

Part III

// Embarking on your Sustainability Journey –

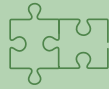


Overview of the Implementation Process (Inward-out)



GUIDING QUESTIONS

STEP 1 Shared Vision	STEP 2 Mapping SD Activities	STEP 3 Linking Activities to SDG Targets	STEP 4 Mapping Governance & Skills	STEP 5 Mapping Regional Challenges	STEP 6 Alignment	STEP 7 Gap-Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does sustainability mean to us? • To which transformation modus (-> Table 14) can our subsystems, such as administration and different faculties, be assigned? Subsystems can be assigned to different modes. • Is SD already part of our strategic orientation? • Does our institution's vision refer to SD? And if so, where and how? • Do we already implicitly refer to SDGs in our value statements? And if so, which SDGs are we referring to? • Who are our trailblazers? In which areas do we find them? • Do our internal stakeholders discuss specific SD-related topics? If so, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What SD activities are we already conducting in our core areas (education, research, outreach & partnering, entrepreneurial activities, governance and campus operations)? • Can these activities be grouped into thematic focus areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of our ongoing SD activities contribute to what SDG target(s)? • Which SDG target(s) are reoccurring and thus could function as focal areas? 	<p>Capacities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which capacities are most important for achieving the identified SDG target(s)? • Do we already possess this capacity, or do we have to build it/develop it further? • What capacities do we need to develop to move towards our institutional vision? <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are our current governing structures (offices, networks, etc.)? • Who has the right to make decisions? Who is allowed to participate in decision-making processes? • Who controls what activities? Is this transparent? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges does our region face today and in future (next 20 years)? • Are regional stakeholders aware of the regional challenges and intend to act to overcome these (problem ownership)? • Are these discussed among or supported by the regional stakeholders? • Which targets help to minimise risks and challenges in our region? • How is the societal climate towards SD? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are our key findings from the previous steps? • Can we group these in separate 'blocks', for example, using the SDS4HEI framework model? • What do we want to visualise for what purpose? • What form of visualisation is easy for us to realise? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do our focus areas (clustered targets in current actions) align with the main regional challenges? • Do important regional SDG targets exist that we are not addressing (gaps)? If so, what are these? • Do we have the capacity to address these? • If so, what are possible new/modified actions/measures in our core areas addressing or contributing to these targets? • Are we aware of any important target(s) that the region is not yet aware of and that we need to communicate? • How can your actions go beyond your region?



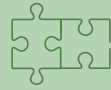
	STEP 1 Shared Vision	STEP 2 Mapping SD Activities	STEP 3 Linking Activities to SDG Targets	STEP 4 Mapping Governance & Skills	STEP 5 Mapping Regional Challenges	STEP 6 Alignment	STEP 7 Gap-Analysis
	<p>what issues are currently discussed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we envisage to orchestrate the process of SD implementation? • What is the culture like in our region? What are the values, beliefs and attitudes towards SD? • What is it that we want to sustain in supporting best quality of live in our region? • What is our shared vision of SD? What does a concrete image of a sustainable HEI look like? 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is SD embedded in your organisation's rules and regulations? • Have SD-related incentive systems been established? • Who are the actors currently involved in SD? • To what extent do the existing governance structures and modes of governing facilitate or impede SD? 			and positively affect a global scale
NOTE(S)	A shared vision is the prerequisite for all strategic SD activities. It entails values, beliefs and narratives concerning SD and thus gives meaning to actions and motivates stakeholders to become active		<p>Instead of referring to SDGs, take a closer look at the sub-targets of the respective SDGs.</p> <p>Connecting these targets to regional challenges and potentials will make sustainability goals more feasible.</p>	<p>Capacities: The framework helps you to identify the most relevant capacities to reach a certain SDG target in a specific implementation area. By analysing the different variables that make up a capacity, you can figure out what your HEI needs to work on to strengthen this capacity.</p>	Although climate change is a global challenge, regional efforts can make the SDGs more feasible. The combination of sustainability and regional development can facilitate sustainable ecosystems.	The process of getting there is more important than the visualisation itself, as it entails thoughtful reflection on the insights gained. Nevertheless, visualisations facilitate internal and external communication.	The Gap Analysis is no means to its end but an instrument to identify areas of improvement. Forasmuch, it should cover all core functions of your HEI while accounting for the regional context.



STEP 1
Shared Vision



STEP 2
Mapping SD Activities



STEP 3
Linking Activities
to SDG Targets



STEP 4
Mapping Governance
& Skills

Governance: Governance structures and modes of governing moderate transformative actions at HEIs. They must be flexible and open enough to allow for change while offering stability.



STEP 5
Mapping Regional
Challenges



STEP 6
Alignment



STEP 7
Gap-Analysis

In doing so, the focus is not on identifying every gap but pinpointing those your organisation can meaningfully contribute to narrowing-

2.1 Towards a Baseline

Definitions of SD are vast in number and difficult to agree upon, especially if different stakeholders with diverse backgrounds (community, culture, academic discipline, etc.) are questioned. The complexity of the term often prevents the formulation of a concrete vision of a sustainable future. However, **a concrete vision is considered a necessary precursor to goal setting**. The motivation within the institution to work on SD can be dampened if sustainability is framed within a negative context, including associations with renunciation, prohibition and buzzwords. Ensuring a positive and constructive approach is crucial to sustaining motivation for SD. The organisational frame of the SDS4HEI framework model assists HEIs with formulating a shared vision of SD and motivates stakeholders to take action. Four capacities are necessary to develop and work on a shared vision of SD. HEIs must be able to:

Managing discourses

Following an **aspirational transformative narrative**, the term 'sustainability' has to become more optimistic again, moving away from its buzzword character, political implications and associations of prohibitions and renunciation. HEIs must orchestrate the discourse on sustainability and conflicting interests and goals and make interconnections more visible. Commit Committees can help to discuss and overcome contradictions by moderating a process of visualisation individual as well as 'We' interests, their relation to the HEI as a whole and assisting in a possible integration of interests. HEIs can help to discuss and overcome contradictions by moderating a process of visualisation individual as well as 'We' interests, their relation to the HEI as a whole and assisting in a possible integration of interests. Activities and efforts must be communicated to internal and external stakeholders, **pointing out opportunities for further actions**. Additionally, HEIs should introduce new perspectives by teaching relevant skills, leading to new professions.

Pioneers of a Culture of Sustainability

A 'Culture of Sustainability' relies on leadership support and **trailblazers who challenge preconceived mentalities**, strive to realign values and goals towards the endeavour of sustainability and develop new processes to encourage synergies across the HEI and beyond,

Telling Transformative Stories

Rather than information, narratives (the 'why') influence how people think and act concerning SD. Related narratives centre around the dystopian consequences, costs and threats of climate change. Transformative narratives, however, stress human's ability to shape society and environment and change existing systems. These narratives are often **bottom-up narratives** that tell a positive and engaging story, articulate a vision of where we want to go and **provide solutions for attaining this vision rather than articulating problems to avoid** (Hinkel et al., 2020). Therefore, the dialog between different stakeholders should be stimulated, for communication is the basis for actualising

culture. Developing suitable narratives should be treated as a parallel process to strategic development.

Rethinking the Role of HEIs

HEIs are exposed to diverse, complex and sometimes contradictory challenges, including the idea of sustainable development. A holistic and transformational approach to SD within a HEI requires systemic change and embraces new working methods based on the established infrastructure to cope with complexity.

HEIs are advised to critically reflect on the following questions to elaborate on a shared SD vision:



Elaborating a Shared SD Vision

- » What does sustainability mean to us?
- » To which transformation modus (→ **Table 14**) can our subsystems, such as administration and different faculties, be assigned? Subsystems can be assigned to different modes.
- » Is SD already part of our strategic orientation?
- » Does our institution's vision refer to SD? And if so, where and how?
- » Do we already implicitly refer to SDGs in our value statements? And if so, which SDGs are we referring to?
- » Who are our trailblazers? In which areas do we find them?
- » Do our internal stakeholders discuss specific SD-related topics? If so, what issues are currently discussed?
- » How do we envisage to orchestrate the process of SD implementation?

The **culture** within a HEI is always shaped by its surrounding culture. It follows that you also need to ask yourself:

- » What is the culture like in our region? What are the values, beliefs, and attitudes towards sustainable development?

A vision can then be formulated using a top-down approach or a preferable **participatory approach** involving relevant stakeholder groups in the process:

- » What is it that we want to sustain in supporting the best quality of life in our region?
- » What is our shared vision of SD?
- » What does a concrete image of a sustainable HEI look like?



Step 1.

Shared Vision



Note

A shared vision is the prerequisite for all strategic SD activities. Although referring to an ideal state in the future, the vision should be context-specific. It entails values, beliefs and narratives concerning SD and thus gives meaning to actions and motivates stakeholders to become active.

A vision of SD is influenced by the dominant culture and structure within a HEI. These aspects are subject to HEIs' history and the country-specific organisational types.

The following table can be used to overview the four different transformation modes of HEIs. For each subsystem, administration, faculties, and core areas, amongst others, the fit of the organisational form with the environmental requirements is crucial. Subsystems can be located in different transformation modes. For example, the development task of university administrations is predominantly seen as moving from mode 1.0 to mode 2.0 and professionalising processes to a greater extent. Depending on the modus, HEIs react differently to the challenge of sustainability in their core areas research, education, outreach and partnering, governance, campus operations and entrepreneurial activities. The modes must be viewed as parallel developments, possessing an additive character. To transform itself, a HEI has to go through each modus.

To help initiate SD at your HEI, the different areas, such as administration and faculties, **should look at which mode they are in and which elements from which mode are needed for the transformation towards an integrative and more sustainable HEI.**

Table 14. Transformation Modes of HEIs

	Traditional HEI (Order Thinking)	Modern HEI (Success Thinking)	Postmodern HEI (Considerate Thinking)	Integrative HEI 4.0 (Systems Thinking)
General Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input, authority and hierarchy; providing knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number-oriented optimization, Output, efficiency and competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue with (internal) stakeholders and learners (especially students), transfer thinking, addressing socio-ecological issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic solutions, co-creativity and sustainability
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher centric • Memorising standardised knowledge • Learning for recognition and academic titles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test-centric • Disseminating factual knowledge, analytical strategies and sound methods • Modules and projects • Learning and competitive game for future success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner-centric • competencies-oriented transfer of self-reflective knowledge • Focus on dialogical seminars and project-based learning • Blended learning • Learning as personal growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System-centric, holistic • Whole-person approach • Dynamic balance between subject matter, group, individual learners and context • Research-based learning • Co-creative and mindful learning
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for absolute truths • Self-concept: observing universal natural laws • Focus on solid theories based on both deduction and induction • Construction of disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary research, standardisation of research, processes and peer review • Self-concept: testing and applying natural laws • Competition for grants • Measurement of success with rankings, impact factors, etc. • Focus on quantitative methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter- and transdisciplinary • Action research • Self-concept: Understanding social dynamics • Dialogical research processes dealing with societal issues • Integration of qualitative research methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transdisciplinarity • Co-creative research • Self-concept: co-creating systemic transformation • Global action university • Living lab approach • Focus on real-life solutions • Idea of open science
Governance, Operations and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on teaching, primary research and technological transfer • Building palaces of knowledge: impressive buildings and extensive libraries • Legitimacy by authority • Compliant by regulation, e.g., waste management and safety • One-dimensional approach to sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on quantitative growth • Rapid growth in functional buildings with little energy awareness • Control of cash flows and process management • Entrepreneurial activity • Science parks • SD as a management task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI as a place of meeting diverse yet like-minded people • Facilitating community and individual expression • Diversity management • Legitimacy by participation • Goal of climate neutrality • SD as a community task and third mission content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI as space for encounter reflection and inspiration • Physical and virtual integration of different societal and ecological systems • Whole-institution approach to sustainability • Additional fourth mission: co-creation for sustainability

Source: Giesenbauer & Müller-Christ (2020)