

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY ON THE SDGs

Malaysia



Respondent Profile

Some details on the respondent:

- A representative from the Ministry of Higher Education accomplished the ARC9 survey. The respondent is involved in the priority setting, drafting, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. Based on their self-evaluation, 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 building capacity, enforcing regulations, providing funding opportunities, and providing reputational incentives.
 1. Establish a common vision and strategy
 2. Build capacity (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
 3. Enforce regulations (e.g. accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
 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, which are the Ministry of Higher Education's Department of Higher Education and the Department of Polytechnics and College Communities Education. There's also an **SDG Academy** which represents the education and training portfolio of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

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 two policy documents in this regard: the [Mid Term Review of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016-2020](#) and the [Twelfth Malaysia Plan 2021-2025](#). 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 and Social in nature.
- In terms of obstacles faced by universities, they are primarily structural which may be characterised by lack of time, funding, human resources, infrastructure.

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, SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, SDG5: Gender Equality, and SDG10: Reduced Inequalities.

Priority 1 | SDG 4 Quality Education
 Priority 2 | SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Priority 3 | SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- Priority 4 | SDG 5 Gender Equality
- Priority 5 | SDG10 Reduced Inequalities

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** which target the areas of education and teaching, research, and campus operations and governance
 - **National rankings, labels and awards** also aimed at education and teaching, research, campus operations and governance, and partnerships and societal engagement
 - **Access to facilities and infrastructure** mainly focused on education and teaching, research, and campus operations and governance
 - **Tools for self-assessment** which targets education and teaching, research, campus operations and governance, and partnerships and societal engagement
 - **Legal obligations** also aimed at education and teaching, research, campus operations and governance, and partnerships and societal engagement
 - **Accreditation requirements** focused on education and teaching, research, campus operations and governance, and partnerships and societal engagement
 - **Audit, monitoring, and evaluation** aimed at education and teaching, research, campus operations and governance, and partnerships and societal engagement

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

- As an example of using policy tools to encourage HEI contributions to the SDGs, the Ministry cited the [Policy Implementation Plan of The Eleventh Malaysia Plan](#). Furthermore, certain policy tools such as financial support and budget allocation, national rankings, labels, and awards, access to facilities and infrastructure, self-assessment, legal obligations, and audit, monitor, or evaluation are all primarily focused on SDG4: Quality Education. Some tools, specifically those on accreditation requirements focus both on SDG4: Quality Education and SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

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 partnered with several actors – specifically fellow central/national government authorities, provincial/local government authorities, HEIs and think tanks, non-governmental organisations (except for areas relating to governance) and industry/private sector – in undertaking the following steps:
 - Established governance and coordination mechanisms
 - Undertook multi-stakeholder consultations
 - Reviewed national plans and strategies
 - Mapped, prioritised, and adapted targets
 - Mainstreamed key concepts into existing or new strategies
 - Assessed 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 consulted and involved the **following partners in all of the steps above**: HEIs and think tanks; Central/national government authorities: Provincial/local government authorities; Industry and the private sector.

Sources

The information was provided by the **Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia**, as of 25 October 2022.

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