives

Written by: Dr Doria ABDULLAH, Dr Anumoni JOSHI, Dr Miguel Antonio LIM

Part 2 | Mapping Higher Education Institution Perspectives

1. Summary

This report presents findings from the second study commissioned by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) as part of the 9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC9) titled “Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards SDGs”. It showcases developments regarding sustainable development in the higher education sector, from the perspective of higher education institutions.

The study was conducted in partnership with the International Association of Universities (IAU). Data from the third iteration of IAU Global Survey on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD) specific for ASEM Partner Countries was analysed to investigate the scope, depth and breadth of engagement by higher education institutions with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It seeks answers to the following research questions:

- RQ1. Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015, how do higher education institutions (HEIs) across ASEM member states engage with the global agenda?
- RQ2. What are the differences in sustainable development (SD) practices conducted by the higher education institutions in Asia and Europe?
- RQ3. Are there challenges about SD implementation that are unique to HEIs from ASEM member states?
- RQ4. What are the interventions required by HEIs from ASEM member states in accelerating their pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs?

A total of 240 respondents from 42 ASEM partner countries completed the study. Out of this figure, 119 (49.6%) respondents came from Asia, representing 17 countries, and 121 (50.4%) respondents came from Europe, representing 25 countries.

Descriptive analysis was conducted on the IAU-HESD 2022 survey dataset between August to November 2022. The survey instrument and findings were also verified through psychometric analysis. Preliminary findings were presented to the ARC9 Advisory Group on 15 September 2022, as well as in a series of dissemination events between October to November 2022.

Based on findings of the survey, the study proposes 5 critical spotlight areas and **14 recommendations** for policymakers and higher education leaders to consider as they intensify sustainable development action at their respective institutions:



Spotlight #1: Mind the knowledge gaps

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge sustainable development as a core competency for academics, administrative staff, and students in higher education
- Increase inclusion of content related to sustainable development as part of curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels

- Provide training on sustainable development in higher education institutions
- Encourage students and staff to leverage on repositories and resources that are available via open access in bridging their knowledge gap related to sustainable development
- Collaborate with stakeholders at local, national, regional, and global levels

**Spotlight #2: Empower students and staff**

Recommendations:

- Recognise that student and staff participation is important in communicating institutional leadership commitment towards sustainable development
- Provide incentives to students and staff to drive sustainable development projects on behalf of the institution, with stakeholders within and beyond HEIs
- Outline guidelines and best practices for students and staff in conducting sustainable development projects, and ensure that advisory and support services are accessible to those in need
- Recognise successful projects and initiatives that are conducted by students and staff

**Spotlight #3: Don't forget the local context**

Recommendations:

- Reinvigorate the UN Secretary-General's call to mobilise action on the 2030 Agenda through the following:
 - Global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the SDGs;
 - Local action embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and
 - People action, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations

**Spotlight #4: Practise evidence-informed sustainable development action**

Recommendations:

- Implement good practices in documenting and reporting projects and programmes on sustainable development at respective institutions
- Use insights generated from the documents and reports in better allocation of resources (funds, manpower); Giving institutional recognition to students and staff; Conducting public advocacy on sustainable development in local and international communities; Conducting teaching, research, and service activities related to sustainable development; Identifying collaborators at different levels, either within or beyond higher education contexts
- Advocate, as a collective of higher education institutions, the need for greater allocation of resources for sustainable development action at the national level

**Spotlight #5: Engage in continuous dialogues on sustainable development**

Recommendations:

- Organise and / or participate in dialogues, forums, conferences, networking events and publications, both online and offline on sustainable development which would enable students and staff to Develop comparative insights across borders; Share best practices; Explore collaboration opportunities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Objective

To investigate the scope, depth and breadth of engagement by higher education institutions - based in one of the ASEM Partner countries - with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Research questions

- RQ1. Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015, how do higher education institutions (HEIs) across ASEM member states engage with the global agenda?
- RQ2. What are the differences in sustainable development (SD) practices conducted by the higher education institutions in Asia and Europe?
- RQ3. Are there challenges about SD implementation that are unique to HEIs from ASEM member states?
- RQ4. What are the interventions required by HEIs from ASEM member states in accelerating their pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs?

2.2. Key Concepts

Sustainable development

As defined by the 3rd IAU Global Survey Report on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (IAU, 2022):

- Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- Concepts and understandings of sustainable development can vary depending on the regional, cultural, and political context
- Commonly divided into four dimensions: social, economic, environmental, and cultural
- The main dimensions of crosscutting consideration are summarised in the “5Ps” of the SDGs: People (SDGs 1-5), Planet (SDG 13 – 15), Prosperity (SDGs 6-12), Peace (SDG 16), and Partnerships (SDG 17)

Whole institution approach (WIA) (Kohl, K., Hopkins 2022)

- WIA stems from the belief that HE has been at the forefront of sustainable development from the early beginnings. However, the full potential of HE capabilities to enhance the international dialogue and implementation has not been realised to date by either the institutions or governments
- “Whole”: a holistic way of teaching that goes further than knowledge dissemination to include practice and implementation

- WIA is a way to move towards sustainability in a holistic way, encompassing teaching content and methodology, influencing the learning process whilst embedding sustainability in all aspects of the institution including facilities, operations and creating interaction with stakeholders in the community, governance and capacity-building
- Leadership is crucial for successful WIA transformation. It will take leaders at all levels in all departments to achieve fundamental paradigm shifts for HE that will be based upon sustainability as a guiding principle
- WIA requires an institution to adopt the following Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) principles:
 - Addressing access to and retention in affordable quality education at tertiary level;
 - Reorienting teaching and research to address sustainability;
 - Building awareness and understanding of sustainable development with its implications for the graduates, the university and its surrounding community; and
 - Providing training for all staff to promote sustainability in the workplace and at home.

2.3. Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was the IAU – Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (IAU-HESD) survey.

In April 2022, the IAU launched the third iteration of its Global Survey on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (to be written as “3rd IAU-HESD 2022” from this point henceforth), following the first (2016) and second (2019) iterations which received much attention globally.

Data collection was conducted online from April to June 2022. The IAU invited respondents who are familiar with SD implementation at their higher education institutions to complete the survey. Only one response per institution was to be submitted. The questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete, and was available in English, French, and Spanish.

Figure 31 • Constructs Included in the IAU-HESD survey

Construct	Items		Total items	Additional notes
	Quantitative	Qualitative		
Background information	3, 4, 5	2, 6	5	Item 1: terms of data use
2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals	7, 8	-	2	Item 9: prompt to continue or skip construct
Climate change education	10, 11, 12, 13, 14	-	5	Optional section
Whole institution approach	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22	20	8	Item 20 is not included in this report
Institutional engagement with the SDGs	23	24	2	Item 24 is not included in this report
Organisation and governance	25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32	26, 28	8	Items 26 & 28 are not included in this report

Teaching, learning and research	33, 34, 35	-	3	-
Collaboration and partnerships	36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 44	38, 40, 43, 45	10	Items 40, 43 & 45 are not included in this report
IAU and HESD	46, 50	48	3	Item 47: Contact request (focal point)

2.4. Methodology

By the third week of July 2022, ASEF received a set of 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey respondent data from ASEM member states that was cleaned and sorted by region. This set of data was shared with ARC9 researchers for analysis, which was conducted throughout August and September 2022. Descriptive analysis was conducted on the dataset.

Preliminary findings were presented to the ARC9 Advisory Group on 15 September 2022 through a virtual presentation session. Group members provided critical comments to the research team, as well as useful recommendations for the next stage of analysis.

A second round of data analysis was conducted between October and November 2022. The survey instrument and findings were also verified through psychometric analysis. Findings of the verification process is included in Annex 5 of this report.

Limitations of the Study

The ARC9 researchers acknowledge the following limitations for the study.

- Items of the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey were taken on an as-it-is basis. Terms used in the survey, such as “sustainable development” and “community engagement” were assumed to be terms that were familiar to survey respondents, who represented their institutions through the survey.
- Similarly, the dataset was obtained and analysed on an as-it-is basis. There were no additional actions, at the part of the ARC9 researchers, to follow up with respondents of the study.
- The sample exhibits self-selection bias, where participants decide entirely for themselves whether they want to participate in the survey, and / or complete items in the survey.
- The 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey included several open-ended items which allowed respondents to provide responses to prompts given in the survey.
 - Each respondent completed the open-ended items of the survey based on a working knowledge of SD for his / her institution. Such observations were made based on responses such as ‘No lo se / Je ne sais’ (I don’t know), ‘There are several’, and ‘There might be more, but I don't have that information’. He / she may unintentionally omit sample projects from his / her institution that are crucial for the survey.
 - Most responses were in the form of links to university / project websites. Additional time is needed to scrutinise the responses, subsequently shape case studies or vignettes representative of the open-ended items. As such, the open-ended items were not reported in this report, unless they are essential to the objectives of the study.
- Across-region comparison (e.g., comparison between responses in Asia and Europe) was conducted descriptively. Interpretation of findings should take into consideration the

differences in size, scale, governance and administration of HEIs represented across both regions.

- Within-region comparison (e.g., comparison within ASEM member states in Asia) was not conducted. Such comparison can be done provided more sample is obtained for analysis.

2.5. Respondents Profile

A total of 240 respondents from 42 ASEM member states completed the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey. Out of this figure,

- 119 (49.6%) respondents came from Asia, representing 17 member states, and
- 121 (50.4%) respondents came from Europe, representing 25 member states.

The respondent breakdown for Asia is presented in Figure 32. A third (n=37) of the respondents came from India. A total of four ASEM partner countries from Asia were not represented in the survey.

Figure 32 • Respondents from Asia

ASIA (n=119)	
India	37
Philippines	17
Korea	11
Pakistan	10
Japan, Vietnam	8 each
Thailand	5
Bangladesh, Malaysia	4 each
Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Russian Federation	2 each
Kazakhstan	1
Australia, Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand, Singapore	Did not participate in the IAU-HESD 2022 survey

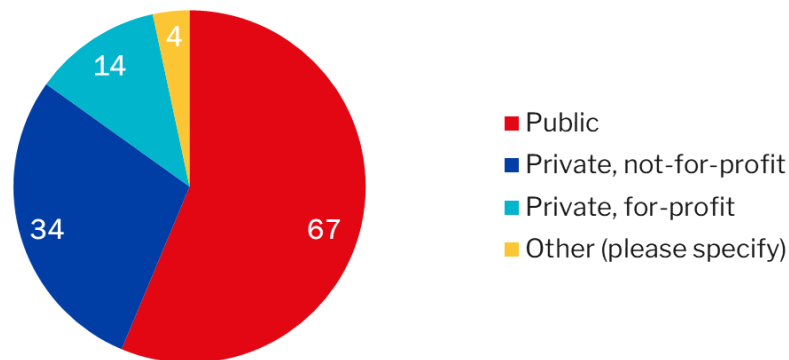
The respondent breakdown for Europe is presented in Figure 33. A third (n=40) of the respondents came from Spain. A total of five ASEM partner countries from Europe were not represented in the survey.

Figure 33 • Respondents from Europe

EUROPE (n=121)	
Spain	40
Belgium, Germany	10 each
United Kingdom	9
France	8
Hungary	6
Sweden	4
Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Romania	3 each
Austria, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal	2 each
Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland	1 each
Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta	Did not participate in the IAU-HESD 2022 survey

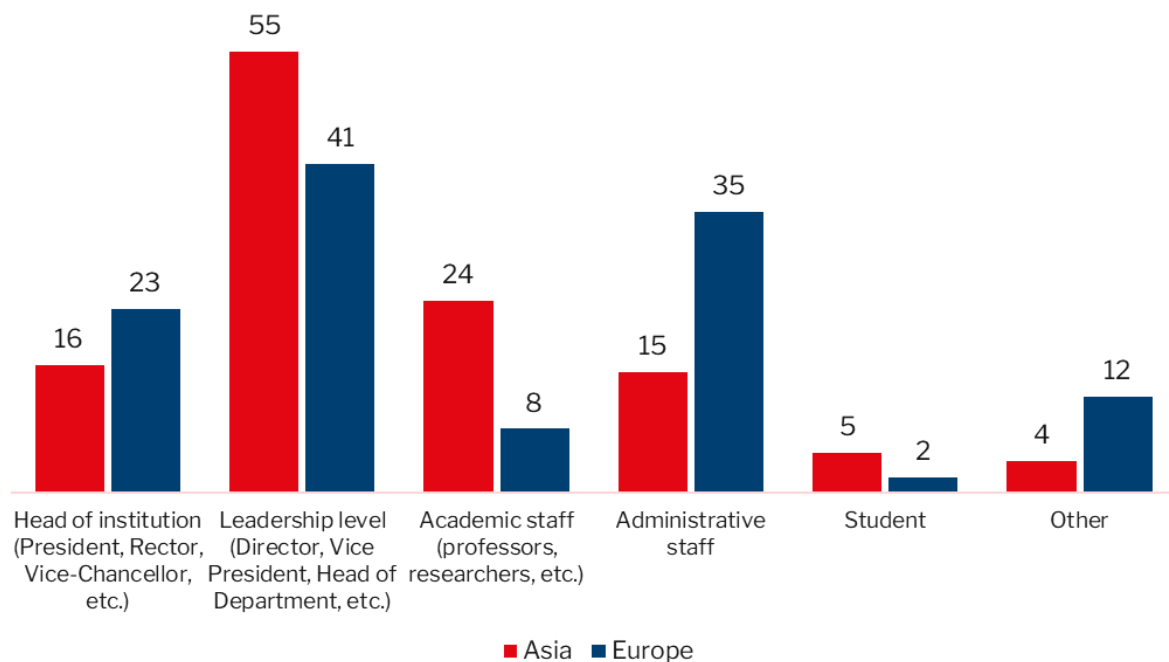
In the sample for Asia, a significantly high proportion of respondents came from India (n=37 out of 119 respondents). Similarly, in the sample for Europe, a significantly high proportion of respondents came from Spain (n=40 out of 121 respondents). While such a warm response is much welcomed in a large-scale quantitative study, it will, to an extent, skew interpretations of the survey data.

Figure 34 • Respondent Breakdown by Type of Institution



Based on Figure 34, 70 percent (168) of the respondents came from public institutions, while 27.9 percent (67) respondents came from private institutions.

Figure 35 • Respondent Breakdown by Position



Based on Figure 35, 56.25 percent (135) of the respondents were head of institutions or held positions at the leadership level. Administrative staff took up 20.83 percent (50), while academic staff recorded 13.3 percent (32) of the total respondents.

3. Findings

The findings of this part of the Report are presented in the following sections:

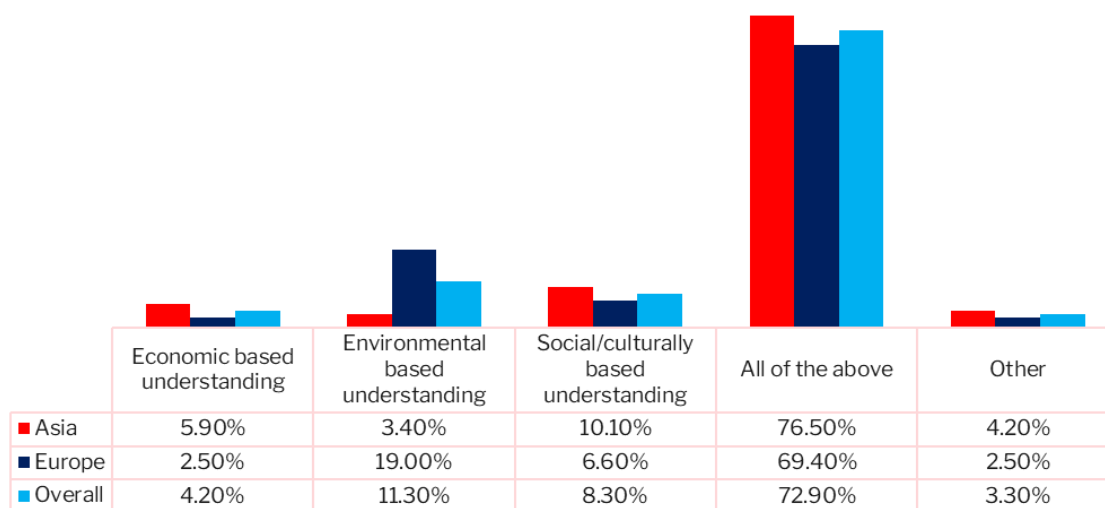
- 3.1. Institutional understanding on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
- 3.2. Climate change education
- 3.3. Whole institution approach in sustainable development
- 3.4. Institutional engagement with each SDG
- 3.5. Institutional practices in organisation and governance of sustainable development
- 3.6. Teaching, learning and research activities related to sustainable development
- 3.7. Collaboration and partnerships on sustainable development

Findings of selected items are compared with findings from the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 global survey report entitled “Accelerating Action for the SDGs in Higher Education”, featuring 464 institutions from 120 countries, available on the IAU [website](#).

3.1. Institutional Understanding on the 2030 Agenda

Figure 36 • Institutional Understanding of Sustainable Development

Q7: What is the main understanding of sustainable development at your institution?

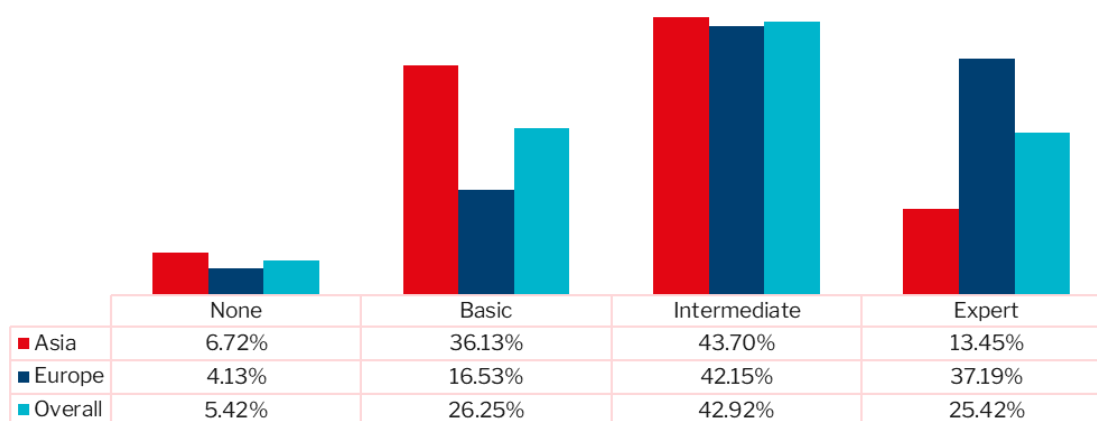


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item, respondents from both regions believed that sustainable development encompasses an integrated understanding of (1) economic, (2) environmental, and (3) social/cultural-based perspectives. **The findings are in sync with that reported in the 3rd IAU-HESD global survey**, where 73.1 percent of respondents reported to have a holistic understanding of sustainable development.

Figure 37 • Institutional Understanding of UN 2030 agenda

Q8A: How much knowledge do you have about the UN 2030 Agenda?

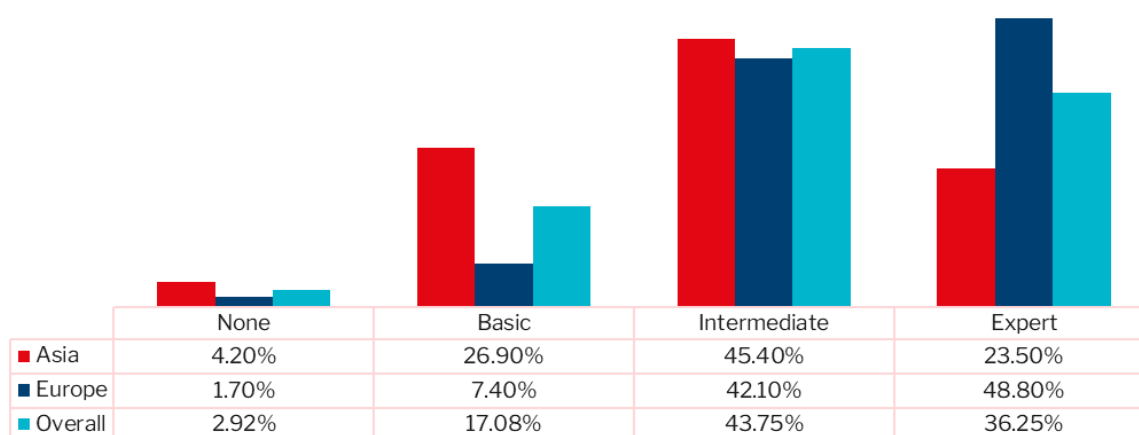


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 70 percent respondents reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on the UN 2030 Agenda. **Regional differences emerged for this item.** 79.83 percent respondents from Asia reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on the UN 2030 Agenda. In contrast, 79.34 percent respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on the UN 2030 Agenda.

Figure 38 • Institutional Understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Q8B: How much knowledge do you have about the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

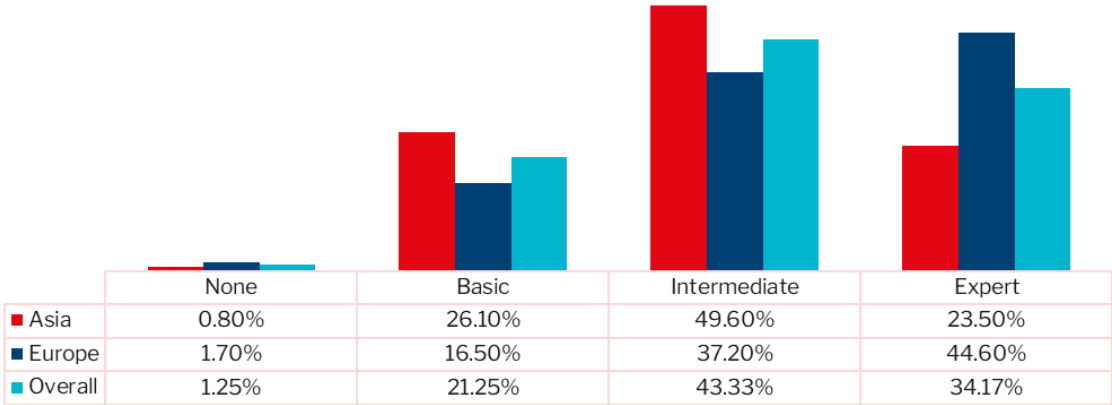


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 81 percent respondents reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on the UN SDGs. **Regional differences emerged for this item.** 72.3 percent respondents from Asia reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on the UN SDGs. In contrast, 90.9 percent respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on the UN SDGs.

Figure 39 • Institutional Understanding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Q8.C: How much knowledge do you have about Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)?

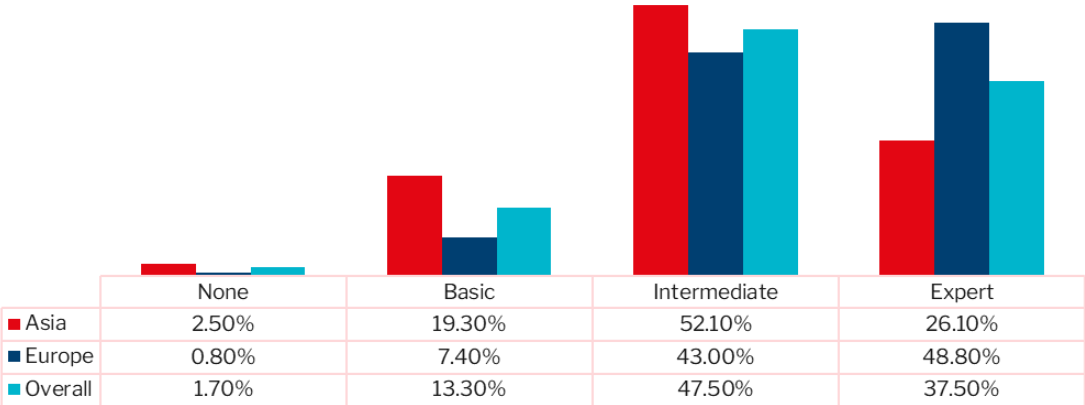


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 79 percent respondents reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on ESD. **Regional differences emerged for this item.** 75.7 percent respondents from Asia reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on ESD. In contrast, 81.8 percent respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on ESD.

Figure 40 • Institutional Understanding of Sustainable Development

Q8.D: How much knowledge do you have about Sustainable Development?

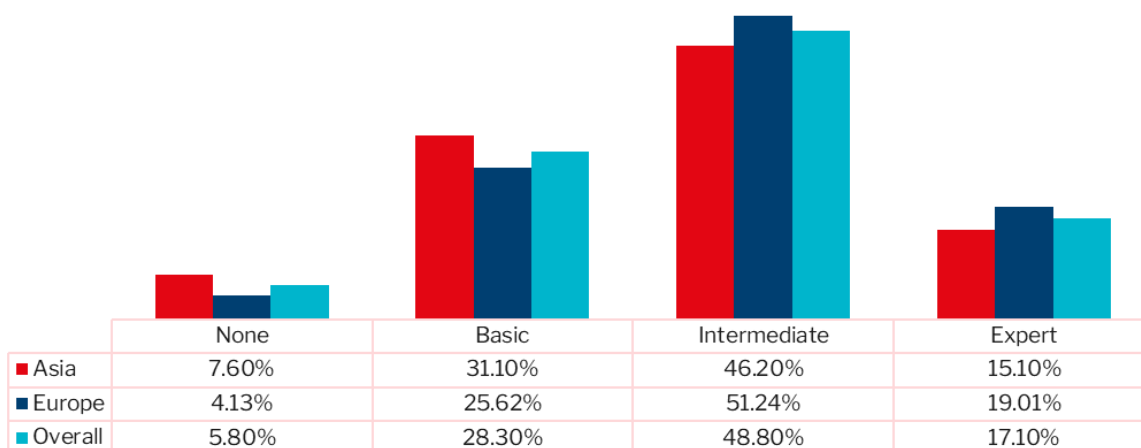


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 86 percent respondents reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on sustainable development. **There is no regional difference observed for this item.** 78.2 percent respondents from Asia, and 91.8 percent respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on sustainable development.

Figure 41 • Institutional Understanding of Global Citizenship Education

Q8.E: How much knowledge do you have about Global Citizenship Education?

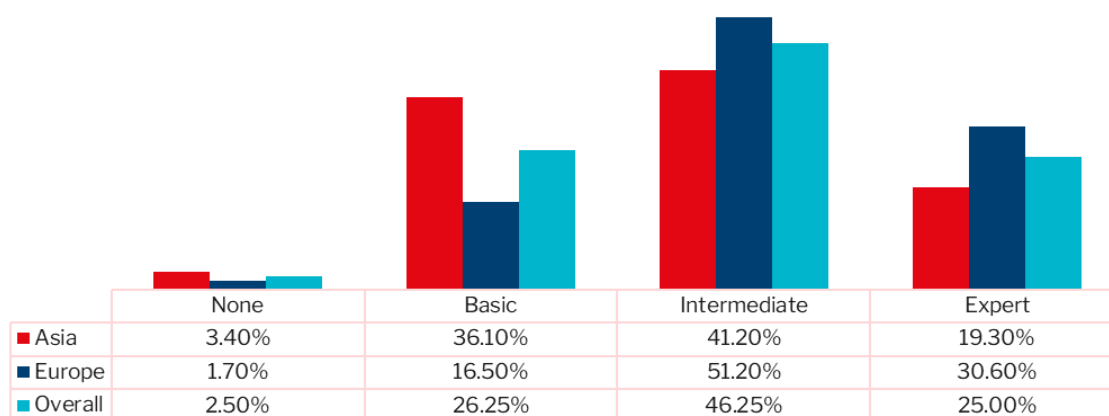


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 76 percent respondents reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on global citizenship education. **There is no regional difference observed for this item.** 77.3 percent respondents from Asia, and 76.86 percent respondents from Europe reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on global citizenship education.

Figure 42 • Institutional Understanding of Climate Change Education

Q8.F: How much knowledge do you have about Climate Change Education?



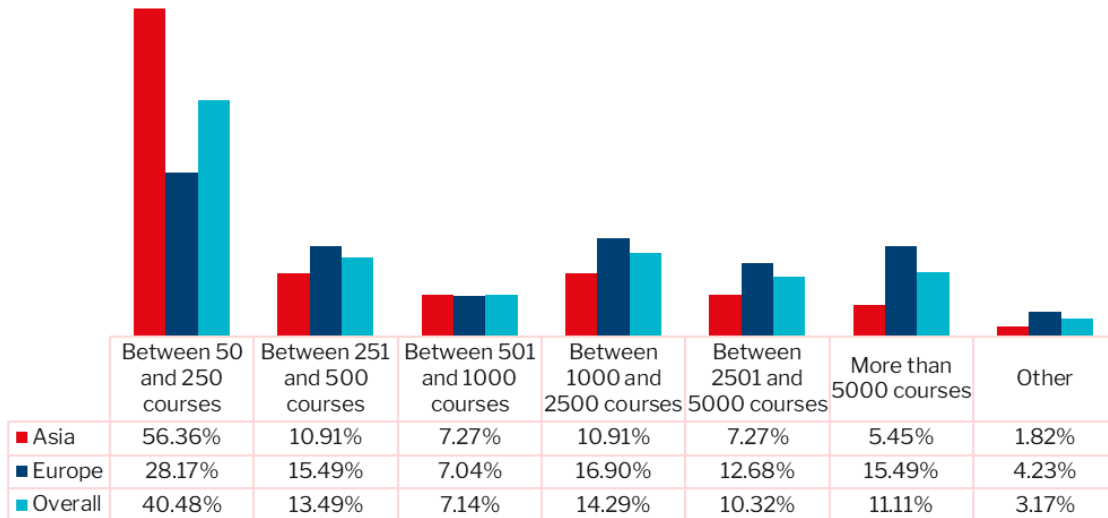
Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 72 percent respondents reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on climate change education. **Regional differences emerged for this item.** 77.3 percent respondents from Asia reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on climate change education. In contrast, 81.8 percent respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on climate change education.

3.2. Climate Change Education

Figure 43 • Courses on Climate Change Education

Q10: Please select the category that best reflects the total number of classes/ courses offered by your institution. These courses can be offered at any level and for any degree program.

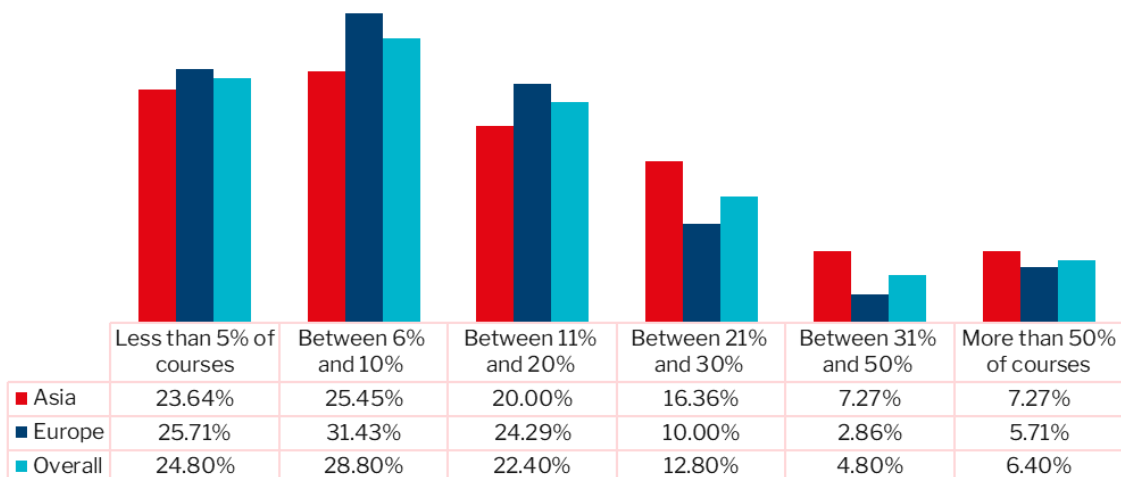


Note: This is an optional section. Total responses Asia = 55, Europe = 71.

Based on this item, 56.36 percent respondents from Asia, and 28.17 percent respondents from Europe reported offering between 50 and 250 courses at their institutions.

Figure 44 • Percentage of Courses Offered on Climate Change Education

Q11: We wish to determine the percentage of total courses offered by your institution that have an element of climate related content. This can refer to a topic, section and/or exercise found in the course or the entire focus of the course and can be offered in any discipline. Please choose the category below that best reflects this percentage:

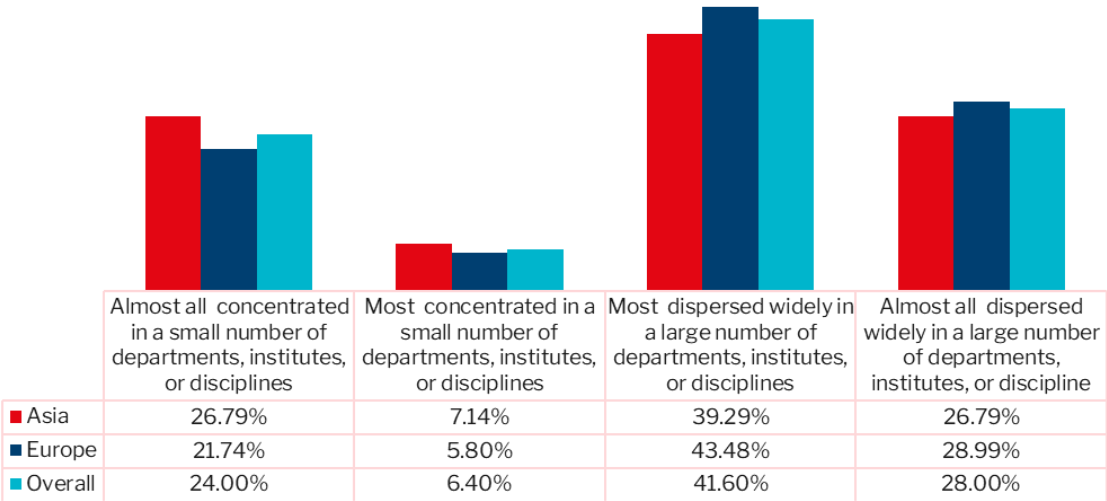


Note: This is an optional section. Total responses Asia = 55, Europe = 70.

Based on this item (refer previous page, Figure 7.2.2), 25.45 percent respondents from Asia, and 31.43 percent respondents from Europe reported between 6 to 10 percent courses offered at their institutions have an element of climate related content. **The findings are in sync with that reported in the 3rd IAU-HESD global survey**, where 30 percent respondents reported having between 6 to 10 percent courses with climate related content.

Figure 45 • Concentration of Climate Related Course Offer

Q12: We would like to determine the extent to which climate related courses are concentrated in a small number of departments and disciplines or whether they are dispersed relatively widely in your institution. Please select the category below that best reflects the concentration of climate related courses:

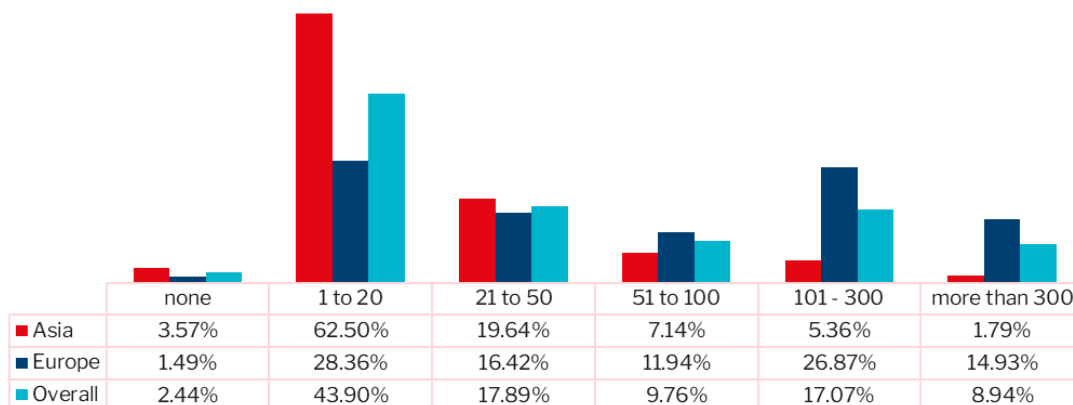


Note: This is an optional section. Total responses Asia = 56, Europe = 69.

Based on this item, 39.29 percent respondents from Asia, and 43.48 percent respondents from Europe reported that climate related courses at their institutions are dispersed widely in a large number of departments, institutes, or disciplines. **The findings are in sync with that reported in the 3rd IAU-HESD global survey**, where 69 percent respondents indicated that such courses tend to be concentrated in a small number of departments, institutes, or disciplines.

Figure 46 • Number of Academic Publications Related to Climate Change

Q13: Academic staff at higher education institutions are typically expected to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, books and/or other scholarly publications. Please estimate the number of academic publications related to climate change that are published by your academic staff as a whole in the most recent year.

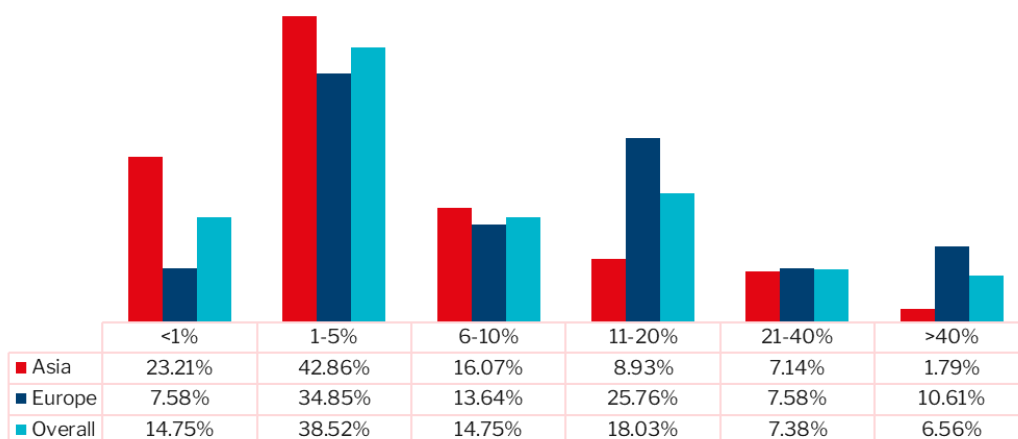


Note: This is an optional section. Total responses Asia = 56, Europe = 67.

Based on this item, 62.50 percent respondents from Asia, and 28.36 percent respondents from Europe estimated that their academics publish between 1 to 20 publications related to climate change per year. **The findings are in sync with that reported in the 3rd IAU-HESD global survey**, where 48 percent respondents indicated that their academics published, on average, between 1 to 20 publications related to climate change in the last year.

Figure 47 • Estimation of the Ratio of External Research Funds Related to Climate Change

Q14: Obtaining external funds to pursue scholarly research is an important activity in most universities. Please provide your best estimate of the ratio of external research funds related to climate change to the total amount of research funds obtained by your institution in the most recent year.



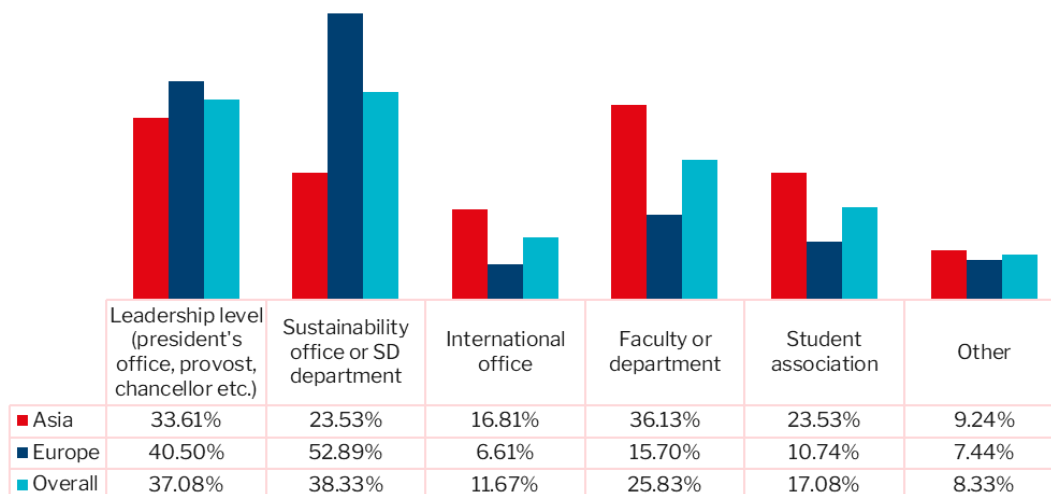
Note: This is an optional section. Total responses Asia = 56, Europe = 66.

Based on this item, 42.86 percent respondents from Asia, and 34.85 percent respondents from Europe estimated that their institutions receive between 1-5 percent of external research funds related to climate change. **The findings are in sync with that reported in the 3rd IAU-HESD global survey**, where 60 percent respondents indicated that of the total external research funds their institutions receive, less than 5 percent is explicitly assigned to climate change research.

3.3. Whole Institution Approach in Sustainable Development

Figure 48 • Unit in Charge of Sustainability Activities at the Institution

Q15: Which specific unit oversees the sustainability activities at your institution?

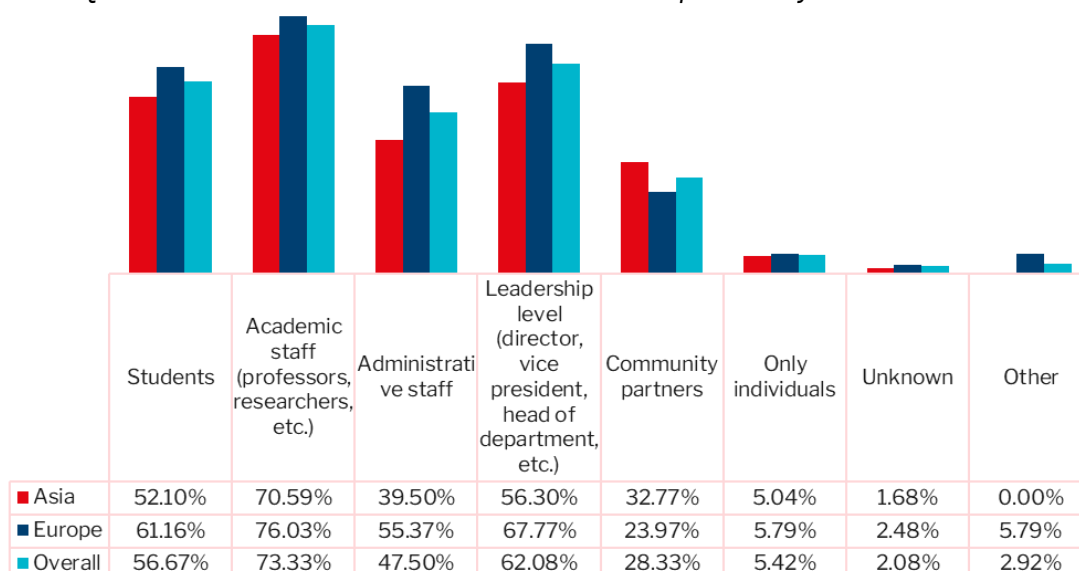


In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, leadership level (40 percent) and sustainability office or SD department (40 percent) were the most selected options. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, with slight regional differences observed in terms of sequence:**

- Top units, Asia: (1) Faculty or department (36.13 percent), (2) Leadership level (president's office, provost, chancellor) (33.61 percent), (3) Sustainability office or SD department (23.53 percent), and (4) Student association (23.53 percent)
- Top units, Europe: (1) Sustainability office or SD department (52.89 percent), (2) Leadership level (president's office, provost, chancellor) (40.50 percent), and (3) faculty or department (15.70 percent).

Figure 49 • Most Involved Stakeholders in Sustainable Development at the Institution

Q16: Who is most involved in sustainable development at your Institution?

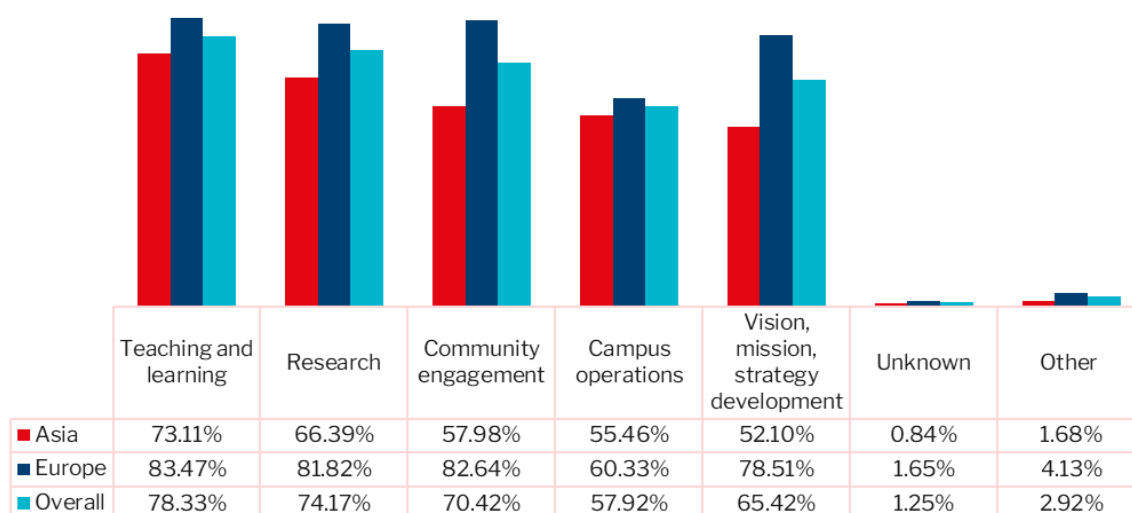


In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 80 percent respondents indicated that academic staff were most involved in sustainable development. This is followed by students (60 percent) and leadership level (64 percent). **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** The three stakeholders were also cited as most involved in sustainable development, with different percentages:

- Academic staff (70.59 percent in Asia, and 76.03 percent in Europe)
- Leadership level (director, vice president, head of department, etc.) (56.30 percent in Asia, and 67.77 percent in Europe)
- Students (52.10 percent in Asia, and 61.16 percent in Europe)

Figure 50 • Areas of Institutional Engagement with Sustainable Development

*Q17: In which areas has your institution engaged with sustainable development?
Please select all that apply:*

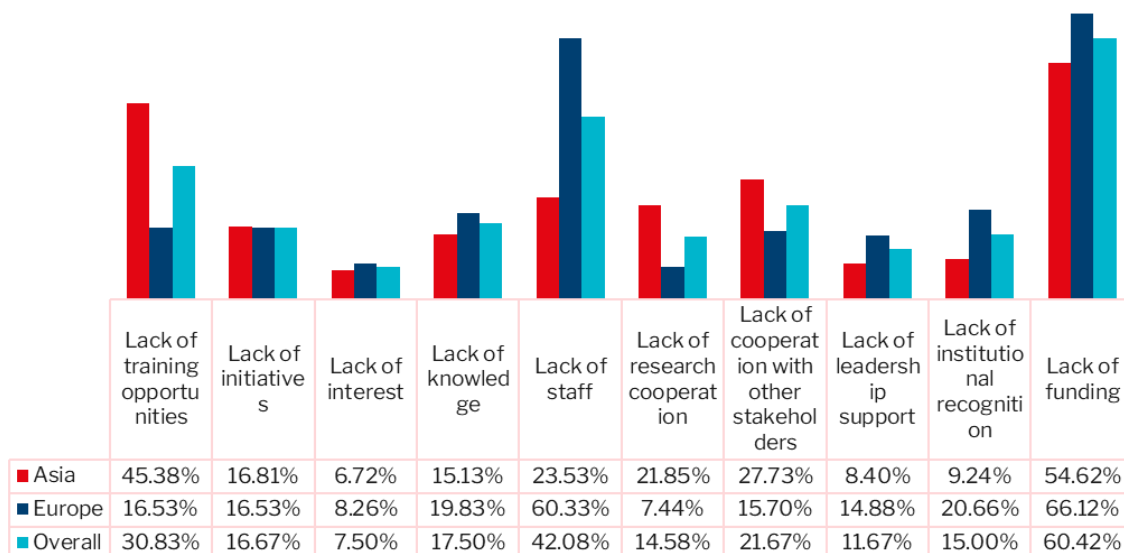


In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, teaching and learning is the area with the highest reported engagement (86.2 percent), followed by research (79.4 percent) and campus operations (67.8 percent). **Findings for the Asia and Europe sample are different from findings reported for the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 global survey. Regional differences also emerged for this item.**

- Top areas, Asia: (1) Teaching and learning (73.11 percent), (2) Research (66.39 percent), (3) Community engagement (57.98 percent), and (4) Campus operations (55.46 percent)
- Top areas, Europe: (1) Teaching and learning (83.47 percent), (2) Research (81.82 percent), and (3) Vision, mission, strategy development (78.51 percent)

Figure 51 • Challenges in Implementing Actions Towards Sustainable Development

Q18: Many universities face different challenges in implementing actions towards sustainable development. Which of the following difficulties or challenges have impeded the implementation of SD (and plans and strategies where they exist) at your institution? Please select the 3 options that are most challenging.



In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, institutions face a broad range of difficulties, most notably lack of funding (67 percent), lack of staff (38 percent), and lack of training opportunities (34 percent). **Findings for the Asia-Europe sample are different from findings reported for the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey. Regional differences also emerged for this item.**

- Top challenges, Asia: (1) Lack of funding (54.62 percent), (2) Lack of training opportunities (45.38 percent), and (3) Lack of cooperation with other stakeholders (27.73 percent)
- Top challenges, Europe: (1) Lack of funding (66.12 percent), (2) Lack of staff (60.33 percent), and (3) Lack of institutional recognition (20.66 percent).

Figure 52 • Challenges in Implementing Actions Towards Sustainable Development

Q19: New opportunities arise and foster the development and implementation of actions towards sustainable development. Which of the following opportunities support the implementation of SD at your institution? Please select the 3 most important options: (see Figure on the next page)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, the opportunities most cited by respondents are training (44.8 percent), new engaging initiatives (40.3 percent), and support from leadership levels (38.8 percent). The activities that least support the development of SD activities are institutional recognition (13.4 percent) and high interest in the subject (22.7 percent). **Findings for the Europe sample are different from findings reported for the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey.**

- Top opportunities, Asia: (1) Training opportunities (48.74 percent), (2) Leadership support (40.34 percent), and (3) New engaging initiatives (30.25 percent)
- Top opportunities, Europe: (1) New engaging initiatives (47.93 percent), (2) Leadership support (38.84 percent), (3) Dedicated staff (36.36 percent) and (4) New or existing cooperation with other stakeholders (36.36 percent)

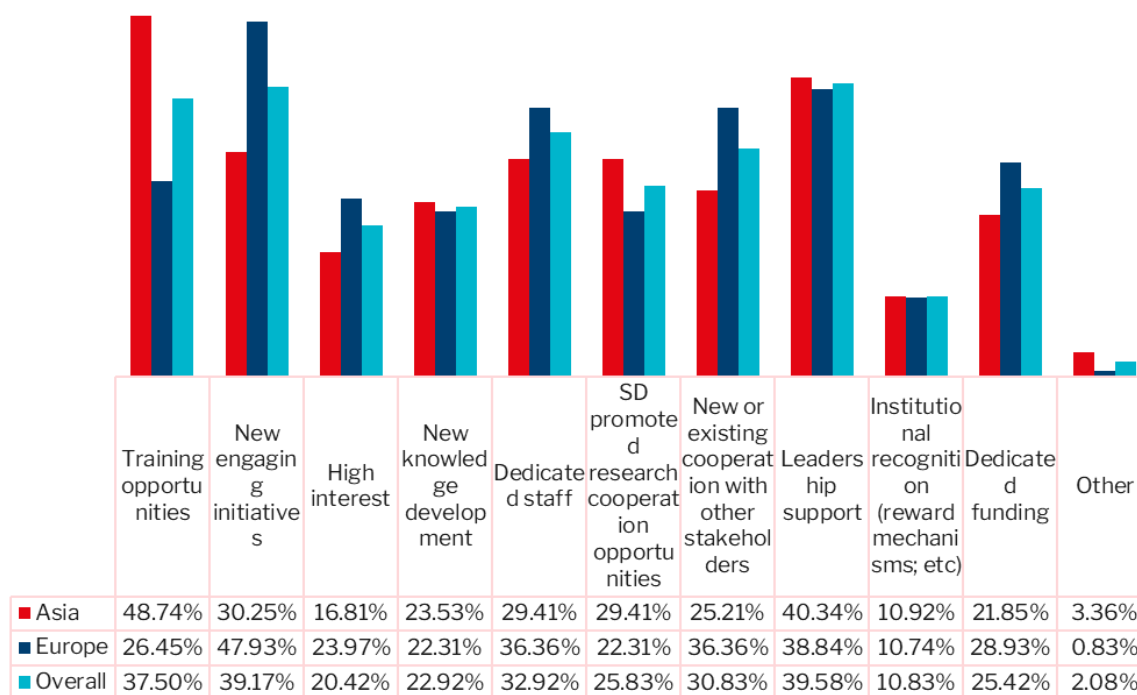
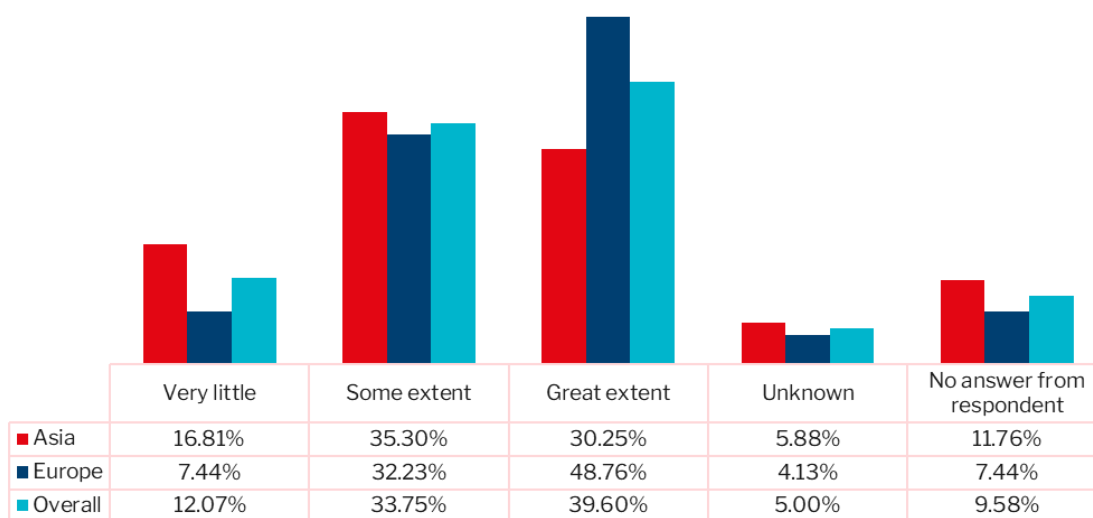


Figure 53 • Interest in the SDGs as a result of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda

Q21: To what extent has the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in 2015 increased interest in sustainable development at your institution?

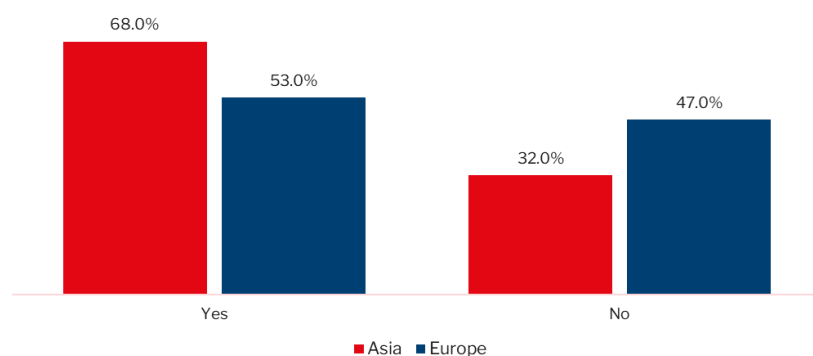


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 42.1 percent respondents indicated that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in 2015 increased interest in sustainable development to a great extent, and 39.0 percent respondents experiencing impact to some extent. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.**

Figure 54 • COVID-19 Impact on the Strategy for SD

Q22: Did / Does COVID-19 impact on the strategy for SD or related activities?



Note: n=240 (Asia:119, Europe:121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 62.7 percent respondents indicated that COVID-19 impacted their institutional SD activities. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.**

7.4. Institutional Engagement with Each SDG

This section illustrates findings for Question 23 of the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey. The following two observations were derived in terms of patterns of responses.

1: Non-response rate

- Q23 comprised of 16 subsections, with one subsection for each of the SDG.
- SDG 17 on “Partnership for the Goals” was not included in the prompt.
- The average non-response rate for each subsection was 15.78 percent. This means that on average, 38 out of 240 respondents did not provide his/her answer to each subsection.
- Readers of this report are advised to take this non-response rate into consideration when interpreting findings for Q23.

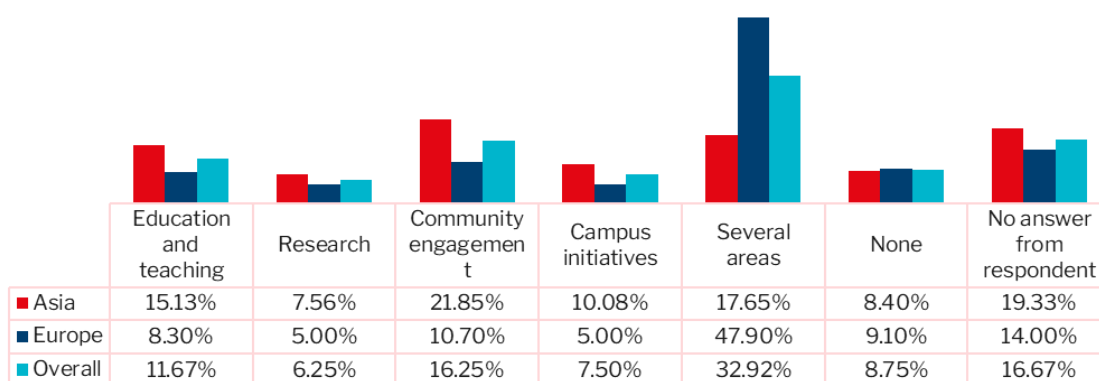
2: Variation of response between Asia / Europe for “several areas”

- Respondents were asked to indicate for which SDG were their institutions are active, and on which level (education and teaching / learning, research, community engagement, campus initiative, several areas, none).
- A high proportion of respondents from Europe selected “several areas” as their answer for each subsection. As a result, responses for other levels are comparatively low. In other words, respondents from Europe relate most to the prompt on “several areas” and would only choose one answer for each subsection under Q23.
- In contrast, there is a variation of responses for respondents from Asia. Some selected “several areas” as their answer, while others were more explicit in their engagement (i.e., indicating one level of engagement). In other words, respondents from Asia interpreted Q23 differently when they responded to this item, contributing to different response patterns for each subsection under Q23.
- Future iterations of the IAU-HESD survey should consider modifications to this item:
 - Instructions for Q23 should indicate whether it is a compulsory item to respond.

- Respondents should have the option to choose only one (1) response, to indicate levels most actively engaged, or
- Respondents are given the option to choose “Not applicable” or “ I am not aware of this” for each subsection of Q23.
- For this report, each subsection is reported on its own.
- Readers of this report are advised to take the variation of responses into consideration when interpreting findings for Q23.

The next 16 figures (55-70) present findings for Q23 (SDG 1 to 16).

Figure 55 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 1 – No Poverty

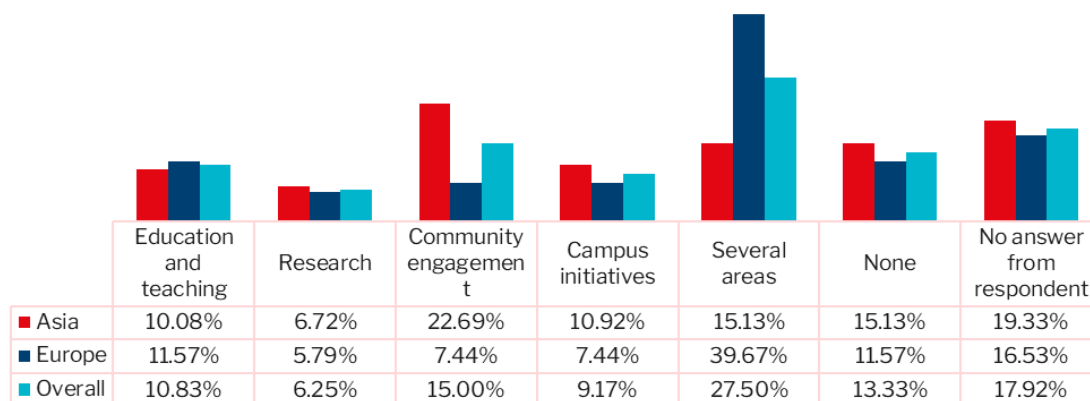


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe:121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 1 (No poverty) covering several areas (17.65 percent). They were also actively engaged in community engagement (21.85 percent), as well as education and teaching (15.13 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 1 (No poverty) covering several areas (47.90 percent).

Figure 56 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 2 – Zero Hunger

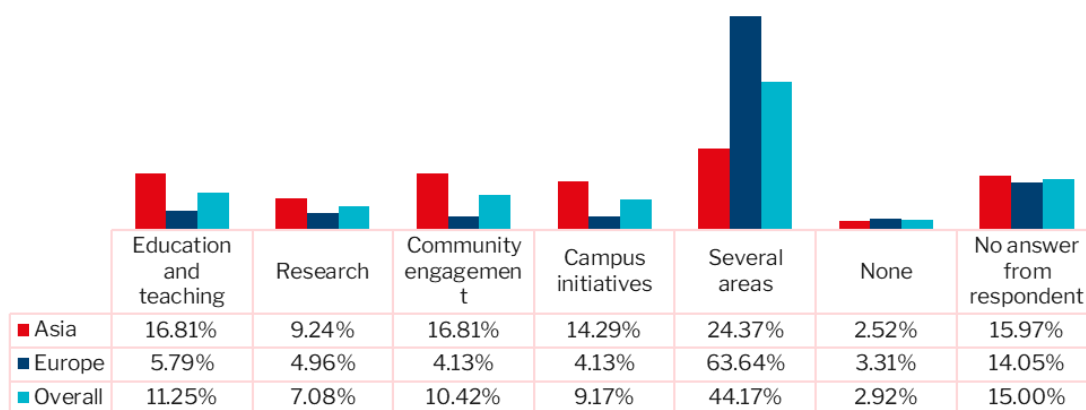


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe:121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 2 (Zero hunger) covering several areas (15.13 percent). They were also actively engaged in community engagement (22.69 percent), campus initiatives (10.92 percent), as well as education and teaching (10.08 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 2 (Zero hunger) covering several areas (39.67 percent).

Figure 57 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing

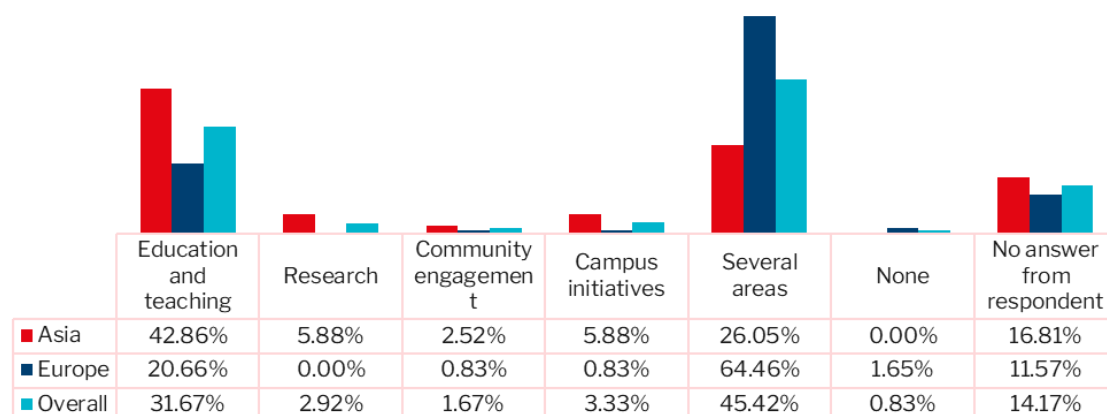


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) covering several areas (24.37 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching, as well as community engagement (16.81 percent respectively).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) covering several areas (63.64 percent).

Figure 58 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 4 – Quality Education

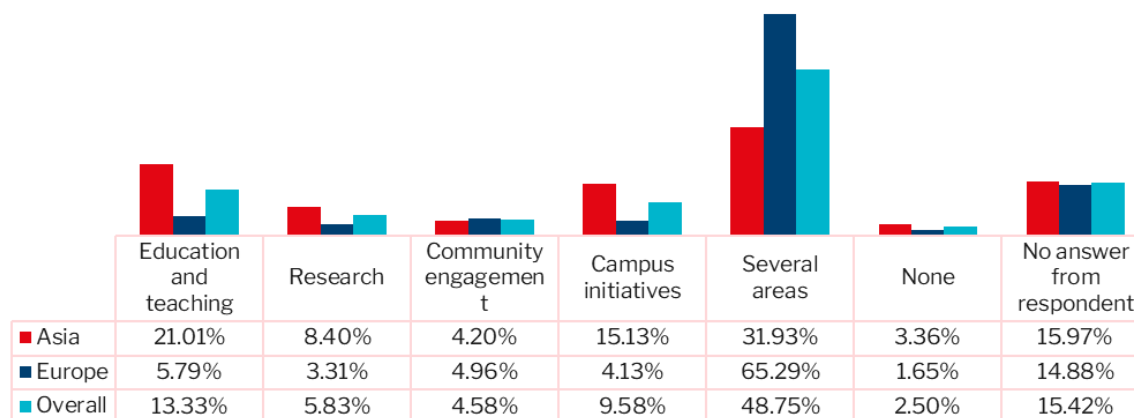


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 4 (Quality education) covering several areas (26.05 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching (42.86 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 4 (Quality education) covering several areas (64.46 percent).

Figure 59 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 5 – Gender Equality

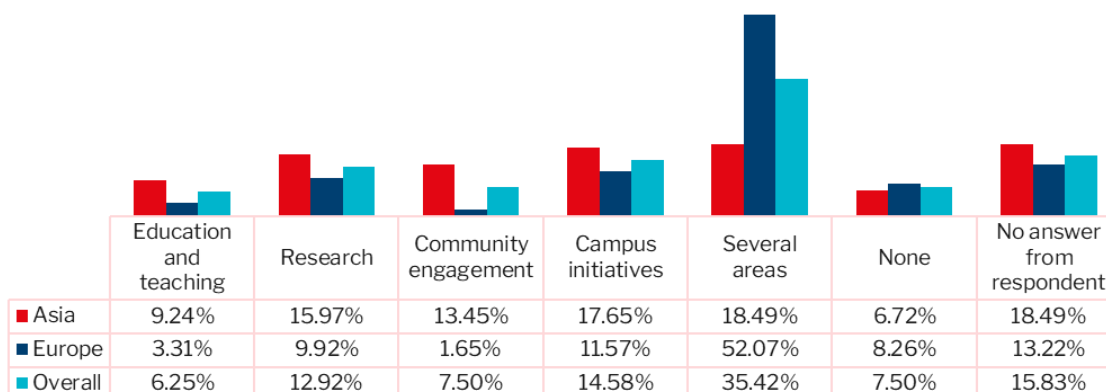


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 5 (Gender equality) covering several areas (31.93 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching (21.01 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 5 (Gender equality) covering several areas (65.29 percent).

Figure 60 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation

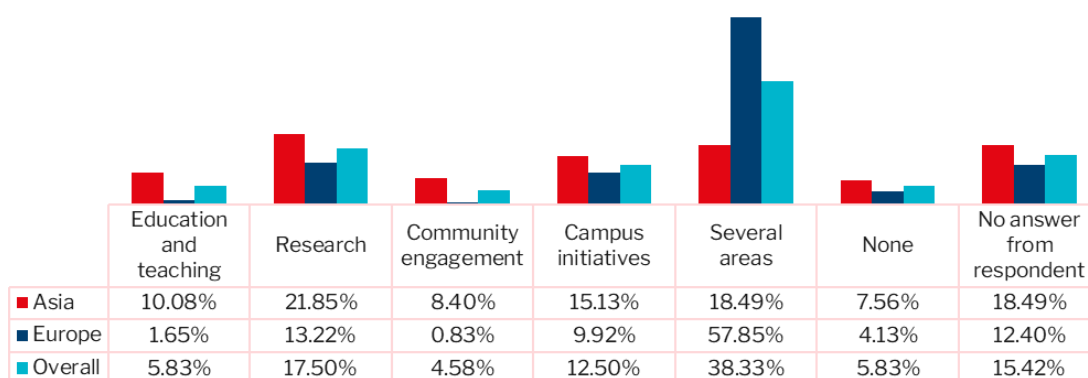


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation) covering several areas (18.49 percent). They were also actively engaged in campus initiatives (17.65 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation) covering several areas (52.07 percent).

Figure 61 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 7 – Clean Energy

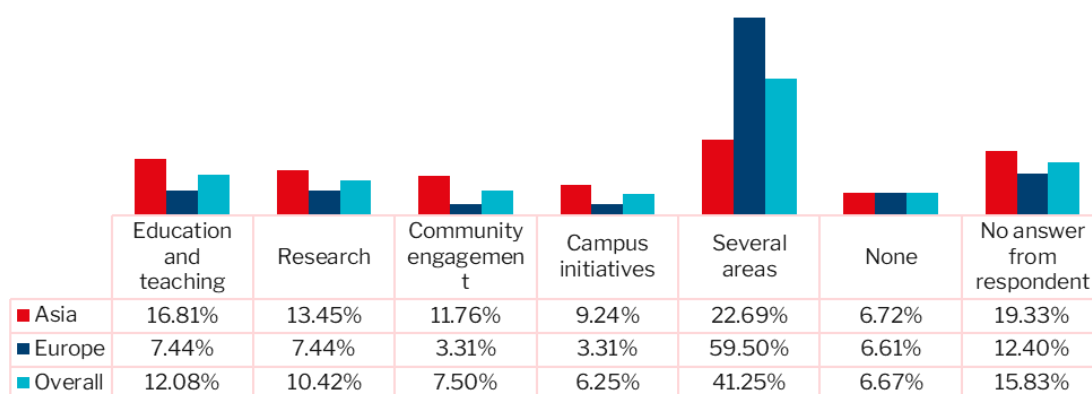


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 7 (Clean energy) covering several areas (18.49 percent). They were also actively engaged in research (21.85 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 7 (Clean energy) covering several areas (57.85 percent).

Figure 62 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

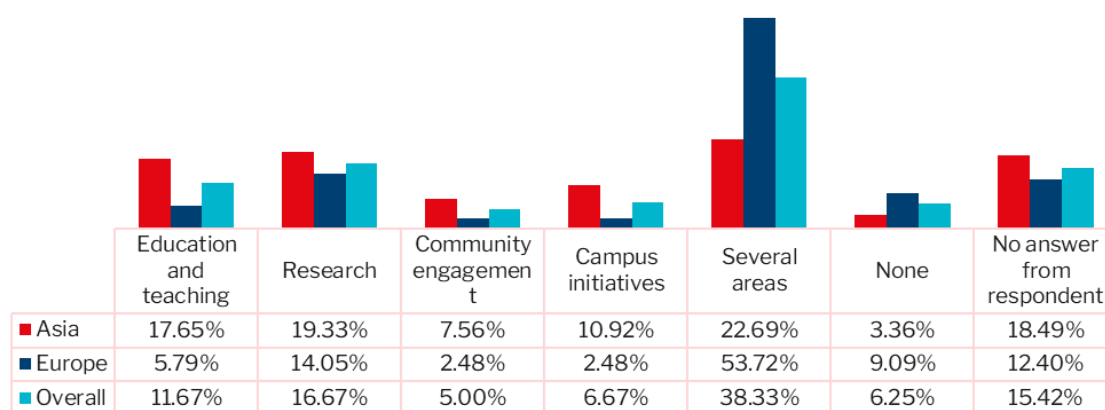


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) covering several areas (22.69 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching (16.81 percent), as well as research (13.45 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) covering several areas (59.50 percent).

Figure 63 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure

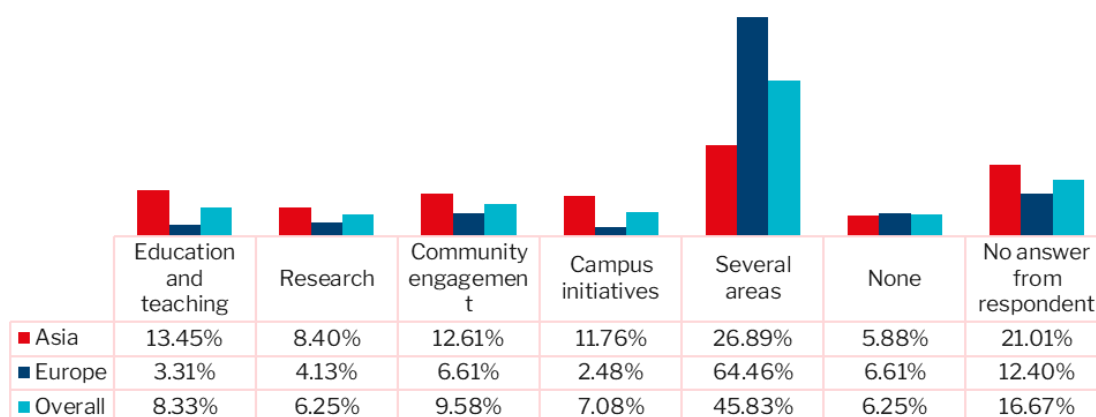


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) covering several areas (22.69 percent). They were also actively engaged in research (19.33 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) covering several areas (53.72 percent).

Figure 64 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities

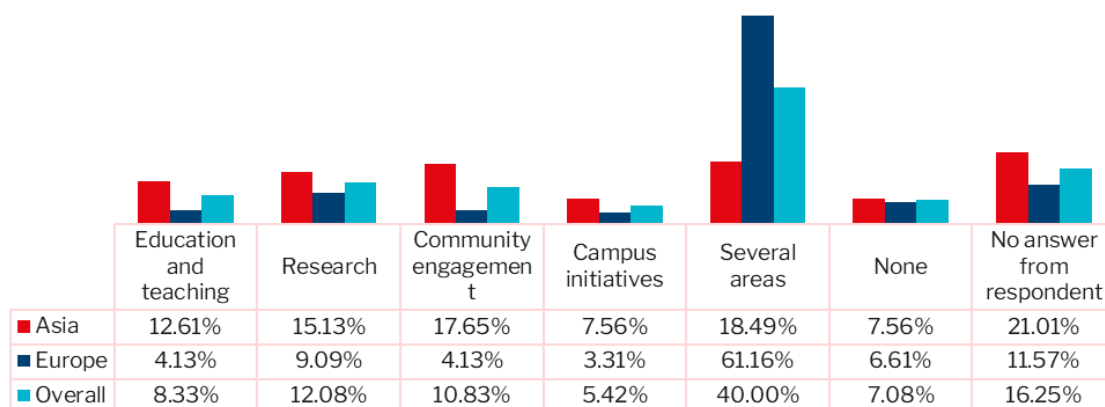


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) covering several areas (26.89 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching (13.45 percent), community engagement (12.61 percent), and campus initiatives (11.76 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) covering several areas (64.46 percent).

Figure 65 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

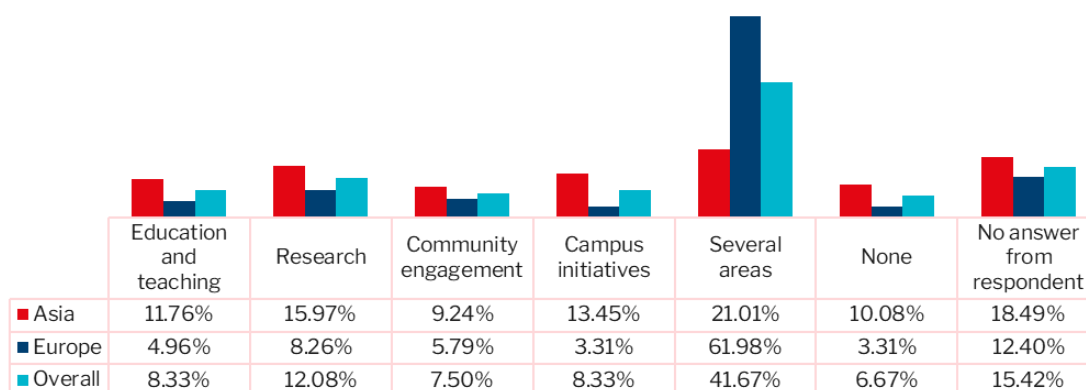


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) covering several areas (18.49 percent). They were also actively engaged in community engagement (17.65 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) covering several areas (61.16 percent).

Figure 66 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production

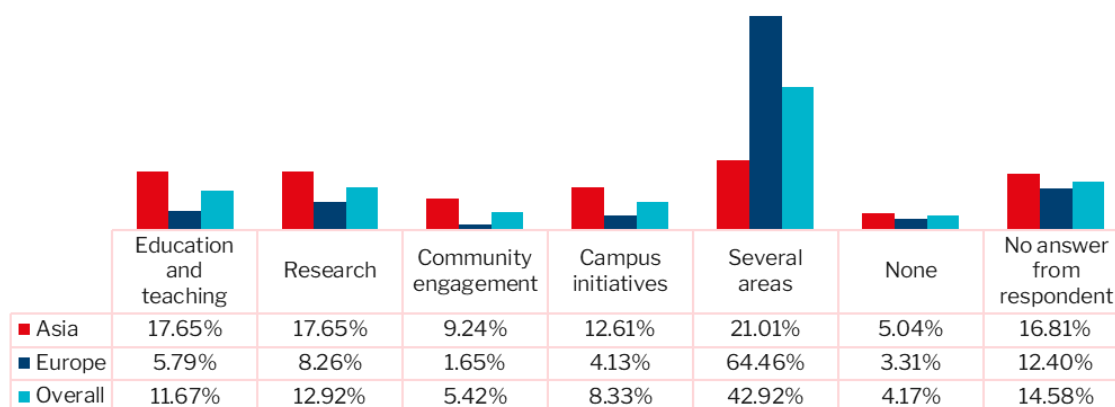


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) covering several areas (21.01 percent). They were also actively engaged in research (15.97 percent), campus initiatives (13.45 percent), as well as education and teaching (11.76 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) covering several areas (61.98 percent).

Figure 67 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 13 – Climate Action

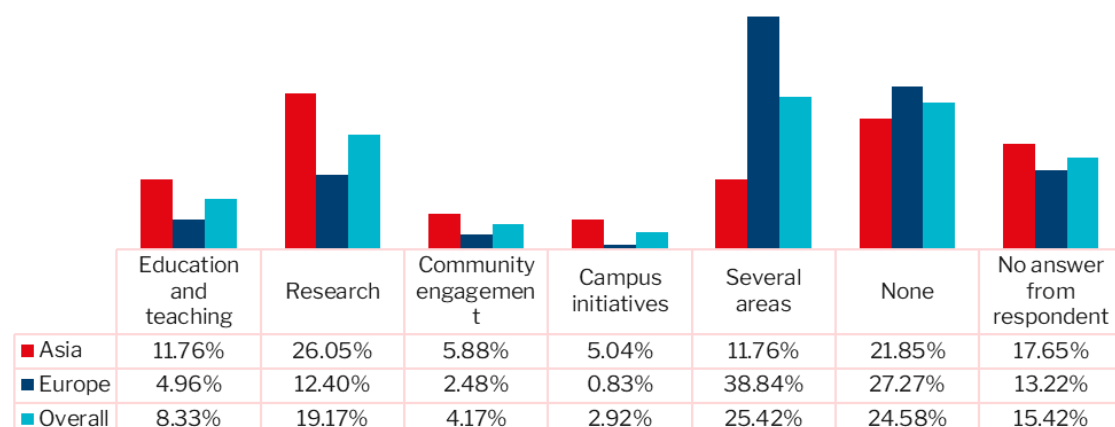


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 13 (Climate action) covering several areas (21.01 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching, as well as research (17.65 percent respectively).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 13 (Climate action) covering several areas (64.46 percent).

Figure 68 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 14 – Life Below Water

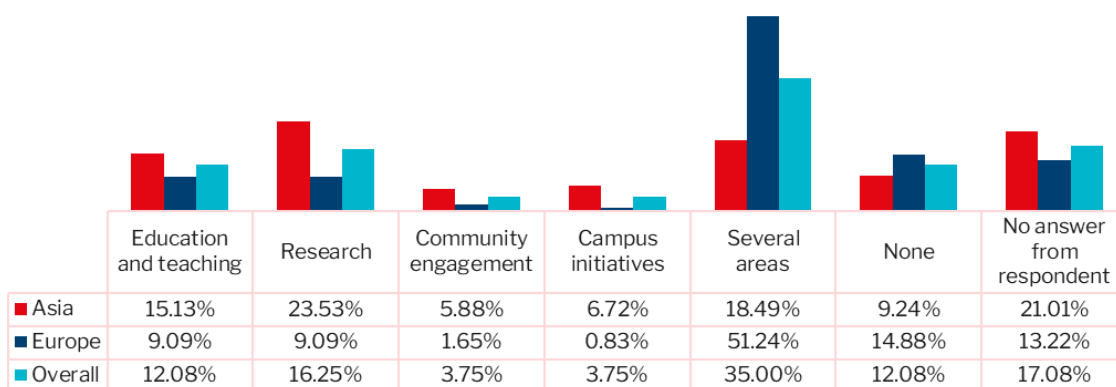


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 14 (Life below water) covering research (26.05 percent). 21.85 percent respondents indicated that their institution did not engage with SDG 14.
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 14 (Life below water) covering several areas (38.84 percent). 27.27 percent respondents indicated that their institution did not engage with SDG 14.

Figure 69 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 15 – Life on Land

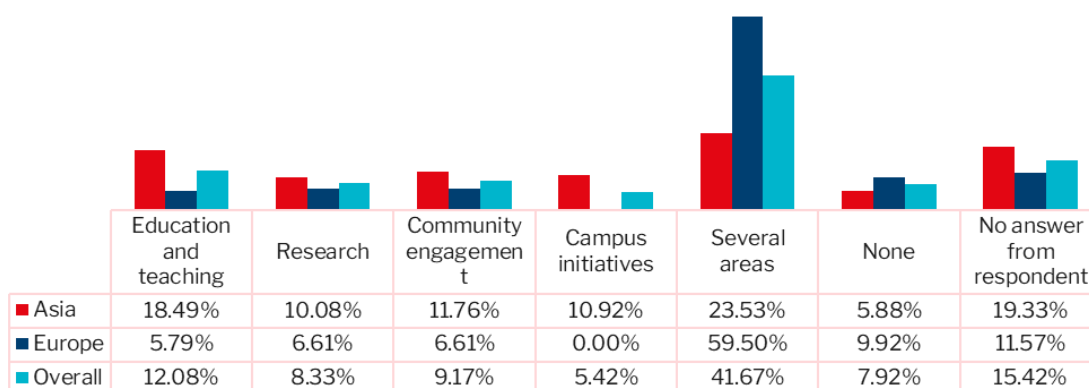


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 15 (Life on land) covering several areas (18.49 percent). They were also actively engaged in research (23.53 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 15 (Life on land) covering several areas (51.24 percent). 14.88 percent respondents indicated that their institution did not engage with SDG 15.

Figure 70 • Institutional Engagement with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

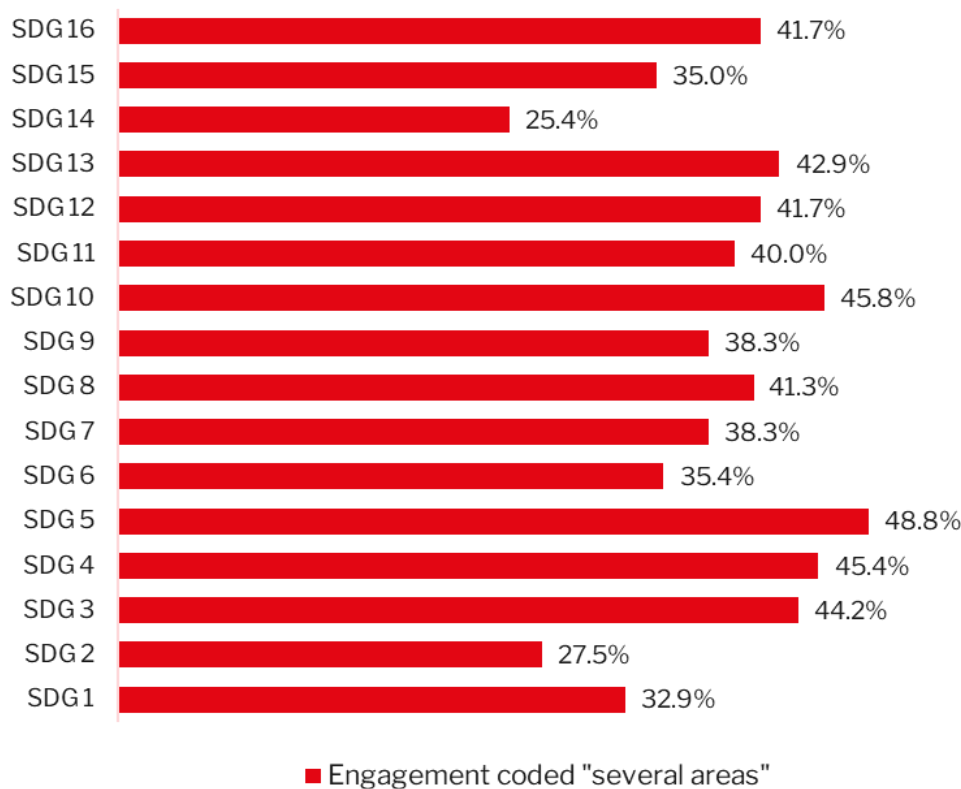


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

Based on this item,

- Respondents from Asia indicated their engagement with SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institution) covering several areas (23.53 percent). They were also actively engaged in education and teaching (18.49 percent).
- Respondents from Europe indicated their engagement with SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institution) covering several areas (59.50 percent).

Figure 71 • Institutional Engagement with SDGs – Top SDGs engaged



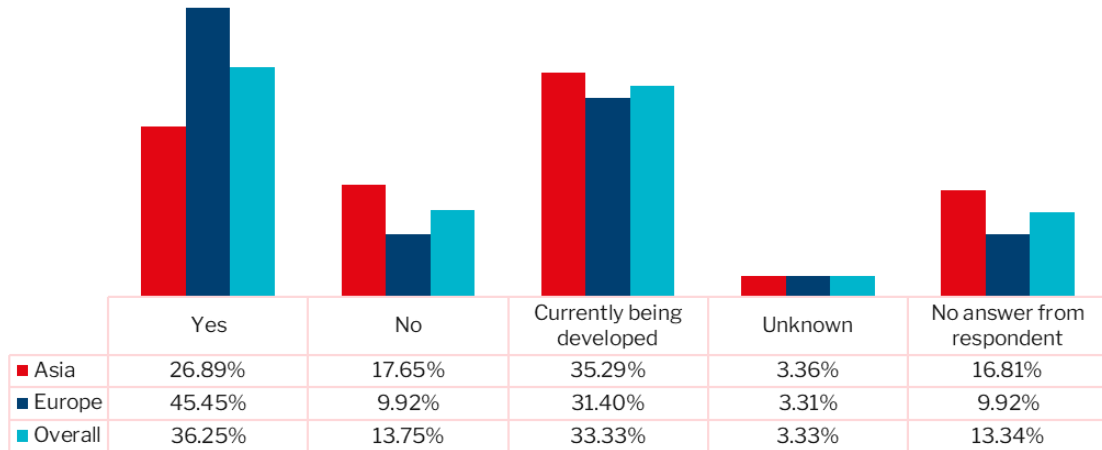
Based on Figures 53-68, it appears that the top response selected across all SDGs are “several areas”. The figures for “several areas” for each SDG is collated (n=240) to identify the top SDGs engaged for respondents across Asia and Europe:

- SDG 5 (Gender equality) (48.75 percent),
- SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) (45.83 percent), and
- SDG 4 (Quality education) (45.52 percent).

3.5. Institutional Practices in Organisation and Governance of Sustainable Development

Figure 72 • Institutional Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development

Q25: Is there a strategic plan for sustainable development at your institution?



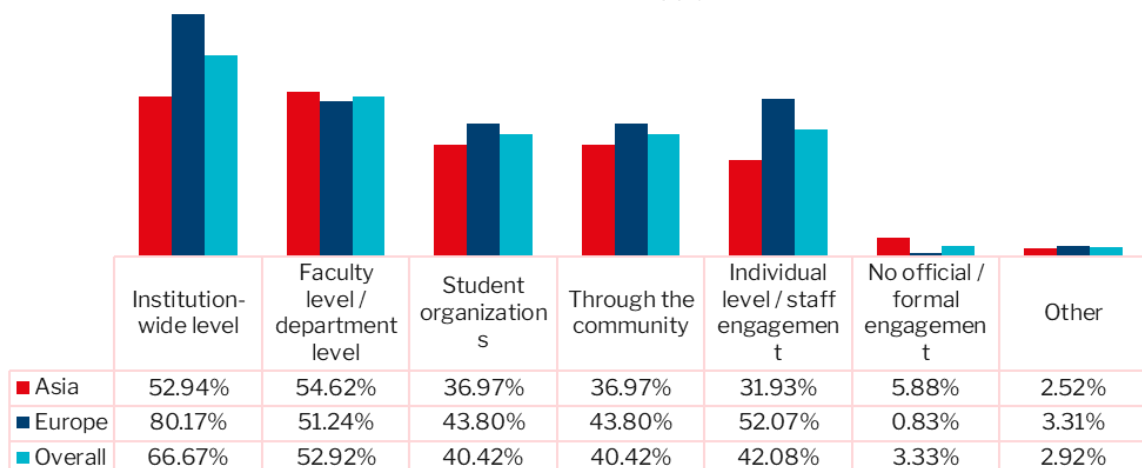
Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 38 percent respondents indicated that there is already a strategic plan, and 37 percent responded that the strategic plan is being developed. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level. Regional differences also emerged for this item.**

- Over 45 percent respondents from Europe indicated that their institution has a strategic plan for sustainable development, as compared to 26 percent respondents from Asia.
- A total of 35.29 percent respondents from Asia indicated that their institutions are currently developing a strategic plan on sustainable development, as compared to 31.40 percent respondents from Europe.
- 17.65 percent respondents from Asia indicated that there is no strategic plan for sustainable development, as compared to 9.92 percent respondents from Europe.

Figure 73 • Level of Support for Sustainable Development

Q27: On what level is sustainable development supported at your institution?
 Please select all that apply:

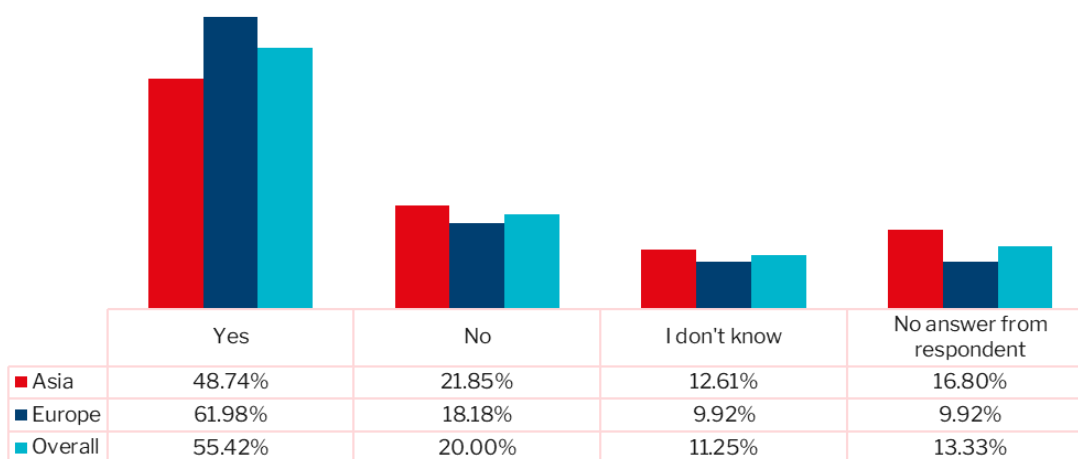


In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 74 percent respondents indicated that sustainable development is most often governed institution-wide. **Findings for the Asia and Europe are different from findings reported for the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 global survey. Regional differences also emerged for this item.**

- Top levels, Asia: (1) Faculty / department level (54.62 percent), (2) Institution-wide level (52.94 percent), (3) Student organisations (36.97 percent), and (4) Through the community (36.97 percent).
- Top levels, Europe: (1) Institution-wide level (80.17 percent), (2) Individual level / staff (52.07 percent), and (3) Faculty / department level (51.24 percent).

Figure 74 • Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation for Sustainable Development

Q29: Are there any assessment/ monitoring and evaluation tools/ mechanisms for sustainable development actions at your institution?

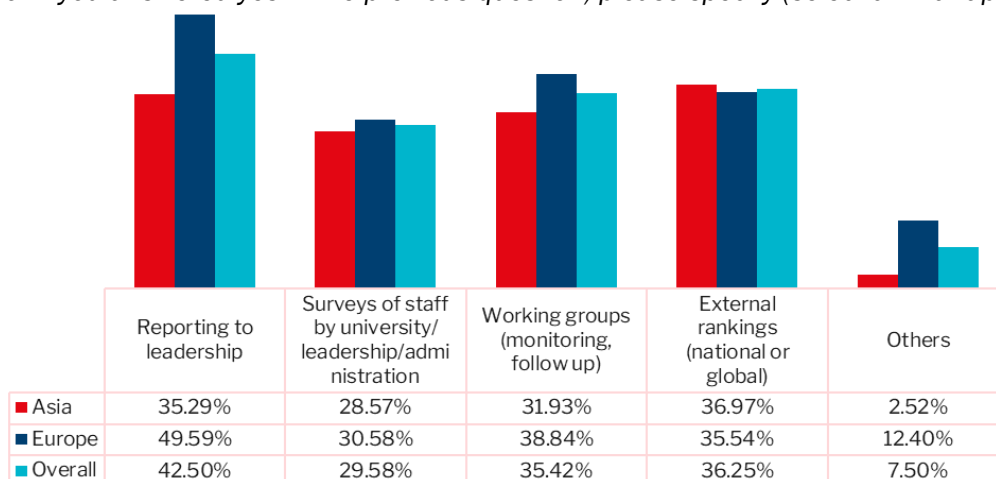


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 61.2 percent respondents indicated that their institution have monitoring tools for sustainable development. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 48.74 percent respondents from Asia, and 61.98 percent respondents from Europe indicated that their institution use assessment / monitoring and evaluation tools/ mechanisms for sustainable development actions.

Figure 75 • Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

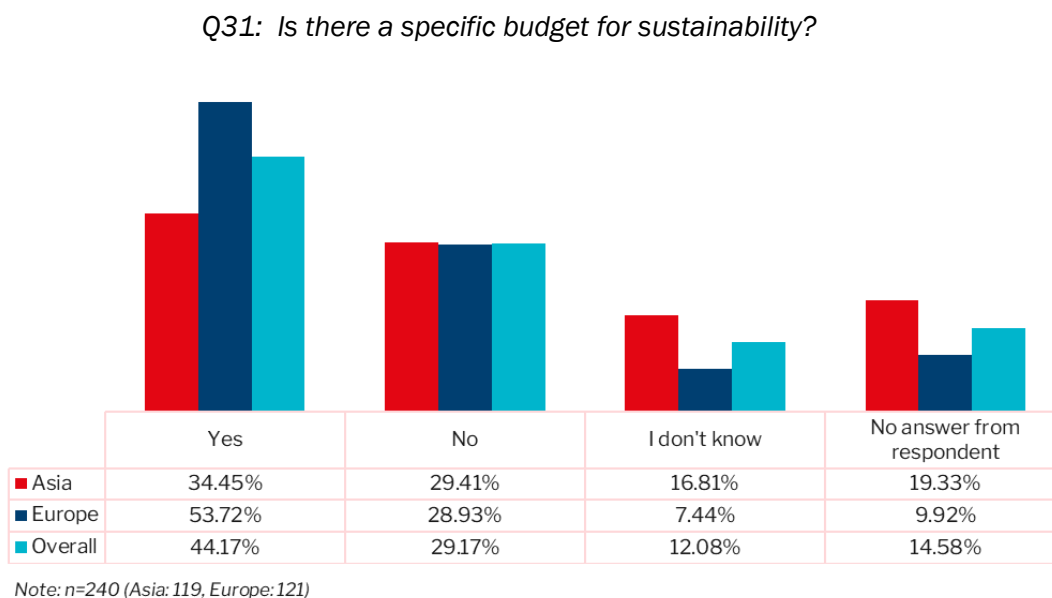
Q30: If you answered yes in the previous question, please specify (select all that apply)



In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, reporting to leadership (internal monitoring) and external rankings at national or global levels (external monitoring) are common ways in which institutions assess their sustainability endeavours. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.**

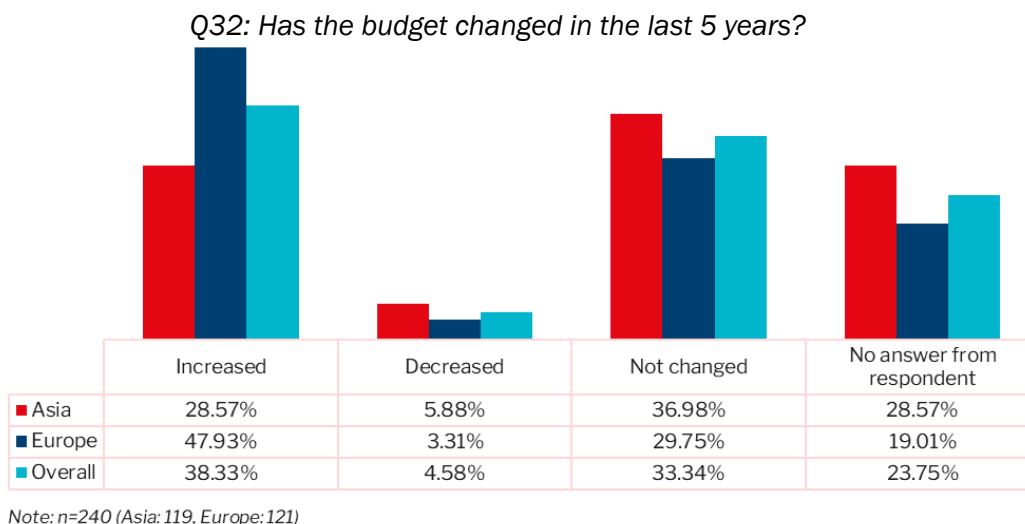
- Monitoring and evaluation tools, Asia: (1) external rankings (36.97 percent), (2) reporting to leadership (35.20 percent), (3) working groups (31.93 percent)
- Monitoring and evaluation tools, Europe: (1) reporting to leadership (49.59 percent), (2) working groups (38.84 percent), (3) external rankings (35.54 percent)

Figure 76 • Budget for Sustainability



In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 44 percent respondents indicated that there is a specific budget for sustainability. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 34.45 percent respondents from Asia and 53.72 percent respondents from Europe indicating that there is a specific budget for sustainability.

Figure 77 • Change in Budget for Sustainability



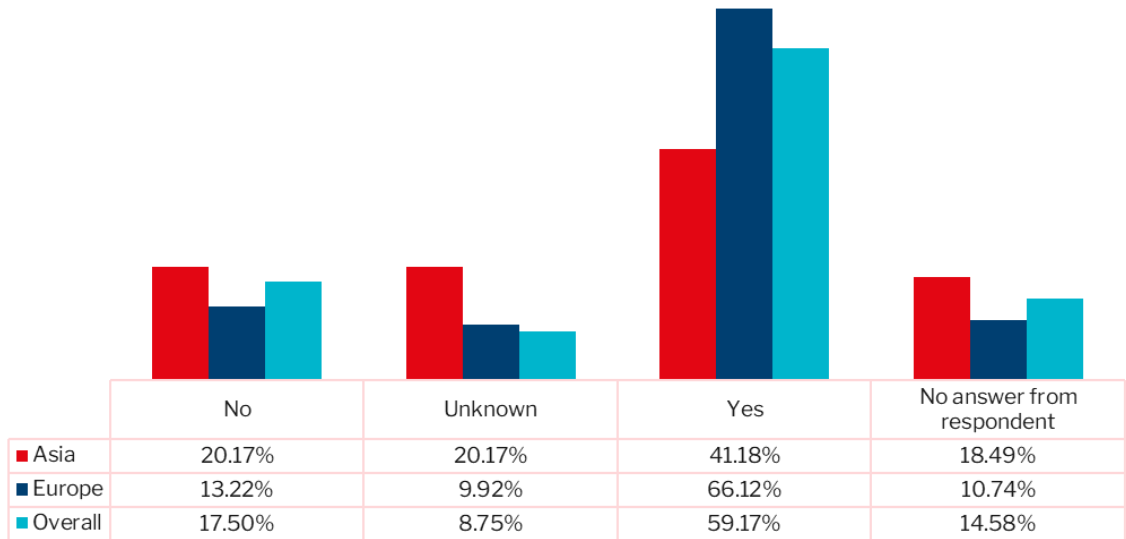
In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 47.3 percent respondents indicated that the budget at their institutions for sustainable development increased, and 9.8 percent indicated that the budget decreased. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.**

Both regions indicated that the budget has increased; such increases are higher in proportion in Europe (47.93 percent) as compared to Asia (28.57 percent). A small proportion of respondents (5.88 percent Asia, and 3.31 percent Europe) indicated that their institutional budget for sustainability has decreased in the last 5 years.

7.6. Teaching, Learning and Research Activities Related to Sustainable Development

Figure 78 • Courses Focused on Sustainable Development

Q33: Does your institution offer courses specifically focused on sustainable development?

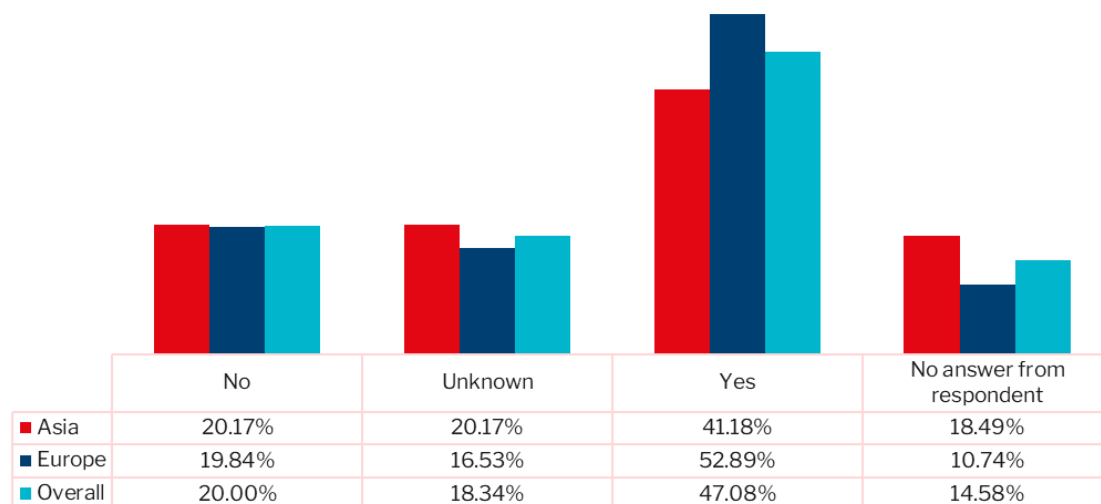


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 65 percent respondents offer courses specific to sustainable development, while 21 percent responded that SD-specific courses do not exist. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 41.18 percent respondents from Asia and 66.12 percent respondents from Europe indicated that their institutions offer SD-specific courses, whereas 20.17 percent respondents from Asia and 13.22 percent respondents from Europe mentioned that such courses do not exist.

Figure 79 • Concept of Sustainable Development As a Cross-cutting Theme

Q34: Has the concept and application of sustainable development become a cross-cutting theme in education, research, and community engagement at your institution?

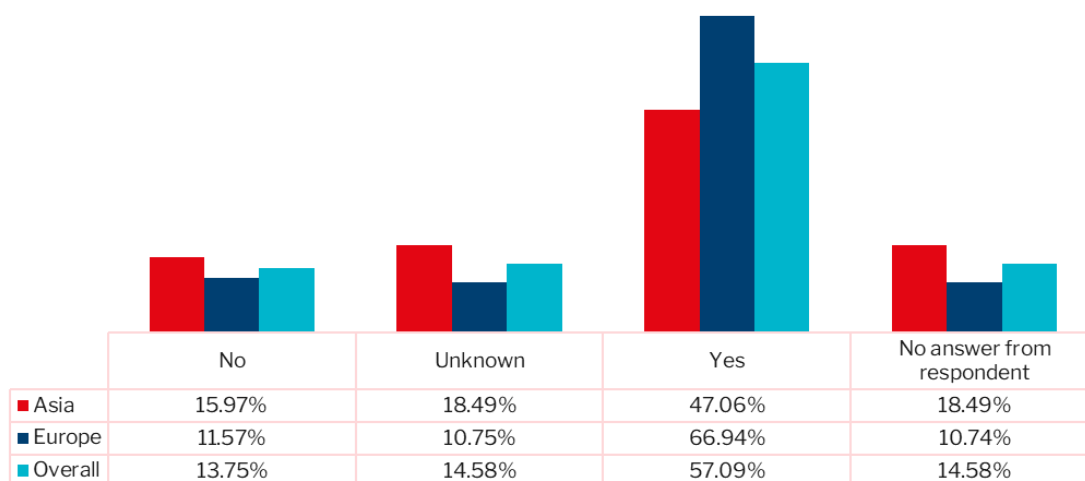


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 54 percent respondents indicate SD is a cross-cutting theme in education, research, and community engagement. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 41.18 percent respondents from Asia and 52.89 percent respondents from Europe indicated that SD is a whole-institutional affair.

Figure 80 • Research on Sustainable Development

Q35: Does research at your university include research focused on sustainable development and SDGs?

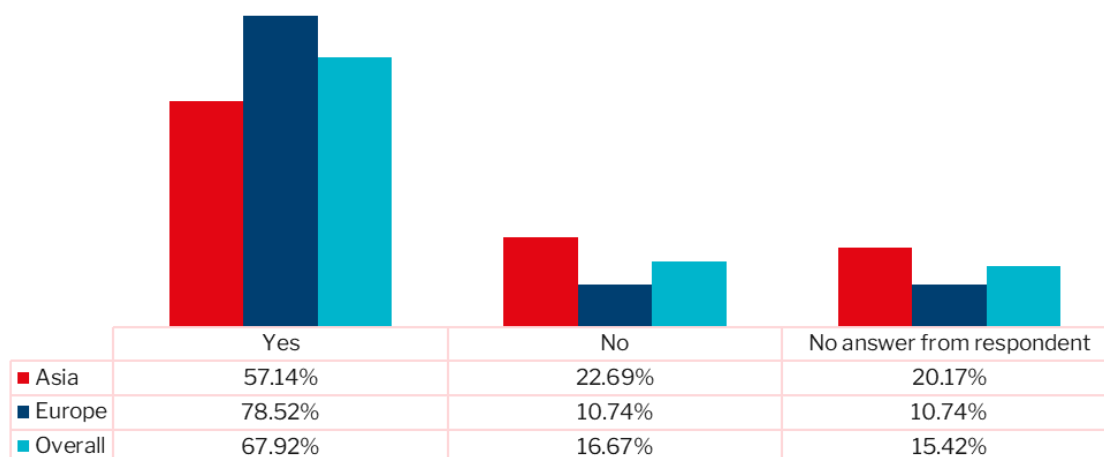


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 67 percent respondents indicated that the research at their institutions includes a focus on SD and SDGs. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 47.06 percent respondents from Asia and 66.94 percent respondents from Europe indicated that SD is a focus in research.

Figure 81 • Institutional Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Q36: Is your institution partnering with other higher education institutions on sustainable development related themes?

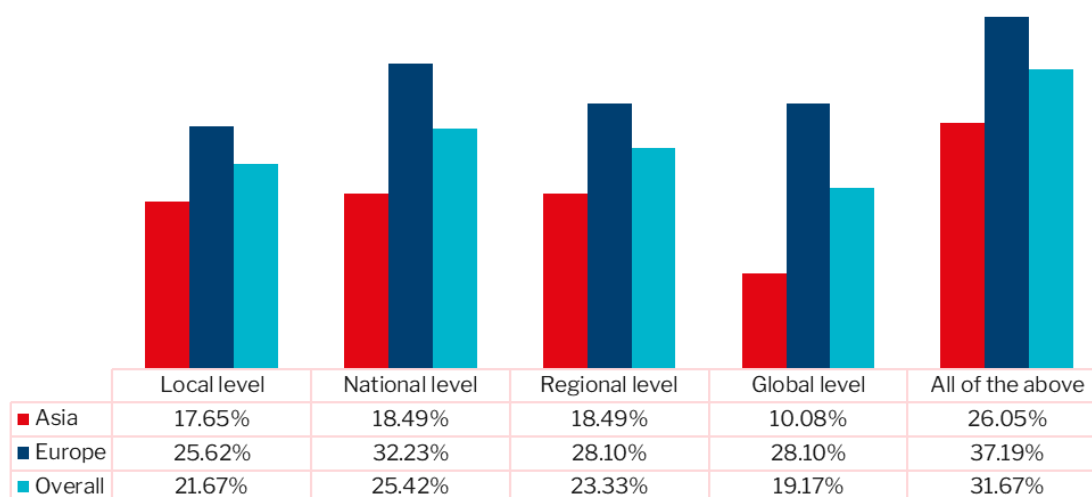


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 79.60 percent respondents indicated that their institutions are partnering with other HEIs on sustainable development. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 57.14 percent respondents from Asia and 78.52 percent respondents from Europe indicating that collaboration with other HEIs on sustainable development is happening at their institutions.

Figure 82 • Level of Institutional Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Q37: If yes, please specify at which level



In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, HEIs collaborate with institutions at diverse levels: from the local to the global. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** Such observations were also found for the ARC9 sample.

Figure 83 • Institutional Networks for Sustainable Development

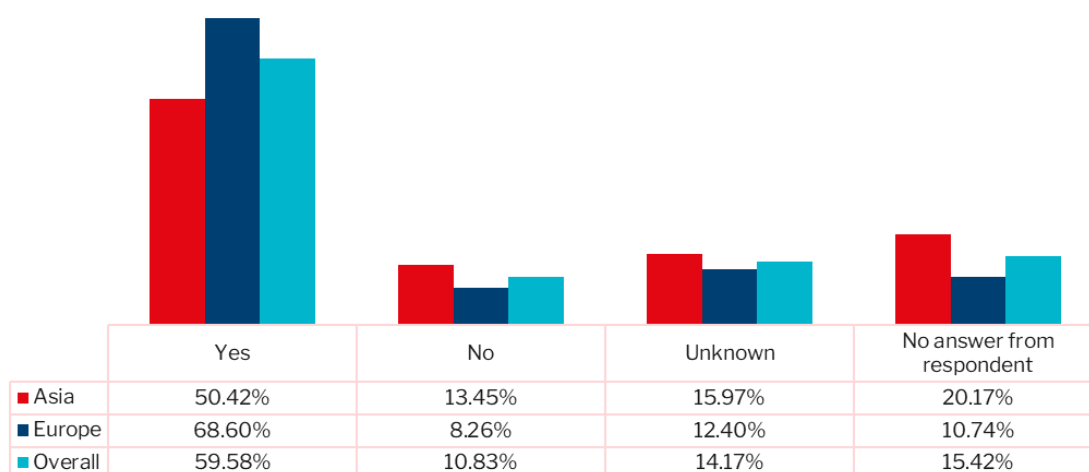
Respondents were asked which of the following HESD specific and other HE networks with special focus on SD are their institution involved? This item required an open-ended response. Responses from the respondents (wherever available) were collected and tabulated, as presented in table below:

Asia	Europe
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None (36 percent) 2. Others (16 percent) 3. Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) (8 percent) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. European University Association (EUA) (19 percent) 2. Universidades Espanolas (CRUE) (16 percent) 3. Others (14 percent)
<p>For respondents that state “others”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASEAN University Network (AUN) ▪ Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) ▪ Asian Sustainable Campus Network ▪ Association of Indian Universities ▪ Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) ▪ International Maritime Organization ▪ International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA) ▪ Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research (ProSPER.Net) ▪ SDG Accord ▪ Sustainable University Network in Thailand ▪ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) ▪ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ▪ United Nations University (UNU) SDG–Universities Platform (SDG-UP) in Japan ▪ World Health Organisation (WHO) 	<p>For respondents that state “others”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aurora / Red Española de Universidades Saludables (REUS) ▪ Catalan Public Universities Association (ACUP) ▪ Challenge-driven Accessible, Research-based Mobile European University (CHARM-EU) ▪ CIVIS Alliance ▪ Consell Interuniversitari de Catalunya (CIC) ▪ European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) ▪ European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) ▪ European Digital University (EDUC) ▪ European Network of Universities for Sustainable Mobility (UMOB) ▪ Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) ▪ League of European Research Universities (LERU) ▪ Living Knowledge Network ▪ Network of Italian Universities for Sustainability (RUS) ▪ Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA) ▪ Nordic Sustainable Campus Network (NSCN) ▪ Pacto Global ▪ Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU) ▪ The Guild

Asia	Europe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategic Alliance for Regional Transition (STARS EU) ▪ UI GreenMetric ▪ UNA EUROPA ▪ United Nations University, Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-Flores) ▪ University of the Arctic (Uarctic) ▪ World University Rankings Network ▪ Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN)

Figure 84 • Institutional Engagement with Public Actors

Q39: Is your institution engaged with public actors (e.g., government, public organizations) on sustainability projects?

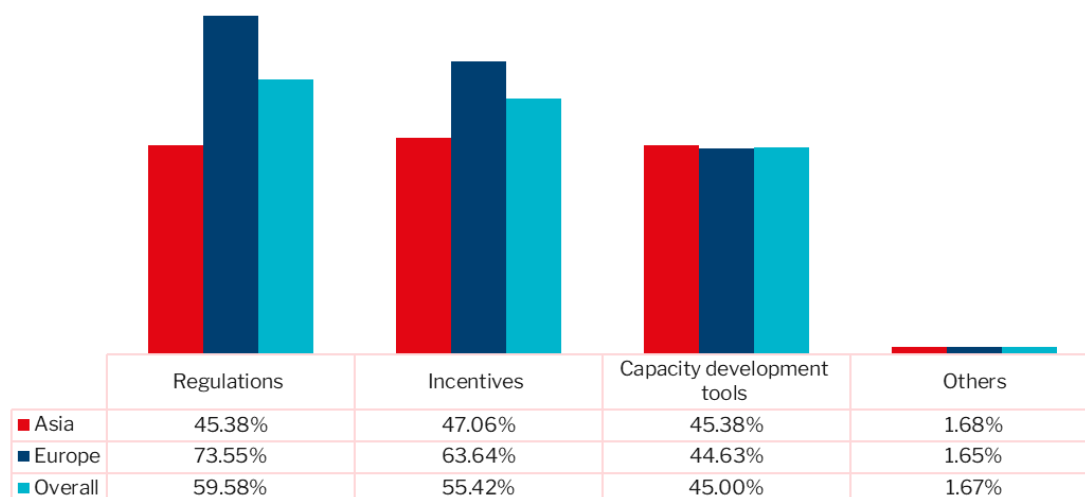


Note: n=240 (Asia:119, Europe:121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 67.5 percent respondents indicated that their institution was engaged with public actors such as the government and public organisations on sustainability projects. . **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** 50.42 percent respondents from Asia and 68.60 percent respondents from Europe engage with public actors on sustainability projects.

Figure 85 • National Policy Instruments Impacting Institutions

Q41: What kind of national policy instruments impact on your institution when it comes to engaging with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs? Please select all that apply:

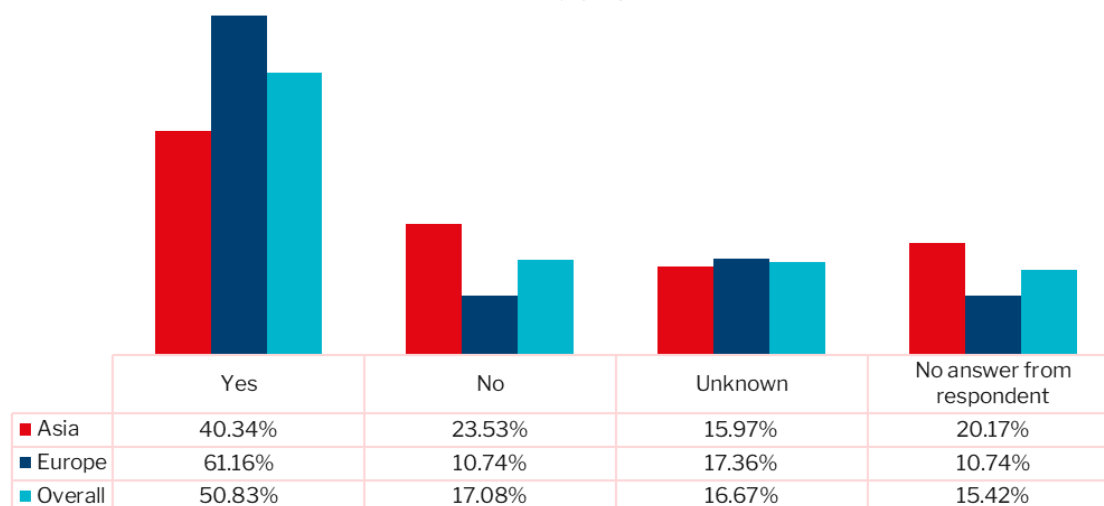


In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 74.6 percent respondents indicated that national tools impact sustainable development action at their institution. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level, and there is no regional difference observed for this item.** All the tools are used by respondents from both regions:

- Regulation refers to legal obligations, accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements
- Incentives refers to funding incentives, reputational tools e.g., national ranking, labels, awards
- Capacity development tool refers to special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines

Figure 86 • Institutional Engagement with Private Actors

Q42: Is your institution engaged with private actors (businesses and / or companies) on sustainability projects?

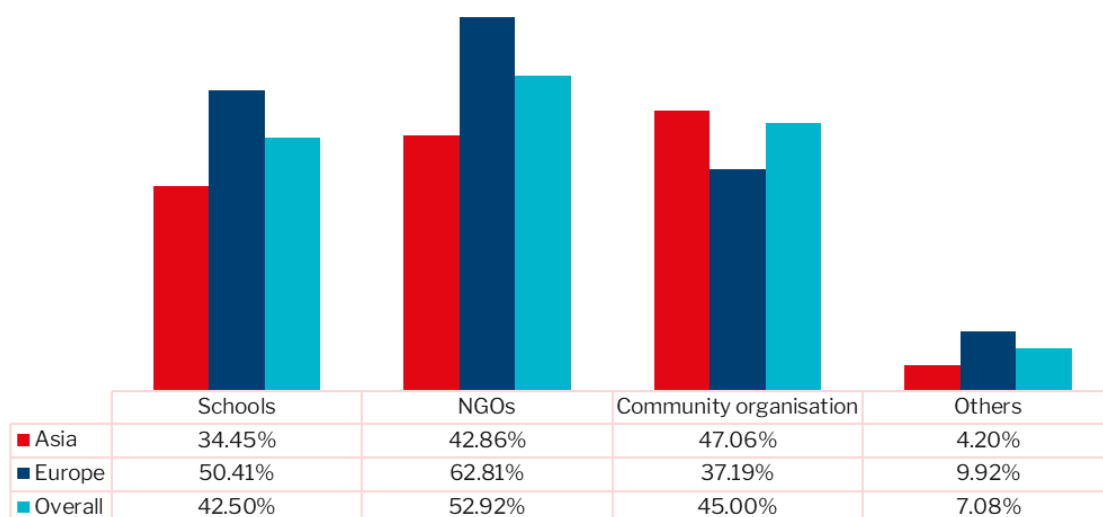


Note: n=240 (Asia: 119, Europe: 121)

In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, 58.4 percent respondents indicated that their institution work with work with businesses and companies for sustainability projects. **The responses analysed for Asia and Europe are in sync with findings at the global level. However, regional differences emerged for this item.** Over 61.16 percent respondents in Europe indicated “yes”, as compared to 40.34 percent respondents in Asia.

Figure 87 • Institutional Engagement with Other Actors

Q44: Is your institution engaged with other stakeholders on sustainable development?



In the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey, respondents highly engage with the community sector, comprising schools, NGOs, and other community organisations. **Regional differences emerged for this item.**

- Respondents from Europe reported that they engaged with NGOs (62.81 percent), schools (50.41 percent), as well as with community organisations (37.19 percent).
- Respondents from Asia reported that they engaged with community organisations (47.06 percent), NGOs (42.86 percent), and schools (34.45 percent) on sustainable development.

3.7. Summary of Findings

Figure 88 • Summary of Findings of The Higher Education Institutional Practice Survey

Aspect	Asia (n=119)	Europe (n=121)
#1: Knowledge on sustainable development	Respondents from both regions believed that sustainable development encompasses an integrated understanding of (1) economic, (2) environmental, and (3) social/cultural-based perspectives	Respondents from both regions have intermediate to expert knowledge on (1) Sustainable development and (2) global citizenship education

	Respondents from Asia reported to have basic to intermediate knowledge on (1) UN 2030 Agenda, (2) SDGs, (3) ESD, and (4) Climate change education	Respondents from Europe reported to have intermediate to expert knowledge on (1) UN 2030 Agenda, (2) SDGs, (3) ESD, and (4) Climate change education
#2: Climate change education	Respondents from both regions (1) offer between 6-10 percent courses with climate related content, (2) climate related courses are dispersed widely in many departments, institutes, or disciplines, (3) academics publish between 1-20 publications related to climate change in a year, (4) receive between 1-5 percent external research funds related to climate change	
#3: Whole institution approach in sustainable development	Respondents from both regions reported that sustainable development is managed at (1) leadership level, (2) sustainable office or SD department, and (3) faculty or department	
	Respondents from both regions reported that (1) academic staff, (2) leadership, and (3) students are most involved in sustainable development	
	Respondents from both regions observed that (1) the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs increased interest in sustainable development to a great extent, and (2) COVID-19 impacted their institutional SD activities	
	Top areas for sustainable development for respondents in Asia: (1) teaching and learning, (2) research, (3) community engagement, (4) campus operations	Top areas for sustainable development for respondents in Europe: (1) teaching and learning, (2) research, (3) vision, mission, strategy development
	Top challenges for respondents in Asia: (1) lack of funding, (2) lack of training opportunities, and (3) lack of cooperation with other stakeholders	Top challenges for respondents in Europe: (1) lack of funding, (2) lack of staff, and (3) lack of institutional recognition
	Top opportunities for respondents in Asia: (1) training opportunities, (2) leadership support, and (3) new engaging initiatives	Top opportunities for respondents in Europe: (1) new engaging initiatives, (2) leadership support, (3) dedicated staff and (4) new or existing cooperation with stakeholders
#4: Institutional engagement with SDGs	Respondents from both regions engaged in individual SDGs across (1) education and teaching, (2) research, (3) community engagement, and (4) campus initiatives	
	Top SDGs engaged for Asia-Europe sample: (1) SDG 5, (2) SDG 10, (3) SDG 4	
#5: Organisation and governance for sustainable development	Respondents from both regions reported to use (1) external rankings, (2) reporting to leadership, and (3) working groups in monitoring and evaluating sustainable development action	
	Respondents from both regions reported to have specific institutional budget for sustainability, and the budget has increased over the past 5 years	
	Higher proportion of respondents from Asia are currently developing strategic plan on sustainable development, or do not have strategic plan for sustainable development	Higher proportion of respondents from Europe indicated that their institutions already have strategic plan for sustainable development

	Sustainable development for respondents in Asia is supported at (1) faculty / department level, (2) institution-wide, (3) student organisations, and (4) throughout the community	Sustainable development for respondents in Europe is supported at (1) institution-wide, (3) individual level, and (3) faculty / department level
#6: Teaching, learning and research	Respondents from both regions reported that sustainable development is a cross-cutting theme in education, research, and community engagement at their institution	
#7: Collaboration and partnerships	Respondents from both regions reported that they partner with other stakeholders (public, private, other HEIs, schools, NGOs, and community organisations) across all levels – local, national, regional, global	
	Respondents from both regions reported that national tools impact sustainable development action at their institution. The tools include (1) regulations, (2) incentives, and (3) capacity development tools	

4. Call for Action

Below are 5 Spotlight areas, which could serve as basis for further discussions. Each spotlight area lists a number of recommendations for policymakers and leaders of universities, to deliberate their discussions.



SPOTLIGHT #1: MIND THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Higher education has a critical role to play in meeting the very ambitious, highly interconnected, and highly complex goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, little is known on the depth and breadth of policy, strategic management, and operationalisation of SDGs in higher education at national and institutional levels. Policymakers, scholars, and practitioners must connect the ways in which SDGs are advocated, enacted, and implemented at national and local dimensions to the progress and current developments of SDGs occurring globally, to accelerate action and delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

Findings from the study indicate that

1. **Sustainable development has become a cross-cutting theme** across education, research, community engagement, and campus operations among surveyed respondents.
2. **There are commonalities and distinctive differences in how sustainable development is conceptualized, strategised, and implemented across surveyed respondents in Asia and Europe** due to the differences in size, scale, governance and administration of HEIs represented across both regions.

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS:

1. **Acknowledge** sustainable development as a core competency for academics, administrative staff, and students in HE
2. **Increase** inclusion of content related to sustainable development as part of curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels

3. **Provide** training on sustainable development in HEIs. Such training should include, but not limited to:
 - a) The UN 2030 Agenda
 - b) The UN Sustainable Development Goals
 - c) Education for Sustainable Development
 - d) Global Citizenship Education
 - e) Climate change education
4. **Encourage** students and staff to leverage on repositories and resources that are available via open access in bridging their knowledge gap related to sustainable development
5. **Collaborate** with stakeholders at local, national, regional, and global levels
 - a) To explore joint capacity development opportunities, physically and / or online
 - b) To share best practices among one another
 - c) To produce and / or share training resources related to sustainable development across institutions



SPOTLIGHT #2: EMPOWER STUDENTS AND STAFF

Even though the 3rd IAU-HESD 2022 survey captures institutional practices of HEIs in sustainable development, students were cited as among the population that are most actively involved in driving sustainable development projects. The youth must be given opportunities to shape policy discourses and leadership commitment for agendas affecting their livelihood and well-being, such as those concerning the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Findings from the study indicate that

1. **The youth must be seen and heard** at all levels of the policy process.
2. **Innovative and sustainable solutions** to issues related to the 17 global goals **should come from the youth**, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
3. **Leaders of today should equip the youth, who are leaders of tomorrow with the know-how and exposure in driving impactful policy change.**

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS:

1. **Recognise** that student and staff participation is important in communicating institutional leadership commitment towards sustainable development
2. **Provide** incentives to students and staff to drive sustainable development projects on behalf of the institution, with stakeholders within and beyond HEIs
3. **Outline** guidelines and best practices for students and staff in conducting sustainable development projects, and **ensure** that advisory and support services are accessible to those in need
4. **Recognise** successful projects and initiatives that are conducted by students and staff



SPOTLIGHT #3: DON'T FORGET THE LOCAL CONTEXT

HEIs face structural barriers – both from within and outside the institution – in accelerating action for sustainable development. Solutions to combat the loss of nature, climate change, and inequalities require strong political will and financing incentives. It necessitate students and staff to create and/or participate in collaboration networks across borders, in order to access information, resources, advocacy, and expertise available outside of their institutions.

Findings from the study indicate that

1. **Everyone has a role to play** in accelerating sustainable development action.
2. **One engages in sustainable development for the long run.**
3. A commitment towards sustainable development must be accompanied with a **commitment to ensure resources**, tangible or otherwise, are available to students and staff as and when they are needed.

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS:

1. **Reinvigorate** the UN Secretary-General's call to mobilise action on the 2030 Agenda through the following:
 - a) Global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the SDGs;
 - b) Local action embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and
 - c) People action, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations



SPOTLIGHT #4: PRACTICE EVIDENCE-INFORMED SD ACTION

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS:

1. **Implement** good practices in documenting and reporting projects and programmes on sustainable development at respective institutions
2. **Use** insights generated from the documents and reports in
 - a) Better allocation of resources (funds, manpower)
 - b) Giving institutional recognition to students and staff
 - c) Conduct public advocacy on sustainable development in local and international communities
 - d) Conduct teaching, research, and service activities related to sustainable development
 - e) Identifying collaborators at different levels, either within or beyond higher education contexts
3. **Advocate**, as a collective of HEIs, the need for greater allocation of resources for sustainable development action at the national level



SPOTLIGHT #5: ENGAGE IN CONTINUOUS DIALOGUES ON SD

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS:

1. **Organise and / or participate** in dialogues, forums, conferences, networking events and publications, both online and offline on sustainable development which would enable students and staff to
 - a) Develop comparative insights across borders
 - b) Share best practices
 - c) Explore collaboration opportunities

5. Potential Future Research Areas

Based on findings of the study and feedback received during ARC9 dissemination events, the ARC9 research team proposes the following potential research areas for ASEM member states to pursue in the future:



Area #1: Relevance and contribution of higher education in sustainable development

Potential areas to explore:

- Respondent perception on the role of HEIs in contributing to the 2030 Agenda
- Respondent perception on HEI contribution towards student outcome (e.g., employability), in relation to the 2030 Agenda
- HE contribution in research through SDGs, with distinction on fundamental impact vs translational impact
- HEI contribution towards specific agenda, e.g.
 - Widening access on higher education (e.g., through transnational education)
 - Social inclusion in higher education



Area #2: Institutional engagement with SDGs

Potential areas to explore:

- HEIs' decision-making path in selecting one / several SDGs in their sustainable development strategy
- Specific areas addressed by HEIs, as they select one / several SDGs in their sustainable development action
- Main beneficiaries behind SDG projects conducted by HEIs
- Mindset changes necessary in driving sustainable development action, and champions who should drive such changes
- Role of people-to-people connectivity (e.g., student mobility) in driving sustainable development action at HEIs
- Role of international partnerships in supporting HEIs' action in sustainable development, in particular capacity building
- Role of NGOs and civil societies in supporting HEIs for their sustainable development action

- Different platforms and methods in best practice sharing on sustainable development among HEIs



Area #3: Funding for sustainable development

Potential areas to explore:

- Specific areas for sustainable development action that require funding by HEIs
- Importance of public funding in driving sustainable development action among private HEIs



Area #4: Assessment / evaluation of SDGs

Potential areas to explore:

- Role of external bodies (e.g., ranking leagues) in evaluating and monitoring HEIs' engagement towards SDG implementation
- Institutional performance of individual SDGs, e.g., SDG4.3 (Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university)

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






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












Annex 2. Overview of ASEM Countries Policy Survey Responses
















All data reflect the actual responses provided in the survey.

Country	SDG agency	SDG priority					Reference Document
Austria	Ministry: Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Department: Universities of Technology Unit: Sustainability in Higher Education						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Austrian Federal government is pursuing a so-called ‘mainstreaming approach’, which means that each Ministry is responsible for the implementation of the SDGs in its own area of responsibility. This has been decided by the Austrian Federal government on 12 th January 2016 (Document N/A)” Sustainability Award 2022
Belgium	No formal responsibility						None provided
Brunei Darussalam	No formal responsibility						None provided
Bulgaria	No formal responsibility						None provided
Cambodia	The Department of Higher Education; the General Department of Policy and Planning						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cambodia Education Roadmap 2030 Higher Education Vision 2030
China	Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education						None provided
Croatia	Ministry of Science and Education Directorate for Higher Education Sector for the Development of Higher Education						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently being developed: The Draft National Plan for the Development of Education system in the period 2021-2027

Country	SDG agency	SDG priority					Reference Document
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability
Cyprus	No formal responsibility						None provided
Estonia	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Development Plan 2021-2035 • Estonian Research and Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy 2021–2035
Finland	<p>“At the national level in Finland, policy towards sustainable development and SDG’s is coordinated by Prime Minister’s Office but all line ministries have a responsibility over policies, legislation and funding within its own tasks.</p> <p>As above, the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the planning and implementation of higher education and science policy and preparing statutes, national Budget proposals and Government decisions that apply to these. The Ministry steers the activities of the higher education system, as well as supports the operating capacity of research organisations. However, the HEI’s are autonomous actors that are responsible for the content of their education and research as well as the development of their own activities.”</p>	<p>No answer in the multiple-choice survey question</p> <p>“The HEI’s in Finland have all their own profile areas and their activities towards different SDG targets may vary due to its profile and focus areas; meaning that HEI’s profiling is on energy, will most likely have a focus concerning energy target, those with medical and social care on targets related to health and so on. Therefore all targets of SDG’s are of importance. As a sector in total, HEI’s are especially linked to SDG 4 (Education) and SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure (includes also number of researchers and level of research funding as sub-targets). All HEI’s are also committed to be climate neutral by 2035 (SDG 13, some of them with earlier timeframe).”</p>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Policy Report of the Finnish Government • Strategy of the National Commission on Sustainable Development 2022–2030 • Sustainable Development Policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture and its Administrative Branch • National Roadmap for Research, Development and Innovation
Germany	<p>“The German “Grundgesetz” stipulates that Germany is a federal state. This means that both the federal government (“Bund”) and the sixteen states (“Länder”) have their own legislative domains and act as state entities. "School" and mostly also "Higher Education" are within the jurisdiction of the federal states</p>	No answer					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability strategy of the federal government • Recommendation by the 25th General Assembly of the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK)

Country	SDG agency	SDG priority					Reference Document
	("Länder")."						
Greece	Greek University Network for Sustainability						Currently being developed
Hungary	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifting of Gears in Higher Education Mid-Term Policy Strategy 2016 Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education
India	"India's NITI Aayog has the twin mandate to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs by periodically collect(ing) data on SDGs and to proactively realise the goals and targets. Also, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) undertook a parallel exercise of interaction with the Ministries to evolve indicators reflecting the SDG goals and targets."						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Guidelines on Global Citizenship Education
Ireland	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESD to 2030: Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development ESD to 2030: Implementation Plans 2022-2026
Japan	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UNU SDG–Universities Platform was established by UNU-IAS in 2020 Japan SDGs Award Programme: Third awarded to Okayama University (Aligning its entire educational program with the SDGs)
Lao PDR	Ministry of Education and Sports, Department of Higher Education						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently being developed
Latvia	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027

Country	SDG agency	SDG priority					Reference Document
Lithuania	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National strategy for sustainable development National progress plan Lithuania 2030 strategy
Luxembourg	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance contracts Evaluation National Research and Innovation Strategy
Malaysia	Ministry of Higher Education, Department of Higher Education; Department of Polytechnics and Community College Education; SDG Academy						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Term Review of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, 2016 - 2020 Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021 - 2025
Malta	“Malta has an autonomous Authority which is responsible for the implementation of the SDGs. The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority”						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Malta Higher Education Strategy 2022- 2030
Mongolia	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national level plan of SDG implementation (http://sdg.1212.mn/EN/Home/Detail?id=4)
Myanmar	Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of Advanced Science and Technology						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently being developed
Philippines	“The Philippines does not have a formal agency responsible for higher education towards the SDGs. All work is carried out on voluntary basis.” Commission on Higher Education						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMO No. 52, Series of 2016 - Pathways to Equity, Relevance and Advancement in Research, Innovation, and Extension in Philippine Higher Education

Country	SDG agency	SDG priority					Reference Document
Slovakia	No answer						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Intention in Education, Research, Development, Art and other Creative Actions in the Higher Education Environment • Higher Education Internationalisation Strategy 2030 • Annual development projects that support funding of HEIs activities on state or international level such as “Initiative of Europe and Universities”
Slovenia	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Higher Education Directorate UNESCO Office NAKVIS						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2030 (link) • Higher Vocational Education Act (link) • Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (link)
Switzerland	No formal responsibility						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy • Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector • Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the Higher Education Sector (HEdA Accreditation Ordinance) • The ERI-dispatch 2021-2024 • P-6 swissuniversities Development and Cooperation Network (SUDAC) • P-7 Diversität, Inklusion und Chancengerechtigkeit in der Hochschulentwicklung (2021-2024) • Sustainable Development at Swiss HEI- students' projects
United Kingdom	Department for Education	No answer					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Sustainable Development Goals data update December 2021 • Office for Students (webpage)

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Japan

Japan SDGs Award / JAPAN SDGs Action Platform. (n.d.). Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/sdgs/award/index.html#about_award

Latvia

National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027. (2020, July). https://pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027_ENG_3.pdf.

Lithuania

Minister of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. (2011). National strategy for sustainable development. https://am.lrv.lt/uploads/am/documents/files/ES_ir_tarptautinis_bendradarbiavimas/Darnaus%20vystymosi%20tikslai/NDVS/NDVS.pdf.

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Annex 4. Examples of Focus Group Discussion Questions

National policies and policy instruments oriented towards the SDGs (RQ1, RQ4)

- Can you give us one or two examples of how your national governments are supporting universities towards contributing to the SDGs?
- What do you think is the most effective policy instrument for encouraging higher education institutions to tackle SDGs?

Translating global to local goals (RQ2)

- Do you think the SDGs have served as a valuable framework in responding to your country's higher education needs? Why or why not?
- How useful has been the SDG framework in instigating action in your own countries to improve higher education efforts towards sustainable development?
- How are you consolidating the global goals with local realities? Where are the tensions? Where are the opportunities?
- Are there specific SDGs that are being focused more on in your own countries specific to higher education? Why?

University missions (RQ3)

- Would you say that certain areas of university activity are being supported in your country more than others?

Annex 5. Higher Education Institutions Survey Instrument Validation

Conducted & reported by:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adibah Abdul Latif, School of Education,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Process:

1. Format data
2. Conduct psychometric analysis
 - Instrument validity: Does the instrument measure what it is supposed to measure?
 - Item and person reliability & separation: Are the items sensitive enough to distinguish between the range of respondents?
 - Fit statistics: Are the items in the instrument comply with the necessary psychometric properties?

Findings:

A) Instrument validity

Table of STANDARDIZED RESIDUAL variance in Eigenvalue units = ITEM information units

	Eigenvalue	Observed	Expected
Total raw variance in observations =	255.8271	100.0%	100.0%
Raw variance explained by measures =	151.8271	59.3%	56.8%
Raw variance explained by persons =	13.9044	5.4%	5.2%
Raw Variance explained by items =	137.9228	53.9%	51.6%
Raw unexplained variance (total) =	104.0000	40.7%	43.2%
Unexplnd variance in 1st contrast =	14.3694	5.6%	13.8%
Unexplnd variance in 2nd contrast =	11.0955	4.3%	10.7%
Unexplnd variance in 3rd contrast =	3.0912	1.2%	3.0%
Unexplnd variance in 4th contrast =	2.9879	1.2%	2.9%
Unexplnd variance in 5th contrast =	2.5923	1.0%	2.5%

1: The instrument shows that the variance that can be measured is acceptable (more than 40%)

2: The instrument shows that the error / unexplained variance is less than 15%

3: The instrument shows that there are 14 aspects/constructs being measured.

B) Item and person reliability & separation

SUMMARY OF 104 MEASURED ITEM

	TOTAL	COUNT	MEASURE	MODEL	INFIT		OUTFIT	
	SCORE			S.E.	MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD
MEAN	488.2	230.4	.00	.10	.84	-2.02	.86	-1.91
SEM	16.2	1.6	.14	.00	.05	.47	.05	.46
P.SD	164.6	16.4	1.39	.03	.50	4.73	.50	4.66
S.SD	165.4	16.5	1.39	.03	.50	4.75	.50	4.68
MAX.	864.0	240.0	2.61	.18	2.72	9.90	2.75	9.90
MIN.	243.0	183.0	-2.46	.05	.08	-9.90	.08	-9.90
REAL RMSE	.11	TRUE SD	1.38	SEPARATION 12.09	ITEM	RELIABILITY .99		
MODEL RMSE	.11	TRUE SD	1.38	SEPARATION 12.78	ITEM	RELIABILITY .99		
S.E. OF ITEM MEAN = .14								

The item reliability is high, and the item separation is more than the required value (3). Thus, the instrument can classify the item hierarchy with adequate sample.

SUMMARY OF 240 MEASURED PERSON

	TOTAL	COUNT	MEASURE	MODEL	INFIT		OUTFIT	
	SCORE			S.E.	MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD
MEAN	211.6	99.9	-1.73	.13	.94	-.61	.82	-1.17
SEM	1.7	.6	.02	.00	.03	.15	.02	.11
P.SD	26.0	8.6	.35	.01	.40	2.39	.26	1.66
S.SD	26.0	8.7	.35	.01	.40	2.40	.26	1.67
MAX.	263.0	104.0	-.84	.17	2.32	6.46	1.63	3.74
MIN.	152.0	77.0	-2.80	.13	.24	-4.89	.23	-5.03
REAL RMSE	.14	TRUE SD	.32	SEPARATION 2.23	PERSON RELIABILITY .83			
MODEL RMSE	.14	TRUE SD	.32	SEPARATION 2.40	PERSON RELIABILITY .85			
S.E. OF PERSON MEAN = .02								

The person reliability is high, and the person separation is acceptable (more than 2). Thus, the instrument can classify the people according to their implementation in SDG.

B) Fit statistics

ITEM STATISTICS: MISFIT ORDER

ENTRY NUMBER	TOTAL SCORE	TOTAL COUNT	MEASURE	MODEL	INFIT		OUTFIT		PTMEASUR-CORR.	-AL EXP.	EXACT OBS%	MATCH EXP%	ITEM
				S.E.	MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD					
85	354	183	-.24	.13	2.72	6.89	2.75	7.15	A .10	.17	6.0	71.3	Q32
100	324	203	.91	.13	2.20	9.90	2.19	9.90	B .11	.15	26.6	57.1	Q2
95	297	203	1.39	.14	2.18	9.90	2.17	9.90	C .06	.15	46.3	55.6	Q39
1	339	240	1.66	.13	2.10	9.90	2.15	9.90	D-.12	.17	59.6	60.3	Q3
53	474	214	-.86	.09	1.78	4.13	1.93	4.71	E-.14	.20	1.9	67.3	Q22
57	691	206	-1.95	.06	1.86	9.90	1.92	9.56	F .58	.33	1.9	22.1	Q23d
78	310	208	1.28	.13	1.86	9.90	1.85	9.90	G .09	.15	39.9	54.8	Q29
70	585	240	-1.09	.07	1.83	5.67	1.81	5.07	H .46	.29	16.7	51.4	Q25
2	658	240	-1.41	.06	1.68	6.18	1.81	6.23	I .16	.34	22.1	34.2	Q4
84	333	205	.81	.13	1.79	7.25	1.78	7.26	J .09	.16	36.1	58.4	Q31
67	829	203	-2.42	.06	1.66	7.00	1.61	6.20	K .64	.36	11.3	23.8	Q23n

The following items should be reviewed, as they may indicate that performances in an area originally conceptualised as one domain may need to be reported on more than one dimension:

Item	Prompt in IAU-HESD 2022 survey
32	Has the budget changed in the last 5 years?
39	Is your institution engaged with public actors (e.g., government, public organizations) on sustainability projects?
3	Type of institution
22	Did/ Does COVID-19 impact on the strategy for SD or related activities?
23d	Please indicate for which SDG your institution is active, on which level (education and teaching/learning, research, community engagement, campus initiative) if applicable: [SDG4 – Quality education]
29	Are there any assessment/ monitoring and evaluation tools/ mechanisms for sustainable development actions at your institution?
25	Is there a strategic plan for sustainable development at your institution?
4	Position of respondent
31	Is there a specific budget for sustainability?
23n	Please indicate for which SDG your institution is active, on which level (education and teaching/learning, research, community engagement, campus initiative) if applicable: [SDG14 – Life below water]

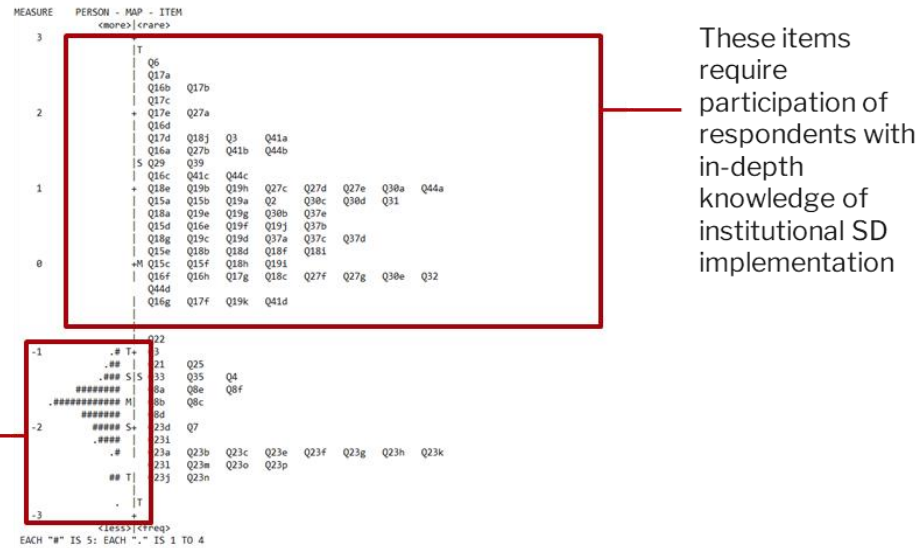
The following respondents should be reviewed, as they illustrate tendencies to commit careless response or guessing:

ENTRY NUMBER	TOTAL SCORE	TOTAL COUNT	MEASURE	MODEL S.E.	INFIT MNSQ	ZSTD	OUTFIT MNSQ	ZSTD	PTMEASUR-AL CORR.	EXP.	EXACT OBS%	MATCH EXP%	PERSON	
147	212	103	-1.93	.13	2.32	6.46	1.62	3.65	A	.19	.68	49.5	53.6	A26 India
65	189	104	-2.38	.14	2.08	4.79	1.50	3.06	B	.16	.62	46.2	57.5	EU65 Romania
239	191	104	-2.34	.14	2.03	4.72	1.63	3.74	C	-.16	.62	46.2	57.3	A118 Viet Nam
56	214	104	-1.93	.13	2.01	5.25	1.18	1.23	D	.55	.68	53.8	53.8	EU56 Netherlands
228	171	104	-2.80	.16	1.95	3.60	1.55	3.03	E	.44	.59	58.7	62.0	A107 Thailand
197	187	104	-2.42	.14	1.93	4.18	1.57	3.39	F	.01	.62	42.3	57.6	A76 Myanmar
188	225	104	-1.75	.13	1.86	4.47	1.29	1.81	G	.38	.71	52.9	53.1	A67 Korea (Republic of)
127	241	104	-1.49	.13	1.84	4.10	1.28	1.62	H	.52	.74	55.8	53.2	A6 Cambodia
159	215	95	-1.63	.13	1.82	4.09	1.13	.82	I	.50	.74	55.8	53.0	A38 India
80	231	103	-1.62	.13	1.78	4.02	1.18	1.15	J	.52	.73	61.2	52.8	EU80 Spain
139	183	104	-2.50	.15	1.76	3.37	1.47	2.83	K	-.08	.61	41.3	58.3	A18 India
150	197	104	-2.22	.14	1.76	3.94	1.34	2.22	L	.26	.64	53.8	56.5	A29 India
164	222	104	-1.80	.13	1.76	4.12	1.29	1.81	M	.48	.70	60.6	53.8	A43 India
37	225	104	-1.75	.13	1.72	3.86	1.03	.27	N	.58	.71	56.7	53.1	EU37 Germany
68	218	104	-1.86	.13	1.67	3.75	1.30	1.91	O	.51	.69	52.9	53.6	EU68 Spain
120	185	104	-2.46	.15	1.66	3.09	1.21	1.36	P	.32	.61	54.8	58.2	EU120 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
161	215	103	-1.88	.13	1.66	3.71	1.26	1.69	Q	.54	.69	59.2	53.4	A40 India
151	187	104	-2.42	.14	1.64	3.08	1.18	1.24	R	.40	.62	51.9	57.6	A30 India
195	213	103	-1.91	.13	1.61	3.45	1.20	1.34	S	.49	.68	55.3	53.7	A74 Mongolia
11	220	104	-1.83	.13	1.59	3.35	1.11	.75	T	.55	.70	53.8	53.8	EU11 Belgium
186	225	104	-1.73	.13	1.58	3.22	1.23	1.46	U	.52	.71	53.8	53.1	A65 Korea (Republic of)
211	208	103	-1.96	.13	1.58	3.26	1.18	1.23	V	.58	.67	59.2	54.5	A90 Philippines
6	248	104	-1.38	.13	1.55	2.81	1.16	.93	W	.63	.76	51.9	56.2	EU6 Belgium
185	220	104	-1.83	.13	1.53	3.03	1.17	1.14	X	.51	.70	54.8	53.8	A64 Korea (Republic of)
46	181	104	-2.55	.15	1.52	2.40	1.29	1.82	Y	.53	.60	62.5	58.8	EU46 Hungary
60	246	103	-1.38	.13	.39	-4.65	.48	-3.78	Z	.88	.76	73.8	56.1	EU60 Poland
49	165	77	-1.04	.16	.43	-3.30	.31	-4.26	d	.61	.65	83.1	61.8	EU49 Ireland
66	173	79	-1.03	.16	.42	-3.47	.31	-4.31	c	.64	.67	83.5	61.2	EU66 Slovakia
182	171	77	-.89	.16	.28	-4.48	.26	-4.72	b	.69	.66	92.2	61.8	A61 Korea (Republic of)
31	173	77	-.84	.15	.24	-4.83	.23	-5.03	a	.71	.67	89.6	62.1	EU31 France

Concluding remarks:

1. The instrument has an acceptable construct validity value. It shows that 59.3% of implementation in SDG can be measured using this instrument
2. The raw data indicated that there were respondents who did not respond to items in the survey. Future iterations of the survey should include the following options:
 - Indicate whether the item is compulsory or not

- Provide the following options: “Not applicable” or “ I am not aware of this”
 - There were too many items in this survey. Items that measure similar aspects should be merged / combined.
3. The main issue of the survey, as indicated through the following item map, is sampling. More sample is needed. Sampling should be more representative of Europe and Asia. Cluster sampling may be adopted in future iterations.



Annex 6. List of Events Where Preliminary Findings Were Showcased

The initial findings of this study were presented in the following events:

16th IAU General Conference 2022

Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society
25-28 October 2022 in Dublin, Ireland

ASEF presented initial findings during a breakout session on 'Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development - What is the Role for University Leadership?'.

2022 Inter-Regional Research Symposium

Sustainable Learning in Higher Education: Towards Sustainable Development
23-25 November 2022 in Bangkok, Thailand

ASEF presented initial findings during the ASEF Panel on 'Inter-regional Outlook: Higher Education Working Towards the SDGs'.

Intermediate Senior Officials Meeting 2022 (ISOM)

ASEM Education Vision and Strategy 2030
24-25 November 2022 in Malta

The Intermediate Senior Officials Meeting (ISOM) was organised by the ASEM Education Secretariat. ASEF presented initial findings during a parallel session workshop.

British Council Going Global 2022

International Education in the UK and Asia Pacific region: How to pursue equity in an inequitable world
28 November – 1 December 2022 in Singapore

ARC9 Researchers presented the studies during the panel on 'Enhancing university's third mission through teaching and research'.

ARC9 Roundtable Dialogue

ASEM Higher Education: Working Towards the SDGs
29 November 2022 in Singapore & Virtual

The ARC9 Roundtable Dialogue elaborated on two ARC9 studies that gathered evidence and mapped higher education policies and practices that work toward the SDGs in Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) partner countries.

The ARC9 research team would like to thank all involved in providing constructive feedback to the study.



The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, economy, education, governance, public health, sustainable development and media. ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

ASEF runs more than 25 projects a year, consisting of around 100 activities, mainly conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, publications, and online platforms, together with about 150 partner organisations. Each year over 3,000 Asians and Europeans participate in ASEF's activities, and much wider audiences are reached through its various events, networks and web-portals.

For more information, please visit www.asef.org



The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an intergovernmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. ASEM addresses political, economic, financial, social, cultural, and educational issues of common interest in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership.

ASEM brings together 53 partners: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Viet Nam, plus the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Union.

For more information, please visit www.aseminfoboard.org

ARC9 Report
Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping:
Working Towards SDGs

