

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY ON THE SDGs

Malta



Respondent Profile

Some details on the respondent:

- A representative from the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority accomplished the ARC9 survey. The respondent is involved in the priority setting, policy drafting, decision-making 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) – is mostly at the Intermediate level. Their knowledge of existing higher education policies aimed at contributing to the SDGs in Malta is at the Expert 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, providing funding opportunities, providing reputational incentives, and building capacity.
 1. Establish a common vision and strategy
 2. Enforce regulations (e.g. accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
 3. Provide funding opportunities
 4. Provide reputational incentives (e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)
 5. Build capacity (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
- In Malta, the agency responsible for implementing the SDGs in higher education is the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (www.mfhea.mt).

Are there policy documents for higher education's response to the SDGs?

- The [Malta National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030](#) is the dedicated government document that the MFHEA refers to for the implementation of SDGs in the higher education sector. In this document both the economic, social and environmental dimensions are addressed.

What are some obstacles faced by HEIs in contributing to the SDGs?

- In terms of obstacles faced by universities, the key obstacle is the lack of capacity building opportunities for institutions.

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

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 16	Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
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 MFHEA employs a number of policy tools to encourage universities to contribute to the attainment of the SDGs, addressing different missions of the institutions:

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

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 MFHEA took the following policy steps:
 - 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
 - Established monitoring arrangements for reporting and follow-up to the SDGs

- The MFHEA has consulted and involved the following partners in these steps:
 - **HEIs and think tanks** are consulted and involved in all of the steps above, with the exception of multi-stakeholder consultations.
 - **Central/national government authorities:** Establishing governance and coordination mechanisms, Undertaking multi-stakeholder consultations, Reviewing national plans and strategies, Prioritizing and adapted targets, Mainstreaming into existing or new strategies
 - **Provincial/local government authorities:** Undertaking multi-stakeholder consultations.
 - **Industry and the private sector:** Establishing governance and coordination mechanisms
- Partners that were not involved in any of the policy steps: Provincial/local government authorities, Non-governmental organizations.

Sources

The information was provided by the **Malta Further and Higher Education Authority**, as of 31 October 2022.

Produced by



The **Asia-Europe Foundation** 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 promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe.

This country sheet is part of the [9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC9\)](#) project, the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEMME), and the basis of the [ARC9 Report: Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs](#).