

Ireland



Respondent Profile

Some details on the respondent:

- A representative from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science accomplished the ARC9 survey. The respondent is involved in the drafting, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. Their knowledge of SDG-related concepts varies from Basic to Intermediate 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, governments 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 providing funding opportunities, providing reputational incentives, building capacity, and enforcing regulations.
 1. Establish a common vision and strategy
 2. Provide funding opportunities
 3. Provide reputational incentives (e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)
 4. Build capacity (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
 5. Enforce regulations (e.g. accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
- There is a department/agency responsible for implementing the SDGs in higher education at the national level, which is the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science.

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 Department is guided by two policy documents in this regard: [Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024](#) and the [Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development](#). In these documents, sustainability is addressed in the areas of Education and Teaching, Research, Campus Operations and Governance, and Partnerships and Societal Engagement. The dimensions of the SDGs addressed by higher education are Economic, Environmental, and Social in nature.
- In terms of obstacles faced by universities, they 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 SDG priorities for higher education in your country?

- The Ministry's top SDG priorities in higher education are SDG4: Quality Education, SDG10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG13: Climate Action, and SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals.

SDG 4 Quality Education
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

SDG 13 Climate Action
 SGD17 Partnership for the Goals

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, such as:
 - **Financial support or budget allocation, national rankings, labels, and awards, and accreditation requirements** which primarily target the areas of education and teaching; and
 - **Access to facilities and infrastructure**, which focuses on campus operations and governance

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

- Implementation of tools such as financial support or budget allocation, national rankings, labels and awards, access to facilities and infrastructure, self-assessment, accreditation requirements, and audit, monitor, or evaluation were noted by the respondent as cutting across the SDGs.

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 Department 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.
- ↘ On the other hand, the Department works with partners to contextualise policies connected with the SDGs:
- ↘ **Higher Education Institutions and think tanks** were involved in the following policy steps: Established governance and coordination mechanisms, Participated in multi-stakeholder consultations, Reviewing national plans and strategies
 - ↘ **Provincial/local government authorities** were involved in the following policy steps: Established governance and coordination mechanisms, Participated in multi-stakeholder consultations, Reviewing national plans and strategies
 - ↘ **Non-governmental organisations** were involved in the following policy steps: Established governance and coordination mechanisms, Participated in multi-stakeholder consultations, Reviewing national plans and strategies
- ↘ Partners that were not involved in any of the policy steps: Industry and the private sector.

Sources

The information was provided by the **Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science**, on 3 November 2022.

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