NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY ON THE SDGs

Philippines

ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION
Respondent Profile
Some details on the respondent:

- A representative from the Commission on 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. Their knowledge of SDG-related concepts is on the Intermediate level. The same is true for their knowledge of existing higher education policies aimed at contributing to the SDGs.

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 providing funding opportunities, building capacity, enforcing regulations, and providing reputational incentives.

1. Establish a common vision and strategy
2. Provide funding opportunities
3. Build capacity (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
4. Enforce regulations (e.g. accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
5. Provide reputational incentives (e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)

- There is a department/agency responsible for implementing the SDGs in higher education: the Commission on Higher Education.

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 Commission issued a memorandum order titled “Pathways to Equity, Relevance and Advancement in Research, Innovation, and Extension in Philippine Higher Education” in 2016.

- In the memorandum order, sustainability is addressed in the area of Research. The dimensions of sustainability addressed by higher education are Economic, Environmental, 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.

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

- Its top 5 SDG priorities in higher education are SDG4: Quality Education, SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG13: Climate Action, and SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals.

| Priority 1 | SDG 4 | Quality Education |
| Priority 2 | SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth |
| Priority 3 | SDG 11 | Sustainable Cities and Communities |
| Priority 4 | SDG 13 | Climate Action |
| Priority 5 | SDG 17 | 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 Commission 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 partnerships and societal engagement
- **National rankings, labels and awards** which target the areas of education and teaching, research, and partnerships and societal engagement
- **Access to facilities and infrastructure** that mainly focuses on education and teaching and campus operations and governance
- **Tools for self-assessment** in campus operations and governance
- **Optional institutional reviews** also in campus operations and governance
- **Accreditation requirements** focused on education and teaching
- **Audit, monitoring, and evaluation** intended for education and teaching as well as campus operations and governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Tool</th>
<th>Education &amp; Teaching</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Campus Operations &amp; Governance</th>
<th>Partnerships and Societal Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support or budget allocation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National rankings, labels and awards</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to facilities and infrastructure</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special units advising and guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools for self-assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional institutional reviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal obligations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation requirements</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit, monitoring, or evaluation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No example was given on the Commission’s use of policy tools to encourage HEI contributions to the SDGs, but it was noted that there is an on-going discussion with Times Higher Education (THE) on the implementation of an SDG Dashboard in connection with the impact rankings.

Policy tools providing financial support or budget allocation cut across the SDGs while tools on accessing facilities and infrastructure, self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, accreditation requirements, and audit, monitoring, or evaluation are primarily focused on SDG4.
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 Commission has 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 Commission has involved HEIs and think-tanks from among the above steps in:

- Establishing governance and coordination mechanisms
- Multi-stakeholder consultations

The Commission has also cooperated with central/national government authorities in:

- Reviewing national plans and strategies,
- Mapping targets, prioritising and adapting targets,
- Mainstreaming concepts into existing or new strategies,
- Assessing interlinkages, synergies, and tradeoffs,
- The evaluation of the implementation or impact of policies, and
- Establishment of monitoring arrangements for reporting and follow-up to the SDGs.

Sources

The information was provided by the Commission on Higher Education of the Philippines, as of 10 November 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.