

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY ON THE SDGs

Cambodia



Respondent Profile

Some details on the respondent:

- A representative from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport completed the ARC9 survey. The respondent is involved in the priority setting, drafting, implementation, and evaluation stages of the policy cycle.
- Based on self-evaluation, their knowledge of SDG-related concepts – such as the UN 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – varies from Basic to Expert levels. On the other hand, their knowledge of existing higher education policies aimed at contributing to the SDGs is at the Intermediate level.

Understanding the National Context

Who do you expect to be most responsible in pushing forward the implementation of the SDGs in higher education in your country? Is there a department/agency in-charge of such efforts and what are the priorities?

- By order of responsibility, the government and policymakers are seen as the primary actor responsible in pushing forward SDG-related efforts, followed by higher education institutions (HEIs), and civil society.
- Government's primary role in the implementation of the SDGs in higher education is establishing a common vision and strategy. By order of importance given by the respondent, this is followed by enforcing regulations, building capacity, providing funding opportunities, and providing reputational incentives.
 1. Establish a common vision and strategy
 2. Enforce regulations (e.g. accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
 3. Build capacity (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
 4. Provide funding opportunities
 5. Provide reputational incentives (e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)
- There is a department/agency responsible for implementing the SDGs in higher education at the national level—these are the Department of Higher Education and the General [Department of Policy](#) of the [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport](#).

Are there policy documents for higher education's response to the SDGs? What are some obstacles faced by HEIs in contributing to the SDGs?

- The Ministry is guided by the [Cambodia Education Roadmap 2030](#) and the [Higher Education Vision 2030](#) in directing higher education's response to the SDGs.
- In the above policy documents, sustainability is addressed in the areas of education and teaching, research, and partnerships and societal engagement. The dimensions of sustainability addressed by higher education are primarily economic and social.
- In terms of obstacles faced by universities, they are mostly strategic (lack of or unclear strategy on the SDGs) and structural (lack of time, funding, human resources, infrastructure) in nature. They also encounter perception issues that may reflect lack of interest and limited view of the SDGs, as well as knowledge issues stemming from lack of information, awareness, or knowledge of the SDGs and the UN 2030 Agenda.

What are the top 5 SDG priorities for higher education in your country?

- The Ministry's top 5 SDG priorities in higher education are SDG4: Quality Education, SDG5: Gender

Equality, SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals.

- Priority 1 | SDG 4 Quality Education
- Priority 2 | SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- Priority 3 | SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Priority 4 | SDG17 Partnership for the Goals
- Priority 5 | SDG 5 Gender Equality

Policy Tools

What policy tools are used to encourage HEIs to address the SDGs in your country? What specific higher education area do they target?

- The Ministry employs a number of policy tools to encourage universities to contribute to the attainment of the SDGs, across the different dimensions of higher education, such as:

	Education & Teaching	Research	Campus Operations & Governance	Partnerships and Societal Engagement
Financial support or budget allocation		x		x
National rankings, labels and awards				
Access to facilities and infrastructure	x	x	x	
Special units advising and guidelines		x		x
Tools for self-assessment	x		x	x
Optional institutional reviews	x	x	x	
Legal obligations	x	x		x
Accreditation requirements	x	x	x	x
Audit, monitoring, or evaluation	x	x	x	x

- No specific example was given on the Ministry’s use of policy tools to encourage HEI contributions to the SDGs.
- Specifically **SDG4** Quality Education is promoted by specific policy tools, such as providing financial support or budget allocation, opportunities for national rankings, labels and awards, access to facilities and infrastructure, special units advising and guidelines, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, legal obligations, accreditation requirements, and audit, monitoring, or evaluation.

Contextualising Higher Education Policies for SDGs

What steps has your country taken to contextualize the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in its higher education context? Which partners were involved in these steps?

- ↘ To contextualise SDG-related policies, the Ministry has taken a number of steps mainly in **cooperation** with fellow central/national government authorities, as listed below:
 - ↘ Established governance and coordination mechanisms
 - ↘ Undertook multi-stakeholder consultations
 - ↘ Reviewed national plans and strategies
 - ↘ Mapped targets
 - ↘ Prioritized and adapted targets
 - ↘ Mainstreamed into existing or new strategies
 - ↘ Assessing interlinkages, synergies, and tradeoffs
 - ↘ Evaluated the implementation or impact of policies
 - ↘ Established monitoring arrangements for reporting and follow-up to the SDGs
- ↘ The Ministry has involved central/national government authorities in all of the steps above.
- ↘ Partners that were not involved in any of the policy steps: Higher Education Institutions and think tanks, Provincial/local government authorities, Industry and the private sector, Non-governmental organisations.

Sources

The information was provided by the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia**, as of 15 December 2022.

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